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## Seventh annual survey of take up of school lunches in England

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## Summary

- All 152 local authorities (LAs) in England were approached for information regarding school catering services. Of these, 99 (65%) responded, providing information relating to both LA organised catering services (whether provided directly or contracted on behalf of schools by the LA) and non-LA catering services.
- The response rate and coverage are both sufficiently high to be confident that the findings presented in this report are representative of local authority organised school meal provision in England. The coverage nationally relating to take up of school lunches is 61% in the primary<sup>a</sup> sector, down from 78% in 2010-2011, and 38% in the secondary sector, down from 54% in 2010-2011.
- LA catered or contracted provision accounted for 84%, 40% and 75% of primary, secondary and special school lunch provision, respectively. Percentages for non-LA catering provision were 16%, 60% and 25%, respectively.
- Take up of school lunches was 46.3% in primary schools and 39.8% in secondary schools. This represents an increase over 2010-2011 of 2.2 percentage points in both the primary and secondary sectors. This equates to about 167,000 more pupils taking school lunch in 2011-2012.
- Average school lunch prices were £1.93 in the LA catered primary sector and £2.03 in the LA catered secondary sector, an increase of 3% for primary and 2% for secondary on the preceding year.
- In the primary sector, in the LAs who provided information, 77% of schools had a full production kitchen, 5% had facilities for regeneration or a mini-kitchen, 17% had hot food transported from another school or venue, and 0.3% had cold food only provision. In the secondary sector, 99% of schools had a full production kitchen; less than 1% had cold food only provision.
- 99% of primary and 95% of secondary LA catered school lunch provision were reported to be compliant with the food-based standards for school lunches, 93% and 79% respectively with the nutrient-based standards. For non-LA provision, 97% of primary and 95% of secondary schools were thought to be compliant with or “working toward” the food-based standards; and 97% and 94%, respectively, for the nutrient-based.

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<sup>a</sup> ‘Primary’ refers to ‘primary, primary academies and special’, unless indicated otherwise.

## **1 Introduction**

The School Food Trust (“the Trust”) was established in 2005 as a Non-Departmental Public Body<sup>b</sup> to support the implementation of changes in school food in England consistent with new standards for school food published on 19 May 2006 by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES),<sup>1</sup> revised and updated on 17 August 2007,<sup>2</sup> and amended on 11 July 2008<sup>3</sup> and 5 May 2011.<sup>4</sup>

This is the seventh annual survey of school meal take up in England; the six previous surveys were carried out at the end of each financial year from 2006 to 2011.<sup>5 6 7 8 9 10</sup> The 2011-2012 survey was carried out by the Trust, in consultation with other organisations and agencies with an interest in school food provision. The Local Authority Caterers’ Association (LACA) did not partner with the Trust this year.

This is the fourth year that a standard method for calculating school lunch take up has been used.<sup>c</sup> The 2011-2012 school lunch take up values are reported separately in a statistical release as well as in this report.<sup>11</sup> Values for the first year of reporting using the standard method were published in July 2009,<sup>12</sup> for the second year in July 2010,<sup>13</sup> and for the third year in July 2011.<sup>14</sup>

The core questions in the survey have remained essentially the same each year in order to facilitate year-on-year comparisons, but a small number of questions have been added or deleted each year according to the needs of the Trust, LACA and other interested parties (e.g. Department for Education (DfE), Department of Health (DH)).

The timing of the survey coincides with the annual assessment by local authorities (LAs) of their turnover and take up of school lunches in the preceding financial year (April-March). The method and timing provide a stable assessment of annual take up of school lunches which is not biased by the seasonal variation known to be associated with take up (highest in the Autumn term, lowest in the Summer term) and avoids the problems of interpretation associated with findings based on a single census date chosen at one point in the school year. It also provides LAs with an opportunity to reflect on factors associated with changes in take up over the previous year. The present report is similar in format to, and makes reference to, the findings from the Trust’s previous annual surveys of take up and statistical releases.

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<sup>b</sup> The Trust was also established as a charity and company limited by guarantee. From October 2011, the Trust is no longer an NDPB, but continues in its charitable and commercial status.

<sup>c</sup> A standard methodology was introduced in 2008-2009 when the take up of school lunches was included in the previous Government’s National Indicator Set (NIS) (NI 52 – Take up of school lunches).

## **2 Methods**

### **2.1 Survey design**

The survey was designed by researchers from the School Food Trust, with input from a range of stakeholders with an interest in collecting or using the data. For the take up of school lunches, meal prices and costs, catering facilities, stay-on-site policies, use of cashless systems and compliance with school food standards, LAs were asked to report separately for schools with LA catering (either LA in-house or LA contracted private contractor) and schools with other catering (school-contracted private contractor or in-school catering provision), generally referred to in the tables as non-LA catering.

### **2.2 Questionnaire testing**

The 2011-2012 survey was largely unchanged from 2010-2011. Following a reduction in the length of the questionnaire for 2010-2011 in line with government commitments to reduce data burdens on frontline staff, only minor amendments were made.<sup>d</sup> Prior to administering the survey, consultation took place to refine the questions and to ensure that the language and terminology used was specific and appropriate for encouraging accurate and comprehensive responses from recipients. The data collection and survey questionnaire were approved by the DfE Star Chamber Scrutiny Board (SCSB).

### **2.3 Sample selection and logistics**

The questionnaire was sent by email to the lead officials in all 152 local authorities in March 2012. Reminder emails were sent from mid-April and telephone calls made to non-responding authorities. Follow-up emails and calls to LAs to clarify take up responses continued until early July 2012.

### **2.4 Data entry and coding**

The questionnaire was distributed in Excel. Data from the Excel files were uploaded from individual returns into Access using an import routine. Where information was missing or unavailable, follow up contact was made with the respondent to complete the information wherever possible.

### **2.5 Statistical analysis**

Statistical analysis for the present report was carried out using SPSS.<sup>15</sup> Analyses were undertaken so as to reflect the relative numbers of schools or pupils in each LA. Estimates of take up of school lunches took into account the numbers of pupils on roll in the schools covered by the catering services. Estimates of catering characteristics (e.g. facilities for food preparation) took into account the number of schools catered for by the service provider within each LA. The findings therefore reflect the correct balance of provision across England and do not give undue emphasis to the findings from smaller schools, LA providers or caterers.

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<sup>d</sup> LAs were asked to specify numbers of academy schools and describe their catering provision; to provide information about changes in meal prices planned for 2012-2013; to specify numbers of primary schools operating cashless systems; to identify separately any steps taken to increase FSM registration and FSM take up. The question asking respondents to name non-LA catering providers was removed.



## 2.6 Reporting and coverage

99 LAs in England responded to the questionnaire,<sup>e</sup> and all were able to provide information on take up for 2011-2012. LAs were asked to provide information on take up separately for their own services (either provided directly or contracted) and for those provided by school-contracted private contractors or in-school catering services. The complexity of school meal catering means that not all LAs provided information for every question. Where not stated explicitly, information relates only to catering services provided by the LA. The findings do not therefore always include the characteristics of schools who arrange catering services from providers who do not operate within the local authority structure (e.g. private catering companies) or schools who provide their own in-school catering services. For each table, the number of LAs responding is shown in a footnote (“Base”).

## 2.7 Quality assurance

Because the Excel version used this year and for previous years includes many internal checks for total numbers of schools reported, the data are internally consistent. Where queries or inconsistencies occurred, information providers from the relevant LA were contacted for clarification and changes were made where appropriate. Similarly, respondents were contacted, wherever possible, to complete missing data on the questionnaires.

# 3 Results

## 3.1 Response rates

Responses to the survey were received from 99 LAs. The response rate of 65% is lower than that achieved in 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 (when all LAs were required to report on the take up of school lunches), and in 2010-2011 when the survey reverted to voluntary completion. Reasons given by LAs for non-response were mainly reduced resource or other priorities at LA level and the voluntary nature of the survey. In some LAs, changes in personnel meant that the survey contact had changed, or that there was no-one with designated responsibility for completing the survey.

Response rates across regions varied from 47% in Outer London to 92% in North East (Table 1).

Of the 99 responding LAs, all were able to provide data on take up in the primary sector, and 86 on take up in the secondary sector.<sup>f</sup> A number of LAs provided information only for take up. For the remaining variables, therefore, the number of responses to each question varies, and the number on which each analysis is based (Base) is shown in a footnote to each table.

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<sup>e</sup> LAs completed the 2011-2012 survey on a voluntary basis. For 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 LAs were required to report school lunch take up data and so all LAs responded to the survey in these years. The mandatory requirement on LAs to report school lunch take up data was removed on October 13<sup>th</sup> 2010 when the National Indicator Set was withdrawn. The 2010-2011 survey was voluntary.

<sup>f</sup> ‘Primary’ means ‘primary, primary academies and special’, unless indicated otherwise in the tables or text. Of the 99 responding LAs, there were thirteen LAs for which no data were analysed for the secondary sector. Of these, one has no secondary schools; two provided data for which there were concerns over quality; and ten provided no data.



**Table 1. Number of Local Authorities in England for which information was obtained, by region**

Region	Number of Local Authorities		Response	
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%
North East	12	11	11	91.7
North West	23	14	14	60.9
Yorkshire/Humber	15	13	13	86.7
East Midlands	9	5	5	55.6
West Midlands	14	8	8	57.1
East of England	11	6	6	54.5
Inner London	14	11	11	78.6
Outer London	19	9	9	47.4
South East	19	12	12	63.2
South West	16	10	10	62.5
<b>England</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>65.1</b>

Base: 99 LAs

### 3.2 Sample characteristics

The total numbers of schools in the responding LAs, the number (and percentage) catered for by LA and non-LA providers, and the number (and percentage) for which take up is reported is shown in Table 2 for primary, secondary and special schools, by region.

Overall, LA catered or contracted provision accounted for 84%, 40% and 75% of primary, secondary and special provision, respectively; the remaining 16%, 60% and 25% were provided privately or by in-school catering or were not known. These values are similar to 2010-2011, suggesting that the profile of LAs reporting is similar for both years.

LAs reported that 2% of primary, 29% of secondary, and 2% of special schools in their LAs were academy schools. In relation to catering provision, a greater proportion of academy schools have non-LA catering (48% of primary, 74% of secondary and 47% of special) compared with maintained schools (15% of primary, 55% of secondary and 26% of special).

**Table 2. Total number of schools in (a) the local authorities responding to the survey, and (b) for which take up is reported, by type of provider, by region, England, 2011-2012**

Region	Number of local authorities	(a) All schools						(b) Schools for which take up is reported					
		Primary		Secondary		Special		Primary		Secondary		Special	
		<i>n</i>	%*	<i>n</i>	%*	<i>n</i>	%*	<i>n</i>	%*	<i>n</i>	%*	<i>n</i>	%*
<b>LA Catered or LA Contracted Provision</b>													
North East	11	715	8.1	55	6.9	42	9.1	715	8.1	48	6.4	42	9.4
North West	14	1026	11.6	102	12.8	67	14.5	1017	11.5	100	13.3	61	13.7
Yorkshire/Humber	13	1554	17.6	166	20.8	50	10.8	1551	17.6	150	19.9	49	11.0
East Midlands	5	916	10.4	90	11.3	24	5.2	916	10.4	86	11.4	24	5.4
West Midlands	8	791	8.9	84	10.5	61	13.2	791	9.0	82	10.9	58	13.0
East of England	6	1067	12.1	97	12.1	40	8.7	1067	12.1	95	12.6	40	9.0
Inner London	11	431	4.9	49	6.1	33	7.2	431	4.9	45	6.0	32	7.2
Outer London	9	381	4.3	34	4.3	34	7.4	381	4.3	30	4.0	34	7.6
South East	12	1518	17.2	90	11.3	88	19.1	1517	17.2	89	11.8	88	19.7
South West	10	446	5.0	32	4.0	22	4.8	441	5.0	29	3.8	18	4.0
<b>England</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>8845</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>8827</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Non LA Catering Provision</b>													
North East	11	50	3.0	91	7.4	4	2.5	33	3.2	40	9.4	2	2.7
North West	14	209	12.6	126	10.3	17	10.8	166	16.3	35	8.3	3	4.1
Yorkshire/Humber	13	86	5.2	112	9.2	11	7.0	71	7.0	52	12.3	4	5.4
East Midlands	5	310	18.8	131	10.7	28	17.7	242	23.7	43	10.1	19	25.7
West Midlands	8	126	7.6	120	9.8	14	8.9	46	4.5	44	10.4	2	2.7
East of England	6	102	6.2	117	9.6	12	7.6	61	6.0	24	5.7	5	6.8
Inner London	11	110	6.7	65	5.3	14	8.9	79	7.7	23	5.4	7	9.5
Outer London	9	120	7.3	100	8.2	5	3.2	35	3.4	12	2.8	3	4.1
South East	12	205	12.4	235	19.2	25	15.8	138	13.5	91	21.5	12	16.2
South West	10	335	20.3	127	10.4	28	17.7	149	14.6	60	14.2	17	23.0
<b>England</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>1653</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1224</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1020</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>All Catering Provision</b>													
North East	11	765	7.3	146	7.2	46	7.4	748	7.6	88	7.5	44	8.5
North West	14	1235	11.8	228	11.3	84	13.6	1183	12.0	135	11.5	64	12.3
Yorkshire/Humber	13	1640	15.6	278	13.7	61	9.9	1622	16.5	202	17.1	53	10.2
East Midlands	5	1226	11.7	221	10.9	52	8.4	1158	11.8	129	11.0	43	8.3
West Midlands	8	917	8.7	204	10.1	75	12.1	837	8.5	126	10.7	60	11.5
East of England	6	1169	11.1	214	10.6	52	8.4	1128	11.5	119	10.1	45	8.7
Inner London	11	541	5.2	114	5.6	47	7.6	510	5.2	68	5.8	39	7.5
Outer London	9	501	4.8	134	6.6	39	6.3	416	4.2	42	3.6	37	7.1
South East	12	1723	16.4	325	16.1	113	18.3	1655	16.8	180	15.3	100	19.2
South West	10	781	7.4	159	7.9	50	8.1	590	6.0	89	7.6	35	6.7
<b>England</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>10498</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>9847</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1178</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Base: 99 LAs. \* % values are column percentages.

Table 3 shows the number of pupils in schools for which take up has been reported, by type of provision. Take up information provided by LAs covers 2,385,821 primary, 1,111,850 secondary, and 44,213 special school pupils. This represents 76%, 67% and 71% respectively of the primary, secondary and special pupil populations for which take up was reported in 2010-2011.

**Table 3. Number of pupils on roll in schools for which take up is reported, by type of provision, by region, England 2011-2012**

Region	Primary			Secondary			Special		
	School Roll	Registered for FSM*	Not registered for FSM	School Roll	Registered for FSM	Not registered for FSM	School Roll	Registered for FSM	Not registered for FSM
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
<b>LA Catered or LA Contracted Provision</b>									
North East	156381	39136	117245	47179	9931	37248	3785	1691	2094
North West	252248	58717	193531	89336	16783	72553	5146	2204	2942
Yorkshire/Humber	339000	67303	271697	142411	21880	120531	4602	1638	2964
East Midlands	181102	29318	151784	75485	10752	64733	1665	570	1095
West Midlands	221823	61977	159846	68408	18140	50268	5543	2421	3122
East of England	214092	27773	186319	79736	7998	71738	3488	977	2511
Inner London	145997	52100	93897	45915	17637	28278	2394	1287	1107
Outer London	131562	28735	102827	26111	6327	19784	2839	1047	1792
South East	376294	51967	324327	91139	8345	82794	6218	2074	4144
South West	113071	20564	92507	23211	3722	19489	1346	510	836
<b>England</b>	<b>2131570</b>	<b>437590</b>	<b>1693980</b>	<b>688931</b>	<b>121515</b>	<b>567416</b>	<b>37026</b>	<b>14419</b>	<b>22607</b>
<b>Non LA Catering Provision</b>									
North East	8022	2113	5909	30644	5494	25150	306	148	158
North West	46012	12750	33262	36338	6982	29356	250	117	133
Yorkshire/Humber	22123	4678	17445	57270	9702	47568	493	179	314
East Midlands	44796	6333	38463	40680	4791	35889	1672	697	975
West Midlands	11088	2448	8640	41392	7934	33458	67	17	50
East of England	10254	1703	8551	22258	2253	20005	499	216	283
Inner London	27081	9690	17391	22287	6623	15664	555	260	295
Outer London	14103	2796	11307	16163	1574	14589	275	107	168
South East	40308	6257	34051	93348	10658	82690	1421	377	1044
South West	30464	4639	25825	62539	6916	55624	1649	557	1092
<b>England</b>	<b>254251</b>	<b>53407</b>	<b>200844</b>	<b>422919</b>	<b>62927</b>	<b>359992</b>	<b>7187</b>	<b>2675</b>	<b>4512</b>
<b>All Catering Provision</b>									
North East	164403	41249	123154	77823	15425	62398	4091	1839	2252
North West	298260	71467	226793	125674	23765	101909	5396	2321	3075
Yorkshire/Humber	361123	71981	289142	199681	31582	168099	5095	1817	3278
East Midlands	225898	35651	190247	116165	15543	100622	3337	1267	2070
West Midlands	232911	64425	168486	109800	26074	83726	5610	2438	3172
East of England	224346	29476	194870	101994	10251	91743	3987	1193	2794
Inner London	173078	61790	111288	68202	24260	43942	2949	1547	1402
Outer London	145665	31531	114134	42274	7901	34373	3114	1154	1960
South East	416602	58224	358378	184487	19003	165484	7639	2451	5188
South West	143535	25203	118333	85750	10638	75113	2995	1067	1928
<b>England</b>	<b>2385821</b>	<b>490997</b>	<b>1894825</b>	<b>1111850</b>	<b>184441</b>	<b>927409</b>	<b>44213</b>	<b>17094</b>	<b>27119</b>

Base: 99 LAs for primary; 86 LAs for secondary; 88 LAs for special (Note: 2 LAs for primary, 1 LA for secondary and 1 LA for special reported school roll but not roll registered for FSM, meaning that registered for FSM is slightly under-estimated and not registered for FSM slightly over-estimated.)

\*Free school meals

The balance of the numbers of schools in different sectors and numbers of pupils registered for FSM broadly reflect the proportions given in the 2011 school census.<sup>16</sup>

### 3.3 School food catering providers

Local authorities were asked what catering and/or support services were offered to schools. 62 LAs offered catering provided by a LA in-house catering service, with 35 offering a service from a LA contracted private contractor (6 LAs offered both services). 51 LAs offered catering support/advice to schools, either as the only service offered (3 LAs),

or in addition to a catering service (48 LAs). Three LAs offered no catering or support services at all.

Overall, 91 of the 99 responding LAs (92%) offered LA catering services. This compares with 93% of LAs in 2010-2011, and 90% of LAs in 2009-2010. Throughout this report, the relative proportions of catering service types by sector and region are similar to 2010-2011, suggesting that the findings remain generalizable despite the fall in response rates.

Respondents were asked for information on the type of catering providers for all schools in their LA. Table 4 shows the totals for primary, secondary and special schools by region, including academies. The balance is very similar to 2010-2011 for overall LA and non-LA provision in all sectors (as described in Table 2), and also for the proportion of schools with each type of catering provision.

Less than 1% of schools were categorised as FSM only or no catering provision in 2011-2012.<sup>9</sup> Of 45 primary schools in this category, 10 (23%) had no catering service. The majority of FSM only schools had non-LA catering provision (services provided by private contractors or through in-school services).

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<sup>9</sup> The change compared with 2010-2011 is due to a change in the profile of LAs reporting.

**Table 4. Number and percentage of types of school catering providers in primary, secondary and special schools, by region, England, 2011-2012**

Region	Total number of schools	LA contracted catering service – LA in-house provider		LA contracted catering service – private contractor (one or more)		School contracted catering service – LA provider				School contracted catering service – private contractor		School catering service – in-school catering provider		FSM service only or no catering		Don't know	
		n	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
<b>Primary</b>																	
North East	754	406	53.8	202	26.8	99	13.1	2	0.3	9	1.2	36	4.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
North West	1223	755	61.7	0	0.0	263	21.5	0	0.0	107	8.7	80	6.5	1	0.1	17	1.4
Yorkshire/Humber	1621	567	35.0	203	12.5	755	46.6	13	0.8	24	1.5	57	3.5	2	0.1	0	0.0
East Midlands	1205	688	57.1	0	0.0	223	18.5	0	0.0	247	20.5	41	3.4	5	0.4	1	0.1
West Midlands	906	414	45.7	0	0.0	376	41.5	0	0.0	87	9.6	7	0.8	10	1.1	12	1.3
East of England	1158	471	40.7	589	50.9	1	0.1	0	0.0	21	1.8	51	4.4	3	0.3	22	1.9
Inner London	533	132	24.8	248	46.5	47	8.8	0	0.0	51	9.6	49	9.2	0	0.0	6	1.1
Outer London	486	285	58.6	90	18.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	80	16.5	22	4.5	2	0.4	7	1.4
South East	1684	756	44.9	738	43.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	102	6.1	54	3.2	6	0.4	28	1.7
South West	762	130	17.1	281	36.9	0	0.0	11	1.4	110	14.4	48	6.3	16	2.1	166	21.8
<b>All primary</b>	<b>10332</b>	<b>4604</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>2351</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>1764</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>838</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Secondary</b>																	
North East	110	40	36.4	0	0.0	6	5.5	3	2.7	38	34.5	23	20.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
North West	182	64	35.2	0	0.0	21	11.5	2	1.1	21	11.5	42	23.1	2	1.1	30	16.5
Yorkshire/Humber	203	28	13.8	19	9.4	81	39.9	10	4.9	20	9.9	40	19.7	0	0.0	5	2.5
East Midlands	162	51	31.5	0	0.0	22	13.6	0	0.0	13	8.0	76	46.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
West Midlands	181	39	21.5	0	0.0	35	19.3	0	0.0	52	28.7	20	11.0	0	0.0	35	19.3
East of England	138	4	2.9	35	25.4	26	18.8	0	0.0	14	10.1	31	22.5	0	0.0	28	20.3
Inner London	92	24	26.1	24	26.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	22	23.9	18	19.6	0	0.0	4	4.3
Outer London	69	21	30.4	4	5.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	10	14.5	12	17.4	0	0.0	22	31.9
South East	205	43	21.0	25	12.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	63	30.7	40	19.5	0	0.0	34	16.6
South West	95	6	6.3	12	12.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	32	33.7	27	28.4	3	3.2	15	15.8
<b>All secondary</b>	<b>1437</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>12.0</b>
<b>Special</b>																	
North East	46	32	69.6	7	15.2	3	6.5	0	0.0	1	2.2	3	6.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
North West	84	46	54.8	0	0.0	16	19.0	5	6.0	3	3.6	9	10.7	1	1.2	4	4.8
Yorkshire/Humber	59	30	50.8	5	8.5	15	25.4	0	0.0	3	5.1	6	10.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
East Midlands	52	21	40.4	0	0.0	3	5.8	0	0.0	6	11.5	22	42.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
West Midlands	75	28	37.3	1	1.3	32	42.7	0	0.0	3	4.0	5	6.7	2	2.7	4	5.3
East of England	48	23	47.9	14	29.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	8.3	0	0.0	7	14.6
Inner London	47	7	14.9	25	53.2	1	2.1	0	0.0	3	6.4	11	23.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Outer London	38	25	65.8	8	21.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	5.3	3	7.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
South East	110	42	38.2	28	25.5	15	13.6	0	0.0	4	3.6	9	8.2	1	0.9	11	10.0
South West	45	9	20.0	12	26.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	11.1	16	35.6	0	0.0	3	6.7
<b>All special</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>43.5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>4.8</b>

Base: primary 10332 schools (99 LAs), secondary 1437 schools (98 LAs), special 604 schools (95 LAs)

### 3.4 Take up of school lunches

99 LAs provided information on the take up of school lunches in primary and special schools,<sup>h</sup> and 86 LAs provided information relating to secondary schools. School lunch take up values for all catering are shown in Table 6, in LA catered or contracted provision in Table 7, and in schools with non-LA catering provision in Table 8. These findings replicate those in the Statistical Release on school lunch take up and follow the format for reporting in previous years.<sup>11</sup>

Mean take up for all catering services was 46.3% in the primary sector and 39.8% in the secondary sector. In the primary sector, the overall take up reflects the slightly higher take up in LA catered schools (average 46.5% in 9273 schools) compared with schools with non-LA catering provision (average 44.2% in 1094 schools). This is also true in the secondary sector (39.9% compared with 39.6%) – this is a change compared with previous years where take up in non-LA catered secondary schools has been marginally higher than in LA catered schools. This change may be due in part to a lower proportion of non-LA catered secondary schools reporting on take up this year.

Coverage of schools (the proportion of schools for which information was reported in the 99 responding LAs) was 93% in primary and 58% in secondary, with take up reported for 10367 primary and 1178 secondary schools. This represents a loss of data compared with 2010-2011, when coverage was 92% for primary schools and 64% for secondary schools in 129 LAs, and take up was reported for 13966 primary and 1696 secondary schools. Thus, for 2011-2012, take up was reported for 26% fewer primary and 31% fewer secondary schools compared with 2010-2011.

The calculation of take up in secondary schools is based on lunchtime income. This should include any element of morning break provision considered to be taken by pupils as their lunch. LAs were asked to indicate which elements of income were included when calculating take up in secondary schools (Table 5). The most common response for LA catered schools was to include income from school lunch and all morning break (43%), whilst for non-LA catered schools responses were more evenly split across categories.

**Table 5. Percentage\* of LAs reporting particular elements of income included when calculating take up, England, 2011-2012**

Elements of income included in take up calculation	2011-2012			
	LA catered n = 61		Non-LA catered n= 32	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
School lunch only	10	16.4	8	25.0
School lunch and a proportion of morning break	6	9.8	2	6.3
School lunch and all morning break	26	42.6	9	28.1
Total till receipts over the whole day	19	31.1	9	28.1

Base: 62 LAs for LA catered; 32 LAs for non-LA catered

\* Column totals may be greater than 100% because LAs could provide more than one response, reflecting the variety of methods of calculation used by different schools within the LA.

<sup>h</sup> Unless denoted separately, values in tables for 'primary schools' represent take up in primary schools, primary academies, and special schools combined. The findings are therefore comparable with those collected in previous years.

**Table 6. Percentage take up of school lunches and percentage coverage, primary<sup>a</sup> and secondary schools, by region, England, 2011-2012**

Region	All LAs		Primary <sup>a</sup>					Secondary					
	Number of LAs in region <sup>b</sup>		% take up	Number of schools		% coverage <sup>c</sup>	Number of LAs in region <sup>b</sup>		% take up	Number of schools		% coverage <sup>c</sup>	
	Responding	Reporting		Total in LAs responding	Total reported on		Responding	Reporting		Total in LAs responding	Total reported on		
North East	12	11	11	57.1	811	792	97.7	11	9	47.5	146	88	60.3
North West	23	14	14	53.1	1319	1247	94.5	14	12	46.6	228	135	59.2
Yorkshire/Humber	15	13	13	47.1	1701	1675	98.5	13	12	40.2	278	202	72.7
East Midlands	9	5	5	40.6	1278	1201	94.0	5	5	34.9	221	129	58.4
West Midlands	14	8	8	47.4	992	897	90.4	8	7	41.8	204	126	61.8
East of England	11	6	6	43.3	1221	1173	96.1	6	5	37.5	214	119	55.6
Inner London	14	11	11	69.0	588	549	93.4	10	9	48.9	114	68	59.6
Outer London	19	9	9	45.6	540	453	83.9	9	7	44.2	134	42	31.3
South East	19	12	12	36.2	1836	1755	95.6	12	10	33.9	325	180	55.4
South West	16	10	10	31.8	831	625	75.2	10	10	31.8	159	89	56.0
<b>England</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>46.3</b>	<b>11117</b>	<b>10367</b>	<b>93.3</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>39.8</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>1178</b>	<b>58.2</b>

Base: 99 LAs reporting for primary, 86 LAs reporting for secondary

Analysis: weighted by number of pupils attending schools reported on

<sup>a</sup> Primary plus special

<sup>b</sup> Number of LAs in region – Responding: number of LAs in which there was catering provision; Reporting – number of LAs in which take up values were reported

<sup>c</sup> Coverage of schools in responding LAs

**Table 7. Percentage take up of school lunches and percentage coverage, primary<sup>a</sup> and secondary schools with LA catered or contracted provision, by region, England, 2011-2012**

Region	Number of LAs in region <sup>b</sup>		Primary <sup>a</sup>				Secondary					
	Responding	Reporting	% take up	Number of schools		% coverage <sup>c</sup>	Number of LAs in region <sup>b</sup>		% take up	Number of schools		% coverage <sup>c</sup>
				Total in LAs responding	Total reported on		Responding	Reporting		Total in LAs responding	Total reported on	
North East	11	11	56.9	757	757	100.0	9	8	44.3	55	48	87.3
North West	13	13	53.5	1093	1078	98.6	10	10	47.0	102	100	98.0
Yorkshire/Humber	13	13	47.1	1604	1600	99.8	13	12	40.8	166	150	90.4
East Midlands	4	4	42.6	940	940	100.0	4	4	34.7	90	86	95.6
West Midlands	7	7	47.7	852	849	99.6	7	6	39.4	84	82	97.6
East of England	6	6	43.7	1107	1107	100.0	6	5	39.9	97	95	97.9
Inner London	9	9	68.5	464	463	99.8	7	6	46.2	49	45	91.8
Outer London	8	8	45.3	415	415	100.0	5	4	45.7	34	30	88.2
South East	12	12	35.9	1606	1605	99.9	9	9	32.0	90	89	98.9
South West	8	8	31.8	468	459	98.1	5	5	27.1	32	29	90.6
<b>England</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>46.5</b>	<b>9306</b>	<b>9273</b>	<b>99.6</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>39.9</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>94.4</b>

Base: 91 LAs reporting for primary, 69 LAs reporting for secondary

Analysis: weighted by number of pupils attending schools reported on

<sup>a</sup> Primary plus special

<sup>b</sup> Number of LAs in region – Responding: number of LAs in which there was catering provision; Reporting – number of LAs in which take up values were reported

<sup>c</sup> Coverage of schools in responding LAs



**Table 8. Percentage take up of school lunches and percentage coverage, primary<sup>a</sup> and secondary schools with non-LA catering provision, by region, England, 2011-2012**

Region	Primary <sup>a</sup>						Secondary					
	Number of LAs in region <sup>b</sup>		% take up	Number of schools		% coverage <sup>c</sup>	Number of LAs in region <sup>b</sup>		% take up	Number of schools		% coverage <sup>c</sup>
	Responding	Reporting		Total in LAs responding	Total reported on		Responding	Reporting		Total in LAs responding	Total reported on	
North East	9	5	60.2	54	35	64.8	11	6	52.4	91	40	44.0
North West	10	6	50.5	226	169	74.8	12	5	45.5	126	35	27.8
Yorkshire/Humber	10	7	46.9	97	75	77.3	13	7	38.7	112	52	46.4
East Midlands	5	3	32.4	338	261	77.2	5	3	35.2	131	43	32.8
West Midlands	6	4	41.0	140	48	34.3	8	5	45.7	120	44	36.7
East of England	6	3	36.0	114	66	57.9	6	3	29.0	117	24	20.5
Inner London	9	7	72.1	124	86	69.4	10	5	54.4	65	23	35.4
Outer London	9	6	48.2	125	38	30.4	9	4	41.7	100	12	12.0
South East	10	4	38.5	230	150	65.2	11	5	35.7	235	91	38.7
South West	10	9	31.9	363	166	45.7	10	9	33.6	127	60	47.2
<b>England</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>44.2</b>	<b>1811</b>	<b>1094</b>	<b>60.4</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>39.6</b>	<b>1224</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>34.6</b>

Base (unweighted): 54 LAs reporting for primary, 52 LAs reporting for secondary

Analysis: weighted by number of pupils attending schools reported on

<sup>a</sup> Primary plus special

<sup>b</sup> Number of LAs in region – Responding: number of LAs in which there was catering provision; Reporting – number of LAs in which take up values were reported

<sup>c</sup> Coverage of schools in responding LAs

**Table 9. Percentage take up of school lunches and percentage coverage nationally for 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012**

	2008-2009		2009-2010		2010-2011		2011-2012		Change in take up (ppt) <sup>b</sup> : 2010-2011 to 2011-2012	Change in take up (ppt) <sup>b</sup> : 2008-2009 to 2011-2012
	% take up	% coverage <sup>c</sup>	% take up	% coverage <sup>c</sup>	% take up	% coverage <sup>d</sup>	% take up	% coverage <sup>e</sup>		
Primary <sup>a</sup>	39.3	88.0	41.4	94.2	44.1	78.4 <sup>d</sup>	46.3	60.8	+2.2	+7.0
Secondary	35.0	69.5	35.8	80.3	37.6	54.2 <sup>d</sup>	39.8	38.0	+2.2	+4.8

Base: 2008-2009 Take up: 145 LAs for primary, 139 LAs for secondary; Coverage: 150 LAs

2009-2010 Take up: 152 LAs for primary, 143 LAs for secondary; Coverage: 152 LAs

2010-2011 Take up: 128 LAs for primary, 109 LAs for secondary; Coverage: 129 LAs

2011-2012 Take up: 99 LAs for primary, 86 LAs for secondary; Coverage: 99 LAs

Analysis: weighted by number of pupils attending schools reported on

<sup>a</sup> Primary plus special

<sup>b</sup> Percentage point change

<sup>c</sup> Coverage of schools in all LAs in England

<sup>d</sup> These are estimated values for national coverage based on 92.3% coverage in 129 LAs for primary and 63.5% coverage in 128 LAs for secondary

<sup>e</sup> These are estimated values for national coverage based on 93.3% coverage in 99 LAs for primary and 58.2% coverage in 98 LAs for secondary

The data suggest that take up nationally has increased in the primary sector from 44.1% in 2010-2011 to 46.3% in 2011-2012. In the secondary sector, the data show an increase in take up from 37.6% to 39.8% over the same period. For primary schools, these figures are based on 99 LAs reporting for 2011-2012 compared with 129 in 2010-2011, and for secondary schools 86 LAs reporting for 2011-2012 compared with 109 in 2010-2011. These differences could mean, therefore, that the increases in take up of 2.2 percentage points (ppt) in both sectors were due, in part, to the change in the number of reporting LAs between the two years. The overall changes are summarized in Figure 1. The changes in take up between 2008-2009 and 2011-2012 are summarized in Table 9.

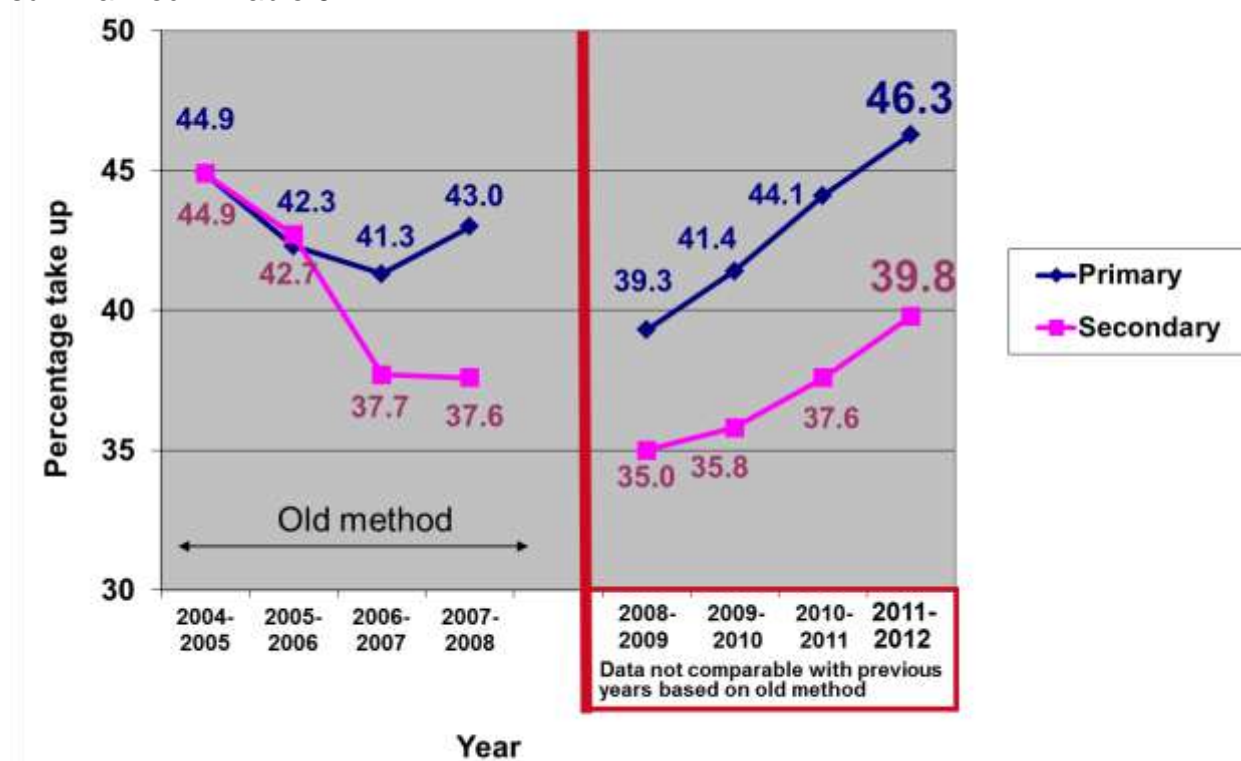


Figure 1. Take up of school lunches, England, 2004-2005 to 2011-2012, by sector.

The changes in take up percentages (for paid-for and free) school meals were used to estimate the number of additional pupils in 2011-2012 who were taking school lunches (Table 10). This suggests that about 167,000 more pupils in 2011-2012 were taking a school lunch compared with the year before. Two-thirds of this increase came from paid-for lunches.

	Paid-for	FSM	Total
Primary	60,000	35,000	95,000
Secondary	52,000	20,000	72,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>112,000</b>	<b>55,000</b>	<b>167,000</b>

\*These are estimated by multiplying take up percentages by national pupil roll (Table 1a DfE School Census 2012)<sup>16</sup>

\*\* This compares with an estimate of 100,000 more pupils eating school lunches in 2009-2010

\*\* This compares with an estimate of 173,000 more pupils eating school lunches in 2010-2011

In the primary sector, 68 LAs reported an increase in take up, 28 reported a decrease and one reported no change compared with 2010-2011. In the secondary sector, 50 reported an increase, 29 reported a decrease and one reported no change. It was not possible to determine the change in 2 LAs for primary take up and 6 LAs for secondary take up because of missing data for 2010-2011.

To investigate the impact on take up of the lower LA response rate for 2011-2012, take up was calculated for the subset of 94 LAs<sup>i</sup> who provided information on take up for primary schools in both 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, and the 79 LAs<sup>j</sup> who provided data for secondary schools for both years (Table 11).<sup>k</sup> This shows increases in take up in both the primary and secondary school subsets, consistent with the increases seen when comparing national figures for take up reported for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. Although the increase in take up in the primary subset (1.2ppt) is smaller than that seen when comparing national figures (2.2ppt), it confirms that take up continues to increase, and suggests that the increase in take up is likely to be between 1.2 and 2.2 percentage points. Despite the fall in the number of LAs responding to the survey, and the number of schools for which take up is reported, the take up figures remain the best estimate of take up nationally, and can be compared with figures from previous years.

Take up figures for the subsets of LAs who reported on take up for both 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 also provide a basis for comparisons at regional level between the two years. Changes in take up at regional level ranged from -0.1ppt to 4.8ppt for primary schools, and from 0.3ppt to 4.3ppt for secondary schools. Regional differences may be affected by the year-on-year changes in take up within individual LAs, and the changes should therefore be interpreted with caution.

**Table 11. Take up of school meals (%) in primary<sup>a</sup> and secondary schools in England, by region, for LAs reporting take up in 2010-2011 and 2011-2012**

Region	Financial year		Difference 2010-2011 to 2011-2012 (percentage points)
	2010-2011	2011-2012	
<i>Primary<sup>a</sup></i>	%	%	
North East	53.8	55.1	1.2
North West	51.5	53.1	1.5
Yorkshire/Humber	46.4	47.1	0.7
East Midlands	38.1	40.6	2.5
West Midlands	47.3	47.4	0.1
East of England	42.2	43.3	1.1
Inner London	63.5	68.2	4.8
Outer London	44.2	45.6	1.4
South East	35.6	36.2	0.6
South West	32.1	32.0	-0.1
<b>All primary</b>	<b>44.4</b>	<b>45.6</b>	<b>1.2</b>

<sup>i</sup> Two of the 99 LAs reporting on take up for primary schools in 2011-2012 did not report in 2010-2011. The 3 LAs who participated in the DfE FSM pilot were excluded from the analysis.

<sup>j</sup> Six of the 86 LAs reporting on take up for secondary schools in 2011-2012 did not report in 2010-2011. The LA who participated in the DfE FSM pilot was excluded from the analysis.

<sup>k</sup> Coverage (% of schools in LA reported on) differed between the two years for LAs in the subset. For primary, coverage was 93.2% in 2011-2012 compared with 95.5% in 2010-2011. For secondary, coverage was 63.4% in 2011-2012 compared with 73.6% in 2010-2011.

**Table 11. Take up of school meals (%) in primary<sup>a</sup> and secondary schools in England, by region, for LAs reporting take up in 2010-2011 and 2011-2012**

Region	Financial year		Difference 2010-2011 to 2011-2012 (percentage points)
	2010-2011	2011-2012	
<i>Secondary</i>			
North East	46.4	48.5	2.0
North West	45.8	46.6	0.8
Yorkshire/Humber	38.1	40.2	2.1
East Midlands	34.1	34.9	0.8
West Midlands	41.3	41.8	0.5
East of England	33.2	37.5	4.3
Inner London	47.2	47.8	0.6
Outer London	40.5	44.0	3.5
South East	33.6	33.9	0.3
South West	30.3	31.2	0.9
<b>All secondary</b>	<b>37.9</b>	<b>39.7</b>	<b>1.8</b>

Base: Primary 94 LAs; Secondary: 79 LAs

Analysis: weighted by number of pupils attending schools reported on

<sup>a</sup> Primary plus special

### 3.4.1 Contributions of paid-for and free school meals to overall take up

The relative rates of take up amongst pupils who are or are not registered for FSM is shown in Table 12. In the primary sector, take up of paid-for meals (as a percentage of pupils *not* registered for FSM) was 36.3%, and 33.6% in the secondary sector. Compared with figures reported for 2010-2011, take up of paid meals increased in both sectors.<sup>1</sup> Amongst pupils registered for FSM, there were also small increases in the percentage of pupils taking up their entitlement between 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 in both sectors.

There were substantial regional variations in the take up of paid-for meals, ranging from 21.8% (South West) to 56.9% (Inner London) in the primary sector, and from 26.5% (South West) to 42.3% (North East) in the secondary sector.

**Table 12. Percentage take up of free school meals (FSM) and paid-for school lunches in primary<sup>a</sup> and secondary schools, by region, England, 2011-2012**

Region	Primary <sup>a</sup>			Secondary		
	LAs reporting	Take up of FSM*	Take up of paid-for meals**	LAs reporting	Take up of FSM*	Take up of paid-for meals**
	<i>n</i>	%	%	<i>n</i>	%	%
North East	11	100.1	42.3	9	68.5	42.3
North West	14	82.4	43.7	12	71.9	40.7
Yorkshire/Humber	13	79.3	39.0	12	68.4	34.9
East Midlands	5	79.2	33.1	5	69.8	29.5
West Midlands	8	79.6	34.9	7	69.7	33.1
East of England	5	84.7	36.9	5	77.5	33.1
Inner London	9	83.5	56.9	9	76.0	33.9
Outer London	9	76.0	37.0	6	68.2	38.3
South East	12	77.2	29.3	10	67.3	30.1
South West	10	77.7	21.8	10	69.3	26.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>81.8</b>	<b>36.3</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>70.6</b>	<b>33.6</b>

Base: 96 LAs for primary, 85 LAs for secondary (LAs reporting FSM and paid roll and meal numbers)

Analysis: weighted by number of pupils attending schools reported on

<sup>a</sup> Primary plus special

\* Take up of FSM is reported here as a percentage of the children on roll registered for FSM

\*\* Take up of paid-for meals is reported here as a percentage of the children on roll not registered for FSM

<sup>1</sup> This comparison uses figures from 123 LAs for primary and 106 LAs for secondary for 2010-2011, and 96 LAs for primary and 85 LAs for secondary for 2011-2012.

When overall take up of school lunches is partitioned into the contributions from the paid-for and free elements in the primary and secondary sectors (Figure 2 and Figure 3, respectively), the proportion of the take up accounted for by FSM in primary schools is higher (16.6%) than in secondary schools (11.8%). The split between paid-for and FSM varies substantially between LAs and hence between regions, with Inner London having the greatest contribution to overall take up from FSM, and the South East the lowest for both primary and secondary sectors. This generally reflects the differences in levels of deprivation between regions.

From September 2009 to Jul 2011, three LAs participated in a DfE pilot to extend FSM provision. Take up in these LAs has increased in part due to their involvement in the pilot. However, this has had only a small impact on the overall increases observed nationally between 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 in both the primary and secondary sectors.

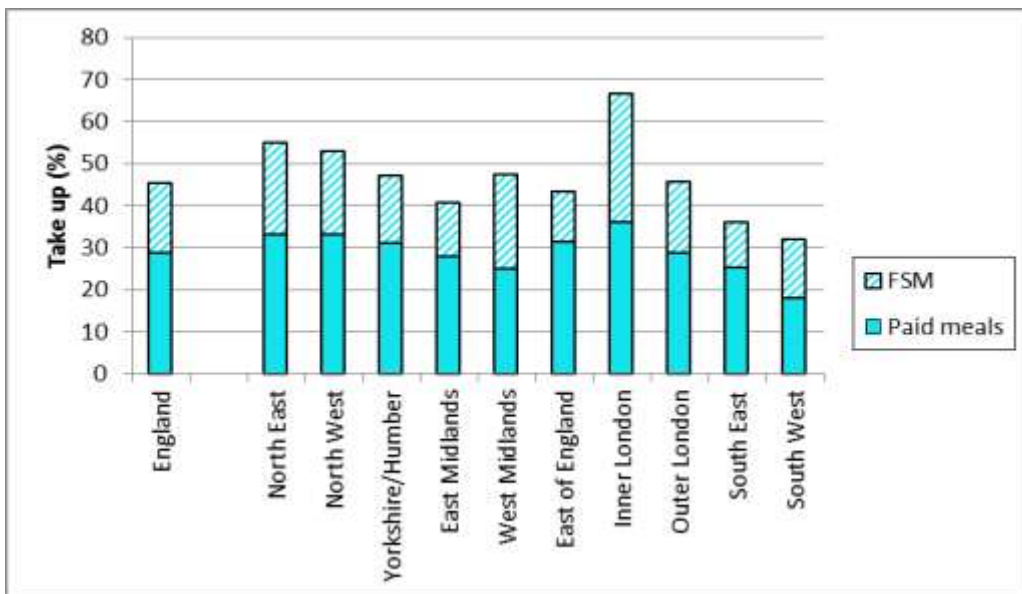


Figure 2: The percentage contribution of paid-for and free school lunches to overall take up in primary and special schools in England, by region, 2011-2012

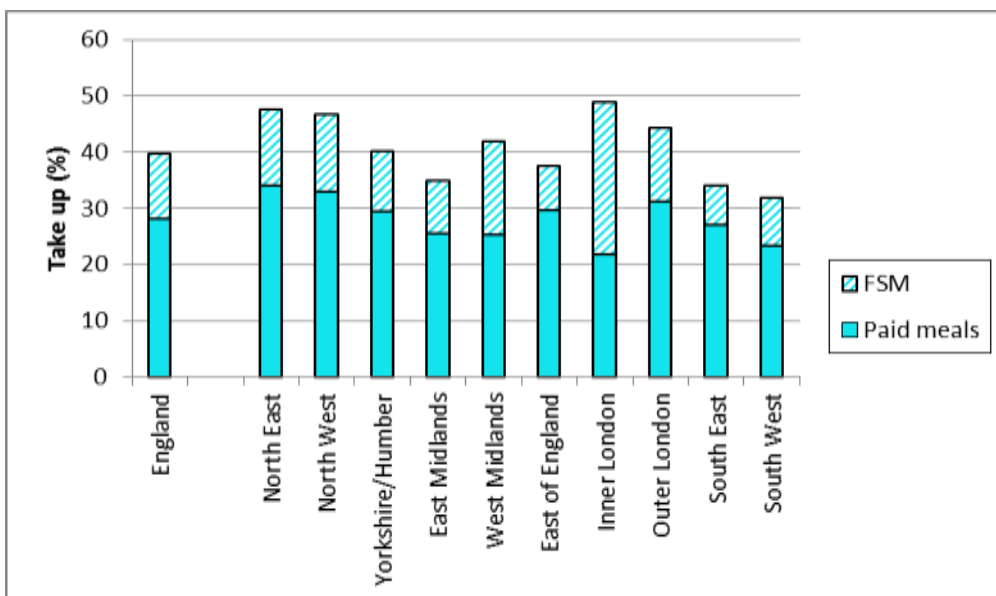


Figure 3: The percentage contribution of paid-for and free school lunches to overall take up in secondary schools in England, by region, 2011-2012

### 3.5 Price of school lunches

The average lunch price was £1.93 in LA catered primary schools, and £2.03 in LA catered secondary schools (Table 13). This represents an average increase per meal of only 5p (2.7%) in the primary sector and 5p (2.4%) in the secondary sector compared with 2010-2011. Average prices in special schools were £1.92 for primaries and £2.01 for secondaries, an increase of 3% for primary and 4% for secondary. Variations in mean prices were small between regions, but the minimum and maximum prices varied substantially both within and between regions, ranging from £1.50 to £2.30 in primary schools, £1.65 to £2.35 in secondary schools, £1.50 to £2.30 in primary special schools and £1.60 to £2.55 in secondary special schools.

Information on recent or planned changes in meal prices for 2012-2013 in primary schools was provided by 83 LAs. Ten LAs (12%) reported that meal prices had changed in April 2012; of these 1 LA had reduced the meal price by 10p, 4 LAs had increased the meal price by 5p and 3 LAs by 10p. A further 27 LAs indicated that meal prices would change in September 2012, and of the 17 who were able to specify the new meal price, 11 indicated that increases would be 5p or less, whilst one LA planned to increase prices by 15p per meal. 26 LAs (31%) said that meal prices in primary schools would not change for 2012-2013.

**Table 13. Mean, minimum and maximum price of a two course school lunch, LA catered and contracted, primary, secondary and special schools, by region, England, 2011-2012 and mean 2010-2011**

Region	Price per meal			2010-2011 Mean £	% increase in price per meal, 2010-2011 to 2011-2012 %
	mean £	min £	max £		
<b>Primary</b>		<i>n=82</i>		<i>n=101</i>	
North East	1.80	1.50	2.00	1.81	-0.5
North West	1.96	1.65	2.16	1.87	4.9
Yorkshire/Humber	1.84	1.50	2.20	1.79	2.5
East Midlands	1.92	1.75	2.00	1.85	3.7
West Midlands	1.89	1.80	2.00	1.83	3.3
East of England	1.99	1.70	2.10	1.94	2.3
Inner London	1.91	1.60	2.30	1.89	1.2
Outer London	1.99	1.75	2.20	1.90	4.7
South East	2.02	1.80	2.15	1.99	1.5
South West	2.10	2.00	2.20	2.05	2.5
<b>All primary</b>	<b>1.93</b>	<b>1.50</b>	<b>2.30</b>	<b>1.88</b>	<b>2.7</b>
<b>Secondary*</b>		<i>n=62</i>		<i>n=82</i>	
North East	1.93	1.80	2.10	1.85	4.5
North West	2.02	1.65	2.25	1.97	2.5
Yorkshire/Humber	2.03	1.70	2.35	1.96	3.5
East Midlands	2.05	2.00	2.20	1.95	5.4
West Midlands	2.01	1.80	2.20	1.96	2.5
East of England	2.07	1.80	2.20	2.03	2.0
Inner London	1.96	1.80	2.35	1.86	5.1
Outer London	2.13	1.80	2.30	2.07	2.7
South East	2.03	1.98	2.28	2.01	1.2
South West	2.27	2.00	2.35	2.18	4.0
<b>All secondary</b>	<b>2.03</b>	<b>1.65</b>	<b>2.35</b>	<b>1.98</b>	<b>2.4</b>



**Table 13. Mean, minimum and maximum price of a two course school lunch, LA catered and contracted, primary, secondary and special schools, by region, England, 2011-2012 and mean 2010-2011**

Region	Price per meal			2010-2011 Mean £	% increase in price per meal, 2010-2011 to 2011-2012 %
	mean £	2011-2012 min £	max £		
<b><i>Special (primary)</i></b>		<i>n=68</i>		<i>n=90</i>	
North East	1.81	1.50	2.00	1.82	-0.6
North West	1.96	1.65	2.16	1.87	5.1
Yorkshire/Humber	1.84	1.50	2.15	1.78	3.5
East Midlands	1.84	1.50	2.00	1.83	0.4
West Midlands	1.89	1.80	2.00	1.83	3.4
East of England	1.98	1.65	2.10	1.94	2.2
Inner London	1.85	1.60	2.30	1.74	6.4
Outer London	1.95	1.65	2.20	1.90	2.5
South East	2.04	1.85	2.20	1.98	2.9
South West	2.06	2.00	2.20	2.00	2.9
<b>All special (primary)</b>	<b>1.92</b>	<b>1.50</b>	<b>2.30</b>	<b>1.87</b>	<b>2.7</b>
<b><i>Special (secondary)</i></b>		<i>n=57</i>		<i>n=74</i>	
North East	1.93	1.80	2.10	1.88	2.7
North West	2.08	1.65	2.30	1.93	7.5
Yorkshire/Humber	1.96	1.80	2.20	1.80	8.8
East Midlands	1.96	1.90	2.00	1.95	0.5
West Midlands	2.02	1.85	2.55	1.90	6.2
East of England	2.01	1.80	2.15	2.01	-0.1
Inner London	1.90	1.60	2.35	1.90	0.0
Outer London	2.05	1.80	2.30	1.95	4.9
South East	2.09	1.98	2.28	2.01	4.1
South West	2.10	2.00	2.35	2.04	3.0
<b>All special (secondary)</b>	<b>2.01</b>	<b>1.60</b>	<b>2.55</b>	<b>1.93</b>	<b>4.2</b>

Base: Primary: 82,101; secondary: 62, 82; special (primary): 68, 90; special (secondary): 57, 74, 2011-2012 and 2010-2011, respectively

Analysis: weighted by number of meals provided by caterers

\* Price for secondary schools is the value in the dining room of a FSM

Of the 66 LAs who provided information on changes in meal prices in secondary schools for 2012-2013, 9 LAs (14%) reported that prices had changed in April 2012 (increases of 5-10p), and 21 LAs that prices would change in September 2012 (1 LA planned to decrease meal price by 9p, increases in the others ranged from 5p (in 6 LAs) to 20p (1 LA). 22 LAs (33%) said that meal prices in secondary schools would not change for 2012-2013.

A subset of LAs were able to provide a detailed breakdown of the elements of the costs of providing school meals (see Section 3.11.3).

### 3.6 Facilities for food preparation

Table 14 shows, by region, the proportions of schools with different types of food preparation facilities. Information on facilities in LA-catered and non-LA catered provision is shown in Table 15 and Table 16, respectively.

73% of primary schools had full production kitchens, a small increase on last year. This was compensated for by slight decreases in the percentages of schools with regen or mini kitchens, and those with no facilities providing cold food (or FSM provision) only.



Allowing for the non-response in the secondary sector, 99% of schools had a full production kitchen. The values for all facilities were virtually the same as reported in 2010-2011.

Similar proportions of facilities were seen amongst the LA and non-LA catering providers in the secondary sector. For primary schools, allowing for the higher level of missing information in the non-LA catered sector, fewer non-LA catered schools had full production kitchens (56% compared with 80% in LA catered schools), and a much higher proportion of schools relied on transporting hot meals from elsewhere (39% vs. 14%). Although the proportion of schools with cold lunch only provision is lower than in 2010-2011, more of the non-LA-catered schools had this type of provision compared with LA-catered (1.7% vs. 0.2%), and more had cold lunch only provision for FSM pupils (1.1% vs. 0.1%),. This suggests that, on average, LA-provision in primary schools is more likely to deliver better quality food across the board than the non-LA sector. Analysis of previous survey data<sup>17</sup> has suggested that transported food, especially from non-school sources, was likely to be associated with lower levels of take up.

**Table 14. Facilities for food preparation in primary<sup>a</sup> and secondary schools in England (percentage of schools reported on), by region, England, 2011-2012**

Region	Full production kitchen	Regen or mini kitchen	No facilities: hot food transported from another school	No Facilities: hot food transported from another source	No facilities: sandwich/cold food only	FSM only*	Unknown
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Primary<sup>a</sup></i>							
North East	90.3	6.2	1.5	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
North West	85.8	1.8	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Yorkshire/Humber	80.2	8.4	8.1	3.1	0.1	0.1	0.0
East Midlands	61.4	0.1	18.7	18.6	0.7	0.7	0.5
West Midlands	58.1	19.6	11.0	6.3	0.4	0.4	4.7
East of England	75.6	0.4	18.2	1.6	0.0	0.0	4.2
Inner London	77.5	4.3	4.5	0.7	0.2	0.0	12.8
Outer London	82.6	2.1	10.3	1.3	0.0	0.0	3.8
South East	75.8	3.1	17.8	0.4	0.3	0.0	2.6
South West	36.8	5.7	8.6	17.0	2.0	0.7	30.0
<b>All primary*</b>	<b>73.3</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>4.6</b>
<b>All primary* (excluding "Unknown")</b>	<b>76.8</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>-</b>
<i>Secondary</i>							
North East	93.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.1
North West	94.6	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.5	4.5
Yorkshire/Humber	85.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
East Midlands	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
West Midlands	78.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	21.6
East of England	68.6	0.0	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	28.4
Inner London	81.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.3
Outer London	91.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.1
South East	77.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.9
South West	68.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.2	5.8	24.6
<b>All secondary*</b>	<b>83.2</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>15.9</b>
<b>All secondary* (excluding "Unknown")</b>	<b>98.8</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>-</b>

Base: primary 88 LAs; secondary 86 LAs

<sup>a</sup> primary plus special combined

\* Percentages will not add to 100% as FSM only is a subset of No facilities: sandwich/cold food only

**Table 15. Facilities for food preparation in schools with LA catering or LA contracted provision in primary<sup>a</sup> and secondary schools (percentage of schools reported on), by region, England, 2011-2012**

Region	Full production kitchen	Regen or mini kitchen	No facilities: hot food transported from another school	No Facilities: hot food transported from another source	No facilities: sandwich/cold food only	FSM only*	Unknown
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Primary<sup>a</sup></i>							
North East	90.9	6.5	1.6	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
North West	84.0	2.1	3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Yorkshire/Humber	79.7	8.8	8.2	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
East Midlands	80.3	0.0	19.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
West Midlands	66.1	18.8	8.6	6.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
East of England	81.6	0.5	17.8	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Inner London	89.2	5.2	4.7	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Outer London	85.3	2.4	10.8	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
South East	78.5	3.6	17.9	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
South West	55.8	9.4	10.1	21.2	3.1	1.2	0.5
<b>All primary*</b>	79.5	5.6	11.1	2.4	0.2	0.1	0.0
<b>All primary* (excluding "Unknown")</b>	<b>79.5</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>-</b>
<i>Secondary</i>							
North East	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
North West	99.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Yorkshire/Humber	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
East Midlands	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
West Midlands	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
East of England	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Inner London	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Outer London	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
South East	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
South West	73.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.7	26.7	0.0
<b>All secondary*</b>	98.8	0.0	0.1	0.0	1.1	1.1	0.0
<b>All secondary* (excluding "Unknown")</b>	<b>98.8</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>-</b>

Base: primary 83 LAs; secondary 68 LAs

<sup>a</sup> primary plus special combined

\* Percentages will not add to 100% as FSM only is a subset of No facilities: sandwich/cold food only

<b>Table 16. Facilities for food preparation in schools with non-LA catering in primary<sup>a</sup> and secondary schools (percentage of schools reported on), by region, England, 2011-2012</b>							
Region	Full production kitchen	Regen or mini kitchen	No facilities: hot food transported from another school	No Facilities: hot food transported from another source	No facilities: sandwich/cold food only	FSM only*	Unknown
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Primary<sup>a</sup></i>							
North East	81.5	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.8
North West	95.1	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.9
Yorkshire/Humber	88.8	2.5	6.3	0.0	2.5	2.5	0.0
East Midlands	19.8	0.3	16.4	59.8	2.2	2.2	1.5
West Midlands	9.3	24.3	25.7	4.3	2.9	2.9	33.6
East of England	15.0	0.0	21.5	16.8	0.0	0.0	46.7
Inner London	33.9	0.8	3.4	0.0	0.8	0.0	61.0
Outer London	63.9	0.0	6.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	29.5
South East	57.4	0.0	17.4	3.5	1.7	0.0	20.0
South West	9.1	0.4	6.3	10.9	0.4	0.0	73.0
<b>All primary*</b>	39.9	2.5	11.5	16.0	1.2	0.8	28.8
<b>All primary* (excluding "Unknown")</b>	<b>56.1</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>-</b>
<i>Secondary</i>							
North East	89.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.4
North West	90.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	9.0
Yorkshire/Humber	63.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	37.0
East Midlands	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
West Midlands	63.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	36.7
East of England	41.3	0.0	0.0	5.5	0.0	0.0	53.2
Inner London	67.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	32.3
Outer London	89.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.0
South East	68.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	31.4
South West	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0	31.5
<b>All secondary*</b>	72.6	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.3	0.1	26.6
<b>All secondary* (excluding "Unknown")</b>	<b>98.9</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>-</b>

Base: primary 74 LAs; secondary 84 LAs

<sup>a</sup> primary plus special combined

\* Percentages will not add to 100% as FSM only is a subset of No facilities: sandwich/cold food only

### 3.7 Improving registration for and take up of free school meals

Respondents were asked what steps were being taken within LAs to improve both registration for free school meals, and take up of free school meals amongst those who are eligible (i.e. registered) (Table 17). In relation to registration for FSM, more than two-thirds said that they were raising awareness of FSM, and working to remove stigma related to the identification of FSM pupils. Nearly as many were supporting schools with suggestions on how to increase FSM registration, and more than half reported using the link between FSM registration and Pupil Premium funding, and using the DfE eligibility checking service. Thirteen LAs mentioned a FSM programme or promotion, and these included DfE FSM pilot LAs extending the scheme past July 2011, an LA funding FSM for all primary pupils, marketing campaigns involving free school meals for a period of time, and targeted FSM marketing campaigns. Innovative 'other' steps mentioned by LAs included increasing the FSM allocation to

persuade more pupils to sign up, and an assumed consent initiative (using benefits data to identify eligible pupils and automatically registering them for FSM unless parents indicate they do not want them registered).

Similar steps were being taken to improve take up of FSM, with two-thirds of LAs supporting schools with suggestions on how to increase FSM take up, and nearly as many working to reduce the stigma related to identification of FSM pupils. Other steps included trialling a cashless system in primary schools, free school meal phone in days for parents, and promoting school meals generally with theme days, free school meal weeks, and teacher engagement.

Compared with 2010-2011, more LAs were supporting schools with suggestions to increase FSM take up (66% vs 22%), and removing stigma related to identification of FSM pupils (68% vs. 51%). Most LAs were taking more than one action. As in 2010-2011, only a small number of LAs reported taking no steps to improve FSM registration or take up.

**Table 17. Steps taken by local authorities to improve registration for FSM and take up of FSM**

	LAs using method	
	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Steps taken to improve registration for FSM (n=75)</b>		
Raising awareness (e.g. including FSM information in literature, newsletters, websites)	53	70.7
Removing stigma related to identification of FSM pupils (e.g. cashless catering, removal of tokens, reassuring parents)	51	68.0
Supporting schools with suggestions to increase FSM registration in schools (e.g. helping to complete applications, promoting FSM)	48	64.0
Promoting the link between FSM registration and Pupil Premium funding	41	54.7
Using the DfE FSM eligibility checking service to check entitlement to FSM	38	50.7
Contacting all head teachers encouraging registration for FSM	37	49.3
Making the application process easier (e.g. online/telephone/text applications)	37	49.3
Contacting all parents encouraging registration for FSM	34	45.3
Contacting selected parents encouraging registration for FSM	23	30.7
Free School Meal programme or promotion	13	17.3
Other steps	12	16.0
No steps being taken	3	4.0
<b>Steps taken to improve take up of FSM (n=72)</b>		
Supporting schools with suggestions to increase FSM take up in schools (e.g. promoting school meals, raising awareness of benefits of school meals)	48	66.7
Removing stigma related to identification of FSM pupils (e.g. cashless catering, removal of tokens, reassuring parents)	44	61.1
Contacting all head teachers encouraging take up of FSM entitlement	32	44.4
Contacting selected parents encouraging take up of FSM entitlement	23	31.9
Free School Meal programme or promotion ( <i>please provide details in Q27c</i> )	12	16.7
Other steps	9	12.5
No steps being taken	6	8.3

Base: steps to improve registration 75 LAs; steps to improve take up 72 LAs

### 3.8 Change in demand

Catering providers were asked to think about factors thought to be responsible for either the fall or the sustained or rising demand for school meals compared with 2010-2011. The findings are shown in Table 18 and Table 19, respectively. The reasons are listed in descending order of frequency as reported for primary schools. The smaller number of LAs providing reasons for a fall in demand compared with the

number reporting reasons for an increase in demand is consistent with the average increase in take up reported nationally in both the primary and secondary sectors.

*Fall in demand (Table 18)*

In primary schools, the most common reasons given by LAs for the fall in demand were the provision of packed lunches and an increase in price. A number of LAs reported that the decreases in take up were related simply to the number of pupils buying meals or willing to pay for them (reflecting, in part, the continued impact of the economic crisis). In the secondary sector, nearly half of LAs attributed the fall in demand to shorter lunch hours and poor organisation of mealtimes, but the introduction of healthier options, parents providing packed lunches, and numbers of pupils buying meals decreasing were also felt to have contributed. The issues of shorter lunch hours and poor organisation of the meal service have been a consistent theme mentioned for the last four years running. Other factors mentioned by LAs in relation to both the primary and secondary sectors included the effect of the economy (families on low incomes but not entitled to FSM, families with reduced disposable income and more than one child at school), lack of school support or a whole school approach.

*Steady or increasing demand (Table 19)*

In both primary and secondary schools, marketing of meals to pupils was cited as a key reason for a steady or increasing demand. In primary schools, school policy was also seen as important, as were marketing to parents, increased head teacher involvement and better kitchen and dining facilities, similar to last year. In secondary schools, improved dining facilities and introduction of a stay-on-site policy were also seen as key factors, similar to last year. Seven LAs also mentioned cashless or electronic payments systems as important. Other factors mentioned by LAs included the introduction of cashless systems or online payment systems, and free school meal promotions.

**Table 18. Number and percentage of LAs identifying particular reasons believed to have contributed to a fall in demand for school meals in 2011-2012, primary and secondary schools, England**

Reason	Percentage of caterers			
	Primary		Secondary	
	Number of LAs identifying reason as contributing to fall in demand	% of those LAs responding	Number of LAs identifying reason as contributing to fall in demand	% of those LAs responding
Parents providing packed lunches	38	70.4	16	39.0
Increase in prices charged due to inflation (wages etc)	23	42.6	15	36.6
Number of pupils buying meals has gone down	22	40.7	16	39.0
A fall in pupil numbers on roll who would pay for their meals	19	35.2	7	17.1
Pupil numbers have stayed about the same, but pupils are purchasing meals less frequently than last year	17	31.5	14	34.1
Parents perception of poor quality provision	12	22.2	5	12.2
A fall in pupil numbers eligible for FSM	12	22.2	8	19.5
Disruption in facilities for provision (for example, kitchen refurbishment)	11	20.4	5	12.2
Organisation of meals acts as a deterrent (e.g. longer queues, change in timetable)	11	20.4	20	48.8
Increase in prices charged due to use of better quality ingredients	10	18.5	8	19.5
Provision of more healthy options in the last year resulting in pupils bringing in packed lunches	10	18.5	12	29.3
Shorter lunch hours	10	18.5	20	48.8
Pupils perception of poor quality provision	9	16.7	8	19.5
Lack of pupil involvement	8	14.8		
Increase in prices charged due to increases in quantity of labour required for meal provision	6	11.1	5	12.2
Provision of more healthy options in the last year resulting in pupils buying meals elsewhere	5	9.3	17	41.5
Media coverage of school dinners	5	9.3	4	9.8
Changes in food provision as a result of formal consultation with schools, heads and staff, governors, LAs	3	5.6	2	4.9
Reduced choice or less variety	3	5.6	4	9.8
Meal quality has fallen	2	3.7	0	0.0
Increase in locally available options for pupils to buy food (e.g. food vans, local shops)	2	3.7	13	31.7
Increase in prices charged due to increased training provision	1	1.9	1	2.4
Lack of skills to prepare meals that meet the new standards	1	1.9	0	0.0
Changes in food provision as a result of formal consultation with parents	1	1.9	1	2.4
Changes in food provision as a result of formal consultation with pupils	1	1.9	0	0.0
Introduction of stay on site policy			2	4.9
Introduction of vending machine			1	2.4
Other	16*	29.6	9**	22

Base: 54 LAs primary; 41 LAs secondary \* 16 respondents in total: 12 respondents gave one 'other' reason, and two gave two 'other' reasons for decreased demand in primary schools.

\*\* 9 respondents in total: 7 respondents gave one 'other' reason, and one gave two 'other' reasons for decreased demand in secondary schools.

**Table 19. Number and percentage of LAs identifying particular reasons believed to have contributed to a constant or increased demand for school meals in 2011-2012, primary and secondary schools, England**

Reason	Percentage of caterers			
	Primary		Secondary	
	Number of LAs identifying reason as contributing to increased or constant demand	% of those LAs responding	Number of LAs identifying reason as contributing to increased or constant demand	% of those LAs responding
Marketing of school meals to parents	44	62.0	13	23.6
School policy	42	59.2	22	40.0
Marketing of school meals to pupils	42	59.2	37	67.3
Increased head teacher involvement	40	56.3	24	43.6
Improvement in dining facilities for provision (for example, new serving area, furniture)	37	52.1	28	50.9
Improvement in preparation facilities for provision (for example, new kitchen/work area)	34	47.9	24	43.6
Increased eligibility for or take up of FSM	33	46.5	24	43.6
No change in prices	30	42.3	19	34.5
Increase in pupil numbers on roll who pay for meals	28	39.4	13	23.6
Increased pupil involvement	27	38.0		
Improved meal quality offset by prices being held constant	26	36.6	17	30.9
Better trained staff	26	36.6	19	34.5
Provision of more healthy options	25	35.2	14	25.5
Increased choice or more variety	25	35.2	18	32.7
Media coverage of school meals	18	25.4	7	12.7
Changes in food provision as a result of formal consultation with schools, heads and staff, governors, LAs	14	19.7	13	23.6
Changes in food provision as a result of formal consultation with pupils	12	16.9	18	32.7
Reorganisation of arrangements for meals (e.g. shorter queues, change in timetable)	10	14.1	19	34.5
Changes in food provision as a result of formal consultation with parents	9	12.7	3	5.5
Reduction in prices or special offers	7	9.9	16	29.1
Provision of healthy options only	5	7.0	2	3.6
More staff	3	4.2	4	7.3
Removal of vending machines			6	10.9
Promotion of meal deals			24	43.6
Introduction of stay on site policy			25	45.5
Other	19*	26.4	8**	14.5

Base: 72 primary; 55 secondary \*14 respondents in total: nine respondents gave one 'other' reason, five gave two 'other' reasons for increased demand in primary schools. \*\*8 respondents in total: six respondents gave one 'other' reason, 1 gave two 'other' reasons and one gave three 'other' reasons for increased demand in secondary schools.



### **3.9 Food-based and nutrient-based standards: compliance and support**

#### **3.9.1 Meeting the standards**

In primary schools with LA catering or contracted provision, responses suggest that over 90% of schools were compliant with all elements of both the food-based and nutrient-based standards (Table 20, Table 21). For non-LA catered provision, LAs were able to report on whether or not the standards had been met in the primary sector in about 56% of schools. Of these, it was reported that 73% were compliant with the food-based standards and the nutrient-based standards, and a further 24% provided evidence of working toward compliance.<sup>m</sup> For 3%, no evidence was available about whether or not schools were compliant. Amongst those for which data were available, compliance with the standards for food other than lunch was 85% amongst LA providers and 78% amongst non-LA providers (Table 22).

In the secondary sector, 96% of schools with LA catering provision were deemed to be compliant with the food-based standards, and 82% of those reported on with non-LA provision. For the nutrient-based standards, compliance was deemed to be about 80% and 75%, respectively, with about one-fifth said to have provided evidence of working toward compliance. For food other than lunch, compliance was deemed to be about 90% and 83%, respectively, although it is important to note that less information was generally available (84% of the LA catered schools, and 22% of the non-LA catered schools).

Generally, these findings show that more schools than in 2010-2011 are either compliant or able to provide evidence of working toward compliance.

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<sup>m</sup> “Working toward compliance” means able to provide successive evidence of improvements in menus, balance of food and drink provided, or nutritional analysis of provision.

**Table 20. Percentage of schools meeting food-based standards, by school sector, by region, by type of catering provision, England, 2011-2012**

Region	LA catered or contracted provision						Non-LA catering provision					
	LAs responding	Fully met	Working toward	Not met	No evidence	Not known	LAs responding	Fully met	Working toward	Not met	No evidence	Not known
	<i>n</i>	%	%	%	%	%	<i>n</i>	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Primary<sup>a</sup></i>												
North East	10	97.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8	60.8	0.0	0.0	2.0	35.3
North West	9	95.8	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	7	34.3	49.0	0.0	0.0	16.7
Yorkshire/Humber	10	98.2	0.8	0.0	0.0	1.0	7	5.8	24.6	0.0	0.0	69.6
East Midlands	3	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4	91.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.4
West Midlands	7	98.5	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.1	6	0.0	58.6	0.0	5.0	36.4
East of England	5	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5	3.7	0.0	0.0	3.7	92.5
Inner London	8	98.6	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	7	16.1	1.7	0.0	3.4	78.8
Outer London	8	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8	24.6	3.3	0.0	0.0	72.1
South East	11	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10	69.6	2.6	0.0	4.8	23.0
South West	6	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7	11.3	0.0	0.0	0.8	87.9
<b>All primary</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>98.8</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>40.6</b>	<b>13.4</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>44.0</b>
<b>All primary (excluding Not Known)</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>99.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>72.6</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>-</b>
<i>Secondary</i>												
North East	8	84.4	15.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	9	52.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	47.4
North West	7	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8	55.7	5.7	0.0	0.0	38.6
Yorkshire/Humber	10	91.7	7.6	0.0	0.0	0.8	10	4.7	7.1	0.0	0.0	88.2
East Midlands	3	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4	57.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	42.6
West Midlands	7	97.6	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	8	6.7	11.7	0.0	0.0	81.7
East of England	5	89.5	10.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	5	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.5	94.5
Inner London	6	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9	19.4	1.6	0.0	1.6	77.4
Outer London	5	97.1	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	7	16.9	2.8	2.8	0.0	77.5
South East	8	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11	42.6	6.4	0.0	0.4	50.6
South West	3	68.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	31.8	7	3.7	0.0	0.0	9.8	86.6
<b>All secondary</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>94.4</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>66.4</b>
<b>All secondary (excluding Not Known)</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>95.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>82.2</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>-</b>

Base: Primary LA catered: 77; Primary non-LA catered: 69; Secondary LA catered: 62; Secondary non-LA catered: 78

<sup>a</sup> primary plus special combined

Percentages are row percentages

"Fully met" – evidence that standards have been met; "Working toward" – evidence that school is working toward compliance; "Not met" – not all standards met, no evidence of working toward compliance; "No evidence" – no evidence of compliance available

**Table 21. Percentage of schools meeting nutrient-based standards, by school sector, by region, by type of catering provision, England, 2011-2012**

Region	LA catered or contracted provision						Non-LA catering provision					
	LAs responding	Fully met	Working toward	Not met	No evidence	Not known	LAs responding	Fully met	Working toward	Not met	No evidence	Not known
	<i>n</i>	%	%	%	%	%	<i>n</i>	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Primary<sup>a</sup></i>												
North East	10	97.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8	60.8	0.0	0.0	2.0	35.3
North West	9	68.8	31.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	7	33.3	49.0	0.0	0.0	17.7
Yorkshire/Humber	10	90.5	8.5	0.0	0.0	1.0	7	13.0	17.4	0.0	0.0	69.6
East Midlands	3	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4	91.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	8.4
West Midlands	7	81.5	18.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	6	0.0	58.6	0.0	5.0	36.4
East of England	5	99.9	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	5	3.7	0.0	0.0	3.7	92.5
Inner London	8	98.6	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	7	16.1	1.7	0.0	3.4	78.8
Outer London	8	99.8	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	8	21.3	3.3	0.0	0.0	75.4
South East	11	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10	69.1	4.3	0.4	3.0	23.0
South West	6	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7	10.5	0.8	0.0	0.8	87.9
<b>All primary</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>93.2</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>40.4</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>44.3</b>
<b>All primary (excluding Not Known)</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>93.3</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>72.5</b>	<b>24.3</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>-</b>
<i>Secondary</i>												
North East	8	84.4	15.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	9	52.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	47.4
North West	7	59.7	40.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	8	45.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	42.0
Yorkshire/Humber	10	70.5	28.8	0.0	0.0	0.8	10	7.1	8.2	0.0	0.0	84.7
East Midlands	3	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4	40.4	17.0	0.0	0.0	42.6
West Midlands	7	70.2	29.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	8	0.8	10.0	0.0	0.0	89.2
East of England	5	65.3	34.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	5	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.5	94.5
Inner London	6	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9	19.4	0.0	0.0	1.6	79.0
Outer London	5	91.4	8.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	7	14.1	2.8	2.8	0.0	80.3
South East	8	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11	41.3	6.4	0.4	1.3	50.6
South West	3	50.0	18.2	0.0	0.0	31.8	7	3.7	0.0	0.0	9.8	86.6
<b>All secondary</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>78.8</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>67.6</b>
<b>All secondary (excluding Not Known)</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>79.7</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>74.6</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>-</b>

Base: Primary LA catered: 77; Primary non-LA catered: 69; Secondary LA catered: 62; Secondary non-LA catered: 78

<sup>a</sup> primary plus special combined

Percentages are row percentages

"Fully met" – evidence that standards have been met; "Working toward" – evidence that school is working toward compliance; "Not met" – not all standards met, no evidence of working toward compliance; "No evidence" – no evidence of compliance available

**Table 22. Percentage of schools meeting standards for food other than lunch, by school sector, by region, by type of catering provision, England, 2011-2012**

Region	LA catered or contracted provision						Non-LA catering provision					
	LAs responding	Fully met	Working toward	Not met	No evidence	Not known	LAs responding	Fully met	Working toward	Not met	No evidence	Not known
	<i>n</i>	%	%	%	%	%	<i>n</i>	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Primary<sup>a</sup></i>												
North East	10	75.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	24.7	8	60.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	37.3
North West	9	50.0	0.5	0.0	16.0	33.5	7	19.2	0.5	0.0	10.6	69.7
Yorkshire/Humber	10	75.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	22.3	7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
East Midlands	3	50.3	0.0	0.0	1.4	48.3	4	85.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.9
West Midlands	7	74.8	1.4	0.0	7.5	16.3	6	0.0	61.4	0.0	0.0	38.6
East of England	5	9.0	0.0	0.0	38.3	52.8	5	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.7	96.3
Inner London	8	61.9	15.6	0.0	1.1	21.4	7	17.8	0.0	0.0	3.4	78.8
Outer London	8	55.2	0.0	0.0	10.8	34.0	8	19.7	0.0	0.0	1.6	78.7
South East	11	72.6	0.1	0.0	0.0	27.3	10	65.2	2.6	0.4	7.8	23.9
South West	6	36.5	0.0	0.0	9.3	54.2	7	2.5	0.0	0.0	2.9	94.6
<b>All primary</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>58.0</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>32.0</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>34.7</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>55.5</b>
<b>All primary (excluding Not Known)</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>85.3</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>78.0</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>-</b>
<i>Secondary</i>												
North East	8	62.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	37.8	9	52.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	47.4
North West	7	51.6	21.0	0.0	11.3	16.1	8	15.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	84.1
Yorkshire/Humber	10	87.1	9.1	0.0	0.0	3.8	10	4.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	95.3
East Midlands	3	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
West Midlands	7	94.0	0.0	0.0	3.6	2.4	8	6.7	4.2	0.0	0.0	89.2
East of England	5	46.3	5.3	0.0	0.0	48.4	5	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.5	94.5
Inner London	6	63.8	25.5	0.0	0.0	10.6	9	21.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	77.4
Outer London	5	68.6	2.9	0.0	11.4	17.1	7	15.5	0.0	1.4	0.0	83.1
South East	8	85.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3	11	41.7	7.2	0.0	0.4	50.6
South West	3	63.6	4.5	0.0	0.0	31.8	7	2.4	0.0	0.0	9.8	87.8
<b>All secondary</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>75.1</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>18.6</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>77.6</b>
<b>All secondary (excluding Not Known)</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>89.7</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>83.0</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>-</b>

Base: Primary LA catered: 77; Primary non-LA catered: 69; Secondary LA catered: 62; Secondary non-LA catered: 78

<sup>a</sup> primary plus special combined

Percentages are row percentages

"Fully met" – evidence that standards have been met; "Working toward" – evidence that school is working toward compliance; "Not met" – not all standards met, no evidence of working toward compliance; "No evidence" – no evidence of compliance available

### 3.9.2 Monitoring compliance

Of the 81 LAs who responded to a question about measuring compliance in non-LA catered or contracted schools, 28 (35%) monitored compliance in schools where provision was not provided by the LA (Table 23), either in all schools (12%) or in some schools (22%). The rates varied markedly by region, from as low as 20% in East of England to 67% in South West. These values are slightly lower than last year.

**Table 23. Number and percentage<sup>a</sup> of LAs that monitor compliance with school food standards in schools where catering services are not provided by the LA, by region, England, 2011-2012**

Region	Responding <i>n</i>	LA monitors compliance					
		Yes, in all schools		Yes, in some schools		No	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
North East	10	1	10.0	2	20.0	7	70.0
North West	9	2	22.2	2	22.2	5	55.6
Yorkshire/Humber	11	2	18.2	2	18.2	7	63.6
East Midlands	4	0	0.0	1	25.0	3	75.0
West Midlands	8	2	25.0	1	12.5	5	62.5
East of England	5	0	0.0	1	20.0	4	80.0
Inner London	9	2	22.2	0	0.0	7	77.8
Outer London	9	0	0.0	2	22.2	7	77.8
South East	10	0	0.0	4	40.0	6	60.0
South West	6	1	16.7	3	50.0	2	33.3
<b>All LAs</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>65.4</b>

Base: 81 LAs

<sup>a</sup> Percentages are row percentages

### 3.9.3 Use of professional support

Of 82 LAs that responded to the question about use of professional support, 39 (48%) said that they had had help from a professional (a nutritionist or dietitian) to carry out analyses in relation to the nutrient-based standards. This was slightly less than last year (50%). Values ranged from 20% of LAs in North East to 80% in South East, very similar to the values in 2010-2011.

### 3.9.4 LA purchases of software

Of 81 responding LAs, 61 (75%) reported having purchased menu planning and nutrient analysis software, slightly lower than the results last year (83%). Again, there was a range of values, from 100% of LAs in North East, North West and East Midlands, to 30% in South East. Of these 61, 11 (18%) shared the software with all schools in their LA, but 40 (66%) used it only for schools with LA provision. 10 had other arrangements, typically sharing with schools with their own catering provision, or nutritionists helping to provide support to school food services within the LA.

## 3.10 Level of support for healthier meals

Providers were asked to indicate how keen primary and secondary schools were to develop healthier school meal services and about the level of political support for such development (Table 24). As last year, more than two thirds of primary Head teachers and six out of ten Governors were felt to be either "keen" or "very keen" to support the development of a healthier school meals service. This level of support was felt to be less common in secondary schools (just under half of Head teachers and four out of ten Governors). In one-fifth of secondary school services, support for

healthier meals was felt to be low or very low amongst Head teachers and Governors. Just over two-thirds of LAs felt that political support was strong, with none feeling that political support among elected council members was low or very low, compared with one-fifth last year. These are subjective impressions on the part of catering providers, but reflect feelings about how well they feel their services are supported amongst different constituencies.

**Table 24. Perceived levels of support by LAs for the development of a healthier school meals service, England, 2011-2012**

	Number of LAs responding		Low	←————→			High
Level of keenness shown by							
• primary school Head teachers	70	n %	1 1.4	4 5.7	17 24.3	29 41.4	19 27.1
• primary school Governors	65	n %	1 1.5	7 10.8	17 26.2	25 38.5	15 23.1
• secondary school Head teachers	68	n %	1 1.5	15 22.1	21 30.9	23 33.8	8 11.8
• secondary school Governors	62	n %	3 4.8	11 17.7	22 35.5	19 30.6	7 11.3
Level of political support from elected members	64	n %	0 0.0	0 0.0	19 29.7	19 29.7	26 40.6

Base: 70 LAs

### 3.11 Finance

#### 3.11.1 Operating expectations

In principle, about three-quarters of LA catering services were expected to break even (Table 25), and only 5% were expected to operate at a deficit. In practice, for 2011-2012, 37% said they broke even and a further 40% made a surplus, with 21% in deficit. The percentage of LAs who broke even was higher than the previous year (32%), and fewer were in deficit (21% compared with 29%), with similar percentages making a surplus (40% compared with 37%). However, as in previous years, some LAs commented that a break even position or a surplus was achieved by including the School Lunch Grant or an agreed LA subsidy. One LA specified an 'other' outcome in which they had performed better than expected against a predicted/agreed deficit. It is also important to note that the additional information given by LAs suggests that there is considerable variation in the method used to calculate financial outcomes and although Table 25 reflects accurately the information reported by LAs, the specified outcomes may not be directly comparable between authorities.

**Table 25. Expected financial outcome of LA catering service – in principle, actual 2010-2011 and actual 2011-2012**

Region	LAs	Operate at deficit		Break even		Make a surplus		Other	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
<b><i>In principle</i></b>									
North East	9	1	11.1	6	66.7	2	22.2	0	0.0
North West	7	1	14.3	6	85.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Yorkshire/Humber	9	0	0.0	6	66.7	3	33.3	0	0.0
East Midlands	3	0	0.0	3	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
West Midlands	5	0	0.0	4	80.0	1	20.0	0	0.0
East of England	4	0	0.0	2	50.0	2	50.0	0	0.0
Inner London	7	1	14.3	6	85.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Outer London	6	0	0.0	5	83.3	1	16.7	0	0.0
South East	9	0	0.0	7	77.8	1	11.1	1	11.1
South West	3	0	0.0	3	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>All in principle</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>77.4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.6</b>
<b><i>Actual 2010-2011</i></b>									
North East	9	4	44.4	2	22.2	3	33.3	0	0.0
North West	7	1	14.3	4	57.1	2	28.6	0	0.0
Yorkshire/Humber	9	2	22.2	2	22.2	4	44.4	1	11.1
East Midlands	3	0	0.0	1	33.3	2	66.7	0	0.0
West Midlands	5	1	20.0	1	20.0	3	60.0	0	0.0
East of England	4	0	0.0	2	50.0	2	50.0	0	0.0
Inner London	7	4	57.1	2	28.6	1	14.3	0	0.0
Outer London	6	1	16.7	2	33.3	3	50.0	0	0.0
South East	9	3	33.3	3	33.3	3	33.3	0	0.0
South West	3	2	66.7	1	33.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>All actual 2010-2011</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>29.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>32.3</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>37.1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.6</b>
<b><i>Actual 2011-2012</i></b>									
North East	9	2	22.2	4	44.4	3	33.3	0	0.0
North West	7	1	14.3	3	42.9	3	42.9	0	0.0
Yorkshire/Humber	9	1	11.1	1	11.1	6	66.7	1	11.1
East Midlands	3	0	0.0	1	33.3	2	66.7	0	0.0
West Midlands	5	2	40.0	2	40.0	1	20.0	0	0.0
East of England	4	0	0.0	2	50.0	2	50.0	0	0.0
Inner London	7	3	42.9	2	28.6	2	28.6	0	0.0
Outer London	6	1	16.7	2	33.3	3	50.0	0	0.0
South East	9	1	11.1	5	55.6	3	33.3	0	0.0
South West	3	2	66.7	1	33.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>All actual 2011-2012</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>37.1</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.6</b>

Base: 62 LAs

### 3.11.2 Use of Central Government funding

Government allocated £240m to school food for 2008-2011. The money was ring-fenced to cover the cost of food ingredients, labour to support healthier meal preparation, menu planning and nutrient analysis software and professional support, and small pieces of equipment. Since April 2011, the School Lunch Grant (SLG) is no longer ring-fenced, and instead is included in the Dedicated Schools Grant. LAs were asked what steps they had taken at a strategic level in 2010-2011 to ensure that this funding continued to be spent on school food (Table 26). In total, 53 LAs (67%) had made recommendations for SLG funding to continue to be spent on school food, with half of LAs recommending to the Schools Forum that the money should be held centrally, and nearly one-third making recommendations to schools to use the money to support catering services directly. Of the 9 LAs taking other steps, 5 indicated that



contractual arrangements meant that schools would make the funding available to the catering service, although 1 LA only received 50% of the SLG funding.

For 2012-2013, slightly fewer LAs (61%) had made recommendations in relation to SLG funding, with more LAs taking no steps than in 2011-2012 (30% compared with 23%).

Table 26. Steps taken to ensure SLG was, or will be spent on school food, 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 <sup>a</sup>									
Region	LAs	Recommendation to Schools Forum for money to be held centrally		Recommendation to schools to use the money to support school catering services directly		No steps taken		Other	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
<i>Steps taken by LAs in 2011-2012</i>									
North East	10	6	60.0	4	40.0	1	10.0	2	20.0
North West	11	5	45.5	4	36.4	5	45.5	0	0.0
Yorkshire/Humber	11	7	63.6	2	18.2	2	18.2	1	9.1
East Midlands	4	3	75.0	2	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
West Midlands	8	3	37.5	2	25.0	2	25.0	2	25.0
East of England	4	1	25.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	75.0
Inner London	7	4	57.1	4	57.1	1	14.3	0	0.0
Outer London	8	4	50.0	2	25.0	2	25.0	1	12.5
South East	11	5	45.5	3	27.3	4	36.4	0	0.0
South West	5	3	60.0	1	20.0	1	20.0	0	0.0
<b>All LAs</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>51.9</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>30.4</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11.4</b>
<i>Steps taken by LAs in 2012-2013</i>									
North East	9	5	55.6	4	44.4	1	11.1	1	11.1
North West	11	6	54.5	4	36.4	4	36.4	0	0.0
Yorkshire/Humber	11	6	54.5	2	18.2	4	36.4	0	0.0
East Midlands	4	1	25.0	3	75.0	0	0.0	1	25.0
West Midlands	8	3	37.5	3	37.5	1	12.5	2	25.0
East of England	4	1	25.0	0	0.0	2	50.0	1	25.0
Inner London	7	3	42.9	4	57.1	1	14.3	0	0.0
Outer London	8	2	25.0	0	0.0	5	62.5	1	12.5
South East	10	2	20.0	3	30.0	4	40.0	1	10.0
South West	5	2	40.0	2	40.0	1	20.0	0	0.0
<b>All LAs</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9.1</b>

Base: 2011-2012 79 LAs; 2012-2013 77 LAs

<sup>a</sup> Row totals add up to more than the number of LAs in column 1, or 100%, as some LAs selected more than one category

For 2011-2012, nearly three-quarters of LAs reported having received School Lunch Grant funding (Table 27), consistent with the proportion who indicated last year that they would receive funding, or who were waiting for a decision on whether funding would be available for 2011-2012. In relation to 2012-2013, half of LAs indicated that they would continue to receive SLG funding, with a further one-fifth waiting for a decision.

Table 27. Local decisions about the SLG funding <sup>a</sup>									
Region	LAs	Agreement that funding will be made available		No agreement that funding will be made available		Don't know – decision still to be made		Other	
		<i>n</i>	<i>n</i> %	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
<i>Funding decisions 2011-2012</i>									
North East	9	8	88.9	1	11.1	-	-	0	0.0
North West	11	5	45.5	6	54.5	-	-	0	0.0
Yorkshire/Humber	11	9	81.8	2	18.2	-	-	0	0.0
East Midlands	3	2	66.7	0	0.0	-	-	1	33.3
West Midlands	7	5	71.4	2	28.6	-	-	0	0.0
East of England	4	4	100.0	0	0.0	-	-	0	0.0
Inner London	7	5	71.4	2	28.6	-	-	0	0.0
Outer London	7	6	85.7	1	14.3	-	-	0	0.0
South East	11	7	63.6	4	36.4	-	-	0	0.0
South West	5	4	80.0	1	20.0	-	-	0	0.0
<b>All LAs</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>73.3</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.3</b>
<i>Funding decisions 2012-2013</i>									
North East	9	4	44.4	0	0.0	4	44.4	1	11.1
North West	10	5	50.0	5	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Yorkshire/Humber	11	5	45.5	2	18.2	3	27.3	1	9.1
East Midlands	3	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3	0	0.0
West Midlands	7	4	57.1	1	14.3	1	14.3	1	14.3
East of England	4	3	75.0	1	25.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Inner London	7	2	28.6	3	42.9	2	28.6	0	0.0
Outer London	7	2	28.6	4	57.1	1	14.3	0	0.0
South East	11	6	54.5	3	27.3	1	9.1	1	9.1
South West	5	3	60.0	0	0.0	2	40.0	0	0.0
<b>All LAs</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>47.3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>27.0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5.4</b>

Base: 2011-2012 75 LAs; 2012-2013 74 LAs

Most LAs who received SLG funding in 2011-2012 put the money towards the cost of food ingredients, as well as labour, small pieces of equipment and menu planning (Table 28). 'Other' uses included keeping the price of meals to pupils/parents down, marketing and staff training.

Table 28. Use of Government School Lunch Grant, 2011-2012 <sup>a</sup>							
Region	LAs	Cost of food	Extra labour	Equipment	Menu planning	Professional support	Other
		<i>n</i>	%	%	%	%	%
North East	8	100.0	37.5	25.0	37.5	0.0	0.0
North West	5	80.0	40.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	20.0
Yorkshire/Humber	9	88.9	44.4	44.4	66.7	22.2	33.3
East Midlands	3	100.0	33.3	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0
West Midlands	5	100.0	60.0	60.0	60.0	20.0	20.0
East of England	4	100.0	25.0	50.0	75.0	25.0	0.0
Inner London	5	80.0	40.0	20.0	20.0	0.0	0.0
Outer London	6	66.7	33.3	66.7	33.3	16.7	16.7
South East	7	100.0	42.9	71.4	28.6	14.3	28.6
South West	4	50.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	0.0	50.0
<i>Number of LAs</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>10</i>

Base: 56 LAs

<sup>a</sup> **Row totals** add up to more than the number of LAs, or 100%, as virtually all LAs allocated the School Lunch Grant to more than one category

### 3.11.3 Costs of producing school meals

Balance sheets were computed for a subset of LAs that were able to provide detailed information on ingredients costs, labour costs and overheads (split into other direct costs excluding ingredients and labour, indirect costs, premises costs and central establishment charges), and on meal prices. Table 29 shows production costs in relation to the price of a school lunch for 35 LAs for primary provision and 26 LAs for secondary provision. In all government regions, for both primary and secondary schools, the production costs exceeded the price of a school meal (except for South East for primary where the production cost and price was the same), suggesting that in order to break even, these school catering services must be relying on subsidies and LA grants. For both primary and secondary schools, ingredient costs are the same or very similar to 2010-2011, and labour costs have risen slightly. Overall, production costs were within 2%-3% of those reported in 2010-2011.

The results should be treated with caution, as it has not been possible to verify responses to this section of the questionnaires; the different elements may have been provided by different people within an authority without being cross checked internally. In the secondary sector, the meal price (£2.03) is based on the value in the dining room of a FSM. It is unlikely to be identical to the average amount actually being spent per paying pupil, and again is lower than the total reported production cost of a meal (£2.41). Nevertheless, they give an indication of the financial balancing act that caterers need to perform to maintain financially viable services.

**Table 29. Production costs and meal prices per school meal in a subset of LAs, by type of school, by region, England, 2011-2012**

Region	LAs responding	Production cost per meal				Meal price		
		Ingredients	Labour	Overheads	Total	FSM	Infant 2 course meal	Junior 2 course meal
	<i>n</i>	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<i>Primary</i>								
North East	7	0.63	1.27	0.55	2.46	1.90	1.90	1.90
North West	4	0.69	1.11	0.34	2.14	2.08	2.08	2.08
Yorkshire/Humber	5	0.64	1.42	0.58	2.64	1.91	1.91	1.91
East Midlands	3	0.65	1.18	0.42	2.24	1.88	1.88	1.88
West Midlands	4	0.67	1.15	0.29	2.11	1.90	1.90	1.90
East of England	4	0.71	1.06	0.47	2.23	1.93	1.91	1.93
Inner London	4	0.70	1.27	0.31	2.27	2.21	1.10	1.10
Outer London	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South East	3	0.68	1.00	0.35	2.03	2.03	2.03	2.03
South West	1	0.64	1.24	0.50	2.38	2.00	2.00	2.00
<b>All primary</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>1.20</b>	<b>0.43</b>	<b>2.30</b>	<b>1.97</b>	<b>1.84</b>	<b>1.84</b>
<i>Secondary</i>								
North East	5	0.96	1.28	0.55	2.79	1.96	-	-
North West	4	0.91	1.03	0.30	2.24	2.17	-	-
Yorkshire/Humber	4	0.94	1.22	0.43	2.59	2.05	-	-
East Midlands	2	0.80	0.94	0.37	2.11	2.03	-	-
West Midlands	3	0.87	1.11	0.21	2.19	2.00	-	-
East of England	3	0.75	1.02	0.53	2.30	2.03	-	-
Inner London	3	0.97	1.24	0.31	2.51	1.98	-	-
Outer London	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South East	2	0.83	0.97	0.33	2.12	2.03	-	-
South West	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>All secondary</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>1.13</b>	<b>0.39</b>	<b>2.41</b>	<b>2.03</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Base: Primary: 35 LAs; Secondary: 26 LAs

Where production costs were different to the amount allocated by the LA for a FSM, respondents were asked why this was the case, and to explain how these differences were dealt with. Where the production cost was greater than the FSM allowance, LAs

often reported funding the difference, either using a dedicated budget or subsidy, or operating at an agreed deficit. Some LAs indicated that schools would deal with differences, others that any shortfall would be covered because FSM funding is allocated based on registration, and as not all pupils take the FSM for which they are registered, there is spare funding available. A number of LAs reported using the School Lunch Grant to help make good any shortfalls.

### 3.11.4 Free school meals funding

Respondents were asked how FSM funding was allocated to schools. Just over half (53%) of LAs based allocation on the number of pupils registered for FSMs, with fewer (37%) using number of pupils actually taking FSMs (Table 30). Other responses included using a formula taking into account both registration and take up (2 LAs), and using a formula based on take up (3 LAs).

**Table 30. How free school meals funding is allocated to schools by region, England 2011-2012**

Region	Responding <i>n</i>	Based on FSM eligibility		Based on FSM take up		Other	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
North East	10	3	30.0	6	60.0	1	10.0
North West	11	8	72.7	2	18.2	1	9.1
Yorkshire/Humber	11	5	45.5	5	45.5	1	9.1
East Midlands	4	2	50.0	1	25.0	1	25.0
West Midlands	8	3	37.5	4	50.0	1	12.5
East of England	4	2	50.0	2	50.0	0	0.0
Inner London	8	6	75.0	1	12.5	1	12.5
Outer London	8	5	62.5	3	37.5	0	0.0
South East	10	6	60.0	3	30.0	1	10.0
South West	5	2	40.0	2	40.0	1	20.0
<b>All LAs</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>53.2</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>36.7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10.1</b>

Base: 79 LAs

Percentages are row percentages

## 3.12 Pay rates, staffing and training

### 3.12.1 Pay rates

The values presented in Table 31 show average hourly rates of pay for different grades of catering staff. Overall, 55 LAs provided information on pay scales, 46 in relation to LA in-house catering staff and 9 in relation to LA contracted private contractor catering staff. The number of responses for each grade varied due to some LAs operating different staffing structures, and some being unable to provide the detailed information requested. Rates are similar to those reported last year. Some of the apparent changes in pay between 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 will be due to different profiles of work force on different pay, and differences between the sets of LAs responding to this question in each year.

There were some regional variations, with the highest pay rates seen, as expected, in London. Pay rates may not be strictly comparable across LAs. Although most LAs have implemented single status, there is not a universal job/pay structure in all catering services. Pay scales reflected the implementation of single status in 48 of the 55 LAs who provided information on pay scales. Implementation was planned for 2012-2013 in two LAs.

**Table 31. Pay scales of catering staff (£/h), average, by role, by region, England, 2011-2012 and 2010-2011**

Region	General assistant <i>n=54</i>			Assistant cook <i>n=39</i>			Cook <i>n=33</i>			Primary school head cook <i>n=48</i>			Secondary school head cook/catering manager <i>n=44</i>		
	Pay scale min	Pay scale max	Number of increments	Pay scale min	Pay scale max	Number of increments	Pay scale min	Pay scale max	Number of increments	Pay scale min	Pay scale max	Number of increments	Pay scale min	Pay scale max	Number of increments
North East	6.83	7.18	2.5	7.68	8.05	2.7	8.49	9.03	2.8	9.09	9.71	3.0	9.68	10.45	3.5
North West	6.59	7.12	2.9	7.20	8.16	4.5	7.90	8.69	3.3	8.26	9.24	4.2	9.26	10.89	4.5
Yorkshire / Humber	6.36	6.53	1.6	7.28	7.92	3.8	7.72	8.21	2.4	8.61	9.69	4.1	9.51	11.07	4.5
East Midlands	6.28	6.77	4.3	7.47	8.13	3.7	8.47	8.77	2.0	9.19	9.91	3.3	9.79	10.77	3.7
West Midlands	6.64	7.14	3.7	7.51	8.39	4.8	8.35	9.83	5.3	7.79	8.66	3.5	8.59	9.57	2.8
East of England	6.25	6.65	3.8	6.84	7.60	5.5	7.45	7.78	3.7	8.04	9.19	4.8	9.47	11.27	5.3
Inner London	7.86	8.19	1.8	8.78	9.30	1.5	10.32	11.22	1.8	10.86	12.15	2.2	12.32	13.35	1.5
Outer London	8.01	8.23	1.8	8.35	8.53	1.3	9.85	10.46	3.0	10.17	11.76	5.5	10.43	12.23	5.3
South East	6.41	6.73	2.0	6.74	8.12	7.0	7.19	7.19	0.0	7.54	8.80	6.5	8.15	9.88	7.5
South West	6.37	6.53	1.7	8.72	8.72	0.0	8.94	9.09	1.7	7.77	8.42	3.5	8.88	9.90	4.0
<b>All LAs</b>	6.77	7.12	2.6	7.63	8.26	3.5	8.49	9.12	2.8	8.87	9.86	3.8	9.70	11.03	4.1
<b>2011-2012 (£/h)</b>	<b>6.77</b>	<b>7.12</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>7.63</b>	<b>8.26</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>8.49</b>	<b>9.12</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>8.87</b>	<b>9.86</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>9.70</b>	<b>11.03</b>	<b>4.1</b>
<b>2010-2011 (£/h)</b>	<b>6.76</b>	<b>7.11</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>7.97</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>8.21</b>	<b>8.82</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>8.85</b>	<b>9.73</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>9.79</b>	<b>10.98</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>Percentage change (%)</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.1</b>		<b>3.1</b>	<b>3.7</b>		<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.4</b>		<b>0.2</b>	<b>1.3</b>		<b>-0.9</b>	<b>0.4</b>	

Base: 2011-2012 - general assistant 54 LAs; assistant cook 39 LAs; cook 33 LAs; primary school head cook 48 LAs; secondary school head cook/catering manager 44 LAs.

### 3.12.2 Staffing

The values in Table 32 show the numbers of school-based and non-school-based catering staff employed in providing school meals, for LA in-house and LA contracted catering services. A total of 25969 staff were employed in providing school meals in 48 responding LAs with in-house provision, and 3941 in 10 responding LAs with LA contracted-private contractor provision.

<b>Table 32. Number of catering staff employed by LA catering or contracted services</b>			
	<b>LAs responding</b>	<b>School-based staff</b>	<b>Non-school-based staff</b>
<i>Local authority in-house catering provider</i>			
North East	9	2874	41
North West	8	3486	56
Yorkshire/Humber	7	4652	107
East Midlands	3	3620	50
West Midlands	6	4351	69
East of England	2	1834	35
Inner London	4	1740	25
Outer London	4	1260	51
South East	3	1697	105
South West	2	455	13
<b>All LAs</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>25969</b>	<b>552</b>
<i>Local authority contracted – private contractor</i>			
North East	1	700	-
North West	0	-	-
Yorkshire/Humber	1	132	5
East Midlands	0	-	-
West Midlands	0	-	-
East of England	2	1437	24
Inner London	3	796	20
Outer London	0	-	-
South East	2	304	15
South West	1	572	13
<b>All LAs</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3941</b>	<b>77</b>

Base: 58 LAs

### 3.12.3 Training

56 LAs provided information on the type of training provided to catering staff. Some LAs provided the same courses in-house and externally, using School FEAST, or not using School FEAST, so Table 33 shows the number of LAs providing training in each setting. Overall, Food Hygiene, Basic Induction and Food Safety were the most commonly provided type of training, offered by more than 90% of LAs. Customer Service and Nutrition training had been provided to staff in 66% and 57% of LAs respectively.

Of the 56 responding LAs, 42 had not provided training via the School FEAST network. Of those, 31 were aware of a School FEAST centre or partnership in their region.

**Table 33. Number and percentage of local authorities providing training to catering staff**

Course	LAs offering training		Provided in-house				Provided externally			
			SchoolFEAST		Not SchoolFEAST		SchoolFEAST		Not SchoolFEAST	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Basic Induction	54	96.4	5	8.9	46	82.1	1	1.8	4	7.1
Food Hygiene	55	98.2	7	12.5	40	71.4	1	1.8	12	21.4
Food Safety	53	94.6	6	10.7	40	71.4	0	0.0	13	23.2
Nutrition	32	57.1	4	7.1	19	33.9	1	1.8	10	17.9
Customer Service	37	66.1	3	5.4	20	35.7	0	0.0	15	26.8
Professional Cookery Diploma	15	26.8	4	7.1	4	7.1	0	0.0	8	14.3
L2 Food Production and Cooking Diploma	30	53.6	1	1.8	11	19.6	2	3.6	18	32.1
L2 Kitchen Skills Diploma	11	19.6	0	0.0	8	14.3	0	0.0	4	7.1
Other Diploma	6	10.7	2	3.6	0	0.0	1	1.8	3	5.4
L2 Award Support Work in Schools	3	5.4	0	0.0	3	5.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
L1 VRQ award in providing Healthier School Meals	12	21.4	1	1.8	4	7.1	2	3.6	5	8.9
L2 Certificate in Supporting the Wider Curriculum in Schools	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
L2 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other	13	23.2	1	1.8	9	16.1	1	1.8	2	3.6

Base: 56 LAs

Percentages are of 56 responding LAs

### 3.13 Policy and Strategy

#### 3.13.1 LA food strategies

Just under one-half of LAs reported that they had a food strategy plan (Table 34), varying from as low as 17% in South West to 100% in East Midlands. 21% said that they had plans to implement a food strategy, with a further 20% saying they had no strategy.

Two-thirds of those responding said that school meals featured in their LA's Children and Young People Plan, with only 11% saying they did not. Just 9% of LAs responding reported having a policy restricting unhealthy food outlets near to schools, although a further 12% said that such actions were planned or in discussion. Over half said there were no plans (and one-quarter said they did not know). Figures are similar to those reported last year for 2010-2011.

**Table 34. Policy and school strategy by policy, by region, England, 2011-2012**

Region	LAs with food strategy plan		LAs with school meals featuring in Children and Young People Plan		LAs with policies restricting unhealthy food outlets nearby	
	LAs responding	% of those responding	LAs responding	% of those responding	LAs responding	% of those responding
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
North East	9	77.8	9	100.0	9	22.2
North West	10	40.0	10	70.0	10	20.0
Yorkshire/Humber	11	36.4	11	54.5	11	0.0
East Midlands	4	100.0	4	100.0	4	25.0
West Midlands	8	62.5	8	37.5	8	0.0
East of England	5	40.0	5	60.0	5	0.0
Inner London	9	66.7	9	88.9	9	0.0
Outer London	9	33.3	9	44.4	9	22.2
South East	10	20.0	10	80.0	10	0.0
South West	6	16.7	6	66.7	6	0.0
<b>All LAs</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>46.9</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>69.1</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>8.6</b>

Base: 81 LAs

### 3.13.2 Stay-on-site policies in secondary schools

Of the 75 LAs with LA catering provision in secondary schools, 61 reported on stay-on-site policies in their schools: 37% were known to have a policy, 27% not to have a policy, and the remaining 36% were “Not known” (Table 35). In contrast, in the non-LA catered sector, only 15% of schools were reported to have a stay-on-site policy (the majority being “Not known”). However, if the “Not knows” are excluded, the proportion of schools with stay-on-site policies is higher in non-LA catered schools than in those with LA catering (80% compared with 57%). Information on the implementation of the policy was not requested.

**Table 35. Percentage of secondary schools operating a stay-on-site policy, by region, England, 2011-2012**

Region	Catered for by LA				Not catered for by LA			
	LAs responding	Schools with policy	Schools with no policy	Not known	LAs responding	Schools with policy	Schools with no policy	Not known
	<i>n</i>	%	%	%	<i>n</i>	%	%	%
North East	8	75.6	17.8	6.7	9	82.9	2.6	14.5
North West	7	56.5	22.6	21.0	8	12.5	0.0	87.5
Yorkshire/Humber	11	25.2	51.9	23.0	11	5.4	12.0	82.6
East Midlands	3	39.7	60.3	0.0	4	2.1	4.3	93.6
West Midlands	7	36.9	2.4	60.7	8	6.7	0.0	93.3
East of England	4	12.8	34.6	52.6	4	2.7	17.6	79.7
Inner London	6	97.9	2.1	0.0	9	30.6	0.0	69.4
Outer London	5	25.7	28.6	45.7	8	14.0	9.3	76.7
South East	8	4.8	4.8	90.5	11	4.7	0.0	95.3
South West	2	66.7	6.7	26.7	6	23.5	0.0	76.5
<b>All secondary</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>36.0</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>81.2</b>

Base: catered for by LA: 61 LAs; not catered for by LA: 78 LAs

### 3.13.3 Cashless systems

Few catering providers reported using cashless systems in primary schools (LA catered and contracted 7% compared with non-LA catered 4%, excluding “Not Known”).

About two-thirds (65%) of LA catering providers reported using cashless systems in secondary schools, although this varied from as low as 23% in Outer London to 93% in South East (Table 36). Fewer schools in the non-LA catered sector were reported to use cashless systems (24%), although the proportion of “Not known” was much higher. However, if the “Not knows” are excluded, the proportions of schools using cashless systems are similar in non-LA catered schools and those with LA catering (67% compared with 69%).



**Table 36. Percentage of secondary schools using cashless systems, by region, by catering provider, England, 2011-2012**

Region	Catered for by LA				Not catered for by LA			
	LAs responding <i>n</i>	Schools with cashless systems %	Schools without cashless systems %	Not known %	LAs responding <i>n</i>	Schools with cashless systems %	Schools without cashless systems %	Not known %
<i>Primary</i>								
North East	9	0.8	99.2	0.0	5	0.0	100.0	0.0
North West	8	2.2	97.8	0.0	7	1.6	84.3	14.1
Yorkshire/Humber	11	6.9	93.1	0.0	6	5.7	57.1	37.1
East Midlands	3	3.8	96.2	0.0	4	0.0	93.6	6.4
West Midlands	7	12.9	87.1	0.0	4	0.0	66.7	33.3
East of England	4	0.0	100.0	0.0	4	3.0	42.4	54.5
Inner London	8	0.0	88.5	11.5	7	4.8	7.7	87.5
Outer London	8	23.9	57.7	18.4	8	23.3	5.0	71.7
South East	11	7.4	49.4	43.3	10	0.0	2.0	98.0
South West	5	3.2	96.8	0.0	5	0.5	5.6	93.9
<b>All primary</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>83.6</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>47.8</b>	<b>50.1</b>
<i>Secondary</i>								
North East	8	84.4	15.6	0.0	8	83.3	1.4	15.3
North West	7	72.6	27.4	0.0	8	68.2	8.0	23.9
Yorkshire/Humber	11	70.4	29.6	0.0	11	16.3	13.0	70.7
East Midlands	3	82.4	17.6	0.0	4	30.9	33.0	36.2
West Midlands	7	71.4	26.2	2.4	8	13.3	9.2	77.5
East of England	4	53.8	46.2	0.0	4	9.5	10.8	79.7
Inner London	6	57.4	42.6	0.0	9	25.8	21.0	53.2
Outer London	5	22.9	48.6	28.6	7	11.3	9.9	78.9
South East	8	42.9	21.4	35.7	11	2.6	9.4	88.1
South West	2	93.3	6.7	0.0	6	22.2	2.5	75.3
<b>All secondary</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>64.5</b>	<b>29.1</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>23.8</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>64.7</b>

Base: catered for by LA: primary 74 LAs, secondary 61 LAs; not catered for by LA: primary 60 LAs, secondary 76 LAs

## 4 Discussion

This is the fourth report on school lunch take up since the introduction of the standard method for data collection and calculation which was introduced across all LAs in England in 2008-2009. Because of lower response rates, it provides a somewhat less comprehensive picture of school lunch take up than in previous years (whether paid-for or free, by school sector and type of catering provision (LA catered and contracted, and non-LA). It remains, however, the best available information on take up nationally. This, together with the other data collected in the survey, continues to inform progress on the transformation of school food provision in England, and provides a useful basis for assessing year-on-year changes and the impact of actions and policies by caterers, LAs, schools, and regional and central government.

### 4.1 Data quality and sample representativeness

The introduction of a national indicator for school lunch take up (NI 52) in April 2008 meant that all LAs were required to report take up, both for schools within local authority catering or contracted provision, and for schools which had opted out of such provision and organised their own catering either by contracting directly with catering providers or organising their own services in-school.

With the withdrawal of the National Indicator Set in October 2010, LAs were no longer required to submit returns on school lunch take up. Nevertheless, many LAs and caterers retained a keen interest in knowing whether take up had increased or decreased, and in comparing their own performance with other LAs on a number of related issues. As a result, for 2010-2011, 129 of the 152 LAs in England (85%) provided data, particularly with regard to take up. A year on, the response rate was lower, with 99 LAs (65%) responding.

As a result of the decreased level of response, coverage fell nationally from 78% to 61% in the primary sector, and from 54% to 38% in the secondary sector. This decrease represented a departure from the comprehensive picture of take up in 2009-2010 when all LAs were required to report take up data, for all schools in their area. This lower response rate is a potential source of bias. The subgroup analyses carried out, however, suggest that the trends in take up are consistent between years. While there is some loss of representativeness nationally, we are confident that our figures provide a reasonable picture of overall national trends in take up, especially for LA catered or contracted school meal provision in England.

The main limitation to the present findings is the representativeness of the school meal provision in schools that have opted out of LA catering services. This includes a good proportion of academies, and other schools which are not part of local authority catering services.

## **4.2 Findings**

### **4.2.1 Take up**

The findings indicate that overall take up of school lunches in the primary sector has risen by 2.2 percentage points, from 44.1% in 2010-2011 to 46.3% in 2011-2012. The result is based on 61% coverage nationally, and provides a good indication of the true change in take up nationally, based on analysis of data provided by LAs who responded in both years. The reported increase was similar for both LA catered and contracted and non-LA provision. The analysis suggests that take up in the LAs responding in 2011-2010 was higher than in those who had responded in 2010-2011 but not in 2011-2012, and that the increase in take up indicated by the data presented here, although real, may be over-estimated. Although coverage in the secondary sector for non-LA catered provision (35%) was lower than in 2009-2010 (44%), there were reported increases in take up in both sectors. Equally, there were consistent increases observed for paid-for and FSM take up in both school sectors. This widespread consistency across the data, analysed across both catering and school sectors, reinforces the view that the data as a whole provide a good indication of the national state of play regarding school food catering, and are representative especially of changes in the primary sector. Reported changes in take up and other factors reported at LA- and regional level are more variable because of the differences in the profile of LAs responding and the levels of coverage, and these findings should therefore be interpreted with appropriate caution.

It has been noted that the reported FSM take up (averaging about 82% in the primary sector and 71% in the secondary sector) is lower in the SFT survey than that reported in the DfE school census by about 3% in the primary sector and 9%-10% in the secondary sector. These differences are attributable to the method of data

collection: the census data are based on observations collected on a single day in January; the SFT data, on the other hand, represent FSM take up across the entire year. FSM take up is likely to be at its highest in January (reflecting seasonal variation). The census FSM percentage take up figure is based on registration and take up measured on one day; the SFT survey methodology captures actual numbers of meals served to pupils who are eligible for FSM across the year, but divides by the January census value for FSM registration. We believe that the FSM take up data presented here (and in previous survey years) represents a more valid estimate of FSM take up.

The changes in reported take up represent increases in the actual number of pupils taking school meals in 2011-2012. Nationally, we equate this to approximately 167,000, compared with an increase of about 173,000 last year. About two-thirds of this increase is due to higher levels of paid-for consumption, with the remainder coming from increases in FSM take up. Since 2008-2009, just under half a million more pupils have begun to take school meals.

Lastly, it is important to note that a number of schools have now moved to academy status. Where reported, these schools have been included in the current estimates, but are too few in number to warrant separate analyses. This loss of information from the academy sector makes more difficult the continued monitoring of changes in take up in the non-LA catered sector.

#### **4.2.2 Price of school lunches and delivering school meal services**

School meals cost, on average, £1.93 in the primary sector (up 5p, or 2.7% since 2010-2011), and £2.03 in the secondary sector (up 5p, or 2.4%). These modest increases reflect efforts on behalf of catering providers nationally to keep prices low (through improved efficiencies in delivery and procurement, especially in the face of food inflation of over 5% in the past year), wage restraint, and the use of the School Lunch Grant. Many caterers have negotiated successfully with their LAs and schools over the fate of the (now) un-ring-fenced School Lunch Grant to try and ensure that the funds continue to support school food catering, although the proportion of LAs feeling confident of continued support in the future is falling (Table 27). The continued use of the SLG to support catering services is likely to be important in sustaining the upward trend in numbers of pupils eating healthier school meals. Analysis of this will be undertaken in future years.

#### **4.2.3 Reasons for change, attitudes to healthy meals, and levels of support**

The reasons given for maintaining or increasing take up were similar this year to last year - marketing meals to pupils (and, in the primary sector, to parents) and having a school food policy. Involving the school and the head teacher, pressing for higher levels of FSM registration, and improving dining facilities were also thought to play key roles. While these appear to be common sense activities, it is important for caterers and schools to work together to ensure that pupils are engaged with the school food agenda in real and practical ways.

In the secondary sector, other key factors were stay-on-site policies, meal deals, and better management of the lunchtime experience, including consultation with pupils, to allow pupils to fulfil the many needs that they have at lunchtime.

The current findings put to rest many of the concerns expressed across a wide range of stakeholders that attempts to introduce healthier eating in schools would be likely to have an adverse impact on the both the viability of school food services and the likelihood of increased take up in the light of healthier food provision. The continued increase in take up in both the primary and secondary sectors is testament to the hard work of school caterers, and the success that they have had in making school lunches healthier. While it can be argued that the view of compliance in school food catering is somewhat optimistic (findings from the primary and secondary school food surveys suggest that minor infringements are not uncommon<sup>18 19</sup>), it shows a commitment on the part of caterers to ensure that catering provision is healthier than in the past. Loss of compulsory standards may undermine this commitment as commercial pressures dominate.

## **5 Conclusions**

The present findings offer great encouragement to school food caterers, showing that the provision of healthy food in schools can be both popular with pupils and financially viable. At the same time, it is important to recognize that many schools and caterers still have an uphill struggle to engage with pupils and parents to increase the take up of healthy meals at lunchtime. And while it is well established that healthier children learn better, the educational benefits of healthier children are not always recognized by schools themselves.

There are still issues that need to be addressed. Poor kitchen and dining facilities, reluctance by some pupils, parents and head teachers to engage with the healthy eating agenda, the need for longer lunchtimes balanced with the needs for physical activity, the wider environment around schools, and the food purchasing opportunities on the school journey itself still mitigate against improvements to the service and healthier eating amongst children. As take up increases, however, and the lessons learned about how to improve services are shared more widely, more and more pupils and parents are likely to see that the simplest way to ensure that children eat a healthy meal at lunchtimes is to consume a school lunch.

Evidence in primary<sup>18</sup> and secondary schools<sup>19</sup> shows that school lunches have improved dramatically in the last five years. This research, outside the scope of this survey, helps to demonstrate the impact of healthier eating at school on the health, well-being, behaviour and attainment of children in England.

On average, take up of school lunches is still below 50%. This means that over half of pupils in schools in England are either taking packed lunches to school (which are known to be less healthy)<sup>20 21</sup> or eating off school premises (which is likely to be less healthy still). While the increases in take up reported here, and in recent years are encouraging, there is no room for complacency. Much more needs to be done to ensure that the percentage of pupils taking school lunches continues to increase in the years to come.

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