

Document 1 – Return to Fife Council

From: [redacted S.38 (1)(b)] <[redacted S.38 (1)(b)]@fife.gov.uk>

Sent: 26 August 2024 13:48

To: [redacted S.38 (1)(b)] <[redacted S.38 (1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted S.38 (1)(b)] <[redacted S.38 (1)(b)]@fife.gov.uk>; [redacted S.38 (1)(b)] <[redacted S.38 (1)(b)]@fife.gov.uk>; [redacted S.38 (1)(b)] <[redacted S.38 (1)(b)]@fife.gov.uk>

Subject: Re: Bid for Grant Support to LA School Meal Debt - Financial Year 2024/25

Good afternoon [redacted S.38 (1)(b)]

Please find the information requested below:-

Claim was split over write offs for 2 years 22/23 and 23/24 as below:

22/23	£41,542.41	384 Debtor Accounts
23/24	£39,952.59	568 Debtor Accounts

Just let me know if you need anything further,

[redacted S.38 (1)(b)]

[redacted S.38 (1)(b)]

[redacted S.38 (1)(b)]

Financial Wellbeing and Revenues Team

[redacted S.38 (1)(b)]@fife.gov.uk



Customer and Online Services

Fife Council

PO BOX 18015

Bankhead Central

Glenrothes

KY7 6GH

DOCUMENT 2 – Return from East Dunbartonshire Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastdunbarton.gov.uk>

Sent: 26 August 2024 19:09

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastdunbarton.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]<[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: [Official] : School Meal Debt East Dunbartonshire Council

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

I can advise for 23/24 the number of pupils with outstanding debt was 1,973, unfortunately our cashless catering system is a live system and accumulates debt and I am unable to obtain historic data therefore I am unable to retrospectively quantify a value for 22/23.

Kind Regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]



[redacted under s38(1)(b)]



[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastdunbarton.gov.uk



sustainable thriving achieving

East Dunbartonshire Council

www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

@eastdunbarton.gov.uk>

Sent: Monday, August 26, 2024 4:19 PM

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastdunbarton.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: [Official] : School Meal Debt East Dunbartonshire Council

Our claim relates to 22/23 and 23/24 of which £38,463.05 relates to 22/23

Wendy are you able to answer the third question please

Thanks [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]



[redacted under s38(1)(b)]



[redacted under s38(1)(b)] [redacted under s38(1)(b)].gov.uk



Previous text [redacted – out of scope]

DOCUMENT 3 – Return from Stirling Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@stirling.gov.uk>

Sent: 26 August 2024 09:03

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@stirling.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@stirling.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@stirling.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@stirling.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@stirling.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@stirling.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@stirling.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@stirling.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: (ACTION REQ'D) [External] RE: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Letter from First Minister

Good afternoon [redacted under s38(1)(b)],

Thank you for your email providing the opportunity to clarify our position in order to help you in the decision process. Our debt relates to financial year 2023/24 and only includes debt from August 2023 as our Council took a decision to write off all debt up to that date. 729 children would be supported by writing off this school meal debt.

Kind regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] Schools, Learning and Education | Stirling Council | Old Viewforth | Stirling FK8 2ET

T: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] **E:** [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@stirling.gov.uk | **W:** stirling.gov.uk

Previous text [redacted – out of scope]

DOCUMENT 4 – Return from Orkney Islands Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@orkney.gov.uk>

Sent: 26 August 2024 12:07

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@orkney.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: BID for Grant Support to Local Authority School Meal Debt - Financial Year 2024-25

Classification: OFFICIAL

Good afternoon [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Thank you for your email, here is information requested: -

Financial Year	Debt	No of Families
2015-2016	313.92	[redacted under s38(1)(b)]
2016-2017	431.40	[redacted under s38(1)(b)]
2017-2018	367.70	[redacted under s38(1)(b)]
2018-2019	774.80	6
2019-2020	1561.20	11
2020-2021	153.10	[redacted under s38(1)(b)]
2021-2022	943.30	6
2022-2023	1198.10	12
2023-2024	1587.00	7
TOTAL	7330.52	

Please let me know if I can help further.

Kind regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]







[redacted under s38(1)(b)] Service Manager - Payments

Enterprise & Sustainable Regeneration

Orkney Islands Council

Council Offices, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NY

Tel: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] Ext 2128, Direct dial [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Our Values		People: We put our colleagues and our communities at the heart of everything we do
		Unity: We are one Council and achieve more when we support, encourage and value each other
		Trust: We trust, respect and empower each other and act with honesty and integrity
		Ownership: We take personal and shared responsibility, are transparent, and are accountable for our actions and our impact
		Creativity: We embrace innovative solutions with a drive to improve ways of working
		

Previous text [redacted – out of scope]

DOCUMENT 5 – Return from Falkirk Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@falkirk.gov.uk>

Sent: 27 August 2024 09:00

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@falkirk.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@falkirk.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@falkirk.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Falkirk Council - BID FOR GRANT SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL MEAL DEBT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

[Attachments: Doc X.X – bid template, redacted – out of scope]

Good morning, [redacted under s38(1)(b)].

- **How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years.**

The claim relates to school meal debt accumulated throughout school years 19/20, 20/21, 21/22, 22/23 and 23/24. All this debt was accrued and live on our system up to August 23

- **If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split?**

Year	Debt Amount	Number Pupils
19/20	-£7,496.75	222
20/21	-£5,731.24	82
21/22	-£14,103.34	190
22/23	-£21,218.42	279
23/24	-£11,631.56	87
Total Claimed	-£60,181.31	860

- **How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year.**

Please refer to table above.

Best Regards,

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Suite 1A, Falkirk Community Stadium,
4 Stadium Way, Grangemouth, Falkirk FK2 9EE

T: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

E: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

ANNEX A

**5.1 - BID FOR GRANT SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL MEAL DEBT
- FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25**

Please ensure completion 1 August 2024

Bid should be returned to:

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]
 Learning Directorate
 Free School Meal Team
 Area 2-B North
 Victoria Quay
 Edinburgh
 EH6 6QQ
Email - [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

NAME OF LOCAL AUTHORITY: FALKIRK COUNCIL

Amount of debt accrued to 31 March 2024	£97,172.07
Level of support requested from School Meal Debt Fund	£60,181.31
How is the Local Authority following the COSLA best practice guidance: COSLA Good Practice Principles for School Meal Debt Management.	<p>The level of support requested is debt that the authority has determined is not recoverable as it is historical, or it would be disproportionate or uncompassionate to pursue recovery in the circumstances.</p> <p>Our school meal debt management guidance was developed last summer and finalised and implemented in February 2024. The purpose of this guidance is to promote good practice in the management of school meal debt, whilst retaining a level of flexibility and provide a framework for Heads of Establishment to apply discretion to support family circumstances and so far as possible to avoid stigmatisation of children and their families.</p> <p><u>Within this, good practice is exemplified by:</u></p> <p>In the absence of sufficient funds and where a child requests it or has no lunch provision, they should be provided a meal which will be charged to their iPayimpact account. HTs may use their discretion not to charge in circumstances where they believe it is appropriate to provide a discretionary FSM based on their knowledge of the family and any signs financial hardship (examples below). Where a discretionary FSM is awarded the pupils, account should be adjusted to provide</p>

funds to cover the cost of the period of discretionary FSM provided up to 12 weeks.

- Family income is only slightly over the national threshold for free school meal entitlement.
- A pupil is living independently.
- A pupil is living in supported accommodation.
- Immigration status means the family cannot receive help from the government.
- A pupil is a refugee.
- Family is waiting for their first Universal Credit payment.
- Parent/carer qualifies for Housing, Council Tax Benefit or school clothing grant.
- Parent/carer qualifies for Pension Credit
- A kinship care arrangement is in place.
- Recent death of a parent/carer or sibling
- Illness of a parent/carer or sibling
- Parent/carer has recently been made redundant.
- Parent/carer has recently experienced a major unplanned loss of income.
- Parent/carer has recently received a custodial prison sentence.
- Parent/carer has vacated the family home in an emergency e.g. fire, domestic violence.
- Family relationship breakdown impacting on income.

Where insufficient funds are deposited to address the arrears, a letter is sent home requesting the account is brought up to date. This letter directs families struggling to manage their money to debt advice, benefits support and citizens advice. It also states *“Please let the school know if you are not able to pay. I may be able to offer discretionary free school meals while you seek further advice.”*

Where the parent tells the school they:

- are not able to pay.
- offer a reason.
- confirm they are seeking help.

Then HTs may use their discretion in circumstances to:

- temporarily suspend further requests to bring the account up to date.
- provide discretionary FSM for up to 12 weeks.
- adjust the pupils account to cover the cost of the period of discretionary FSM.

- If at the end of this period it is determined to adjust the arrears (effectively recommend writing these off) then this is implemented through the school resource Officer.

Where the parent does not bring their account up to date and does not contact the school:

- HTs can apply discretionary FSM to provide a meal should the child ask, to support the child's welfare without fear of stigma.
- HTs may opt to refer the arrears to the Children's Services Resources Manager who will coordinate the application of the Councils Corporate Debt Recovery Process with other relevant services. This does not always mean that formal debt recovery will follow, this is a last resort.

-

DOCUMENT 6 – Return from North Lanarkshire Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@northlan.gov.uk>

Sent: 27 August 2024 15:02

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@northlan.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@northlan.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: BID FOR GRANT SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL MEAL DEBT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Thank you for your email, I have updated the form with information below. Let me know if you require any additional information.

Many thanks

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

105k Previously awarded by SG

£21,263 Requested for additional outstanding meal debt as of 31st March 2024

In total the number of children this impact is as follows:

- 2880

It should be noted, that some of this debt may relate to 2022/23 however, as pupils have now left primary school we are unable to run this report. In addition, we also now have a new online payment and reporting system.

Many thanks

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Facility Support Services | Community Operations



Previous text – out of scope

ANNEX A

6.1 BID FOR GRANT SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL MEAL DEBT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

Please ensure completion 1 August 2024

Bid should be returned to:

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] Learning Directorate
 Free School Meal Team
 Area 2-B North
 Victoria Quay
 Edinburgh
 EH6 6QQ
 Email - [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

NAME OF LOCAL AUTHORITY:

Amount of debt accrued to 31 March 2024	£126,263 – 2023/2024
Level of support requested from School Meal Debt Fund	<p>£105k Previously awarded by SG £21,263 Requested for additional outstanding meal debt as of 31st March 2024</p> <p>In total the number of children this impact is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2880 <p>It should be noted, that some of this debt may relate to 2022/23 however, as pupils have now left primary school we are unable to run this report as we also now have a new online payment and reporting system.</p>
How is the Local Authority following the COSLA best practice guidance: COSLA	<p>In Primary schools, there is some anecdotal evidence that much of the debt is being accrued by parents who have received a free meal from P1 onwards. Despite being informed that when the child moves into P6, meals are required to be paid for, if not in receipt of a FSM they continue not to pay. The current cost of living crisis is also a contributing factor and there may be families in need of financial support or assistance.</p> <p>COSLA have distributed a guidance earlier this year on Good Practice Principles for School Meal Debt Management. These principles have been developed by COSLA, with partners from across Local Government (ADES, ADES Resources Network, ASSIST FM, Directors of Finance, and IRRV).</p>

[Good Practice Principles for School Meal Debt Management.](#)

The purpose of these principles is to promote good practice in the management of school meal debt, whilst retaining a level of flexibility to enable local authorities to design and implement approaches which align with the unique needs and circumstances of their communities.

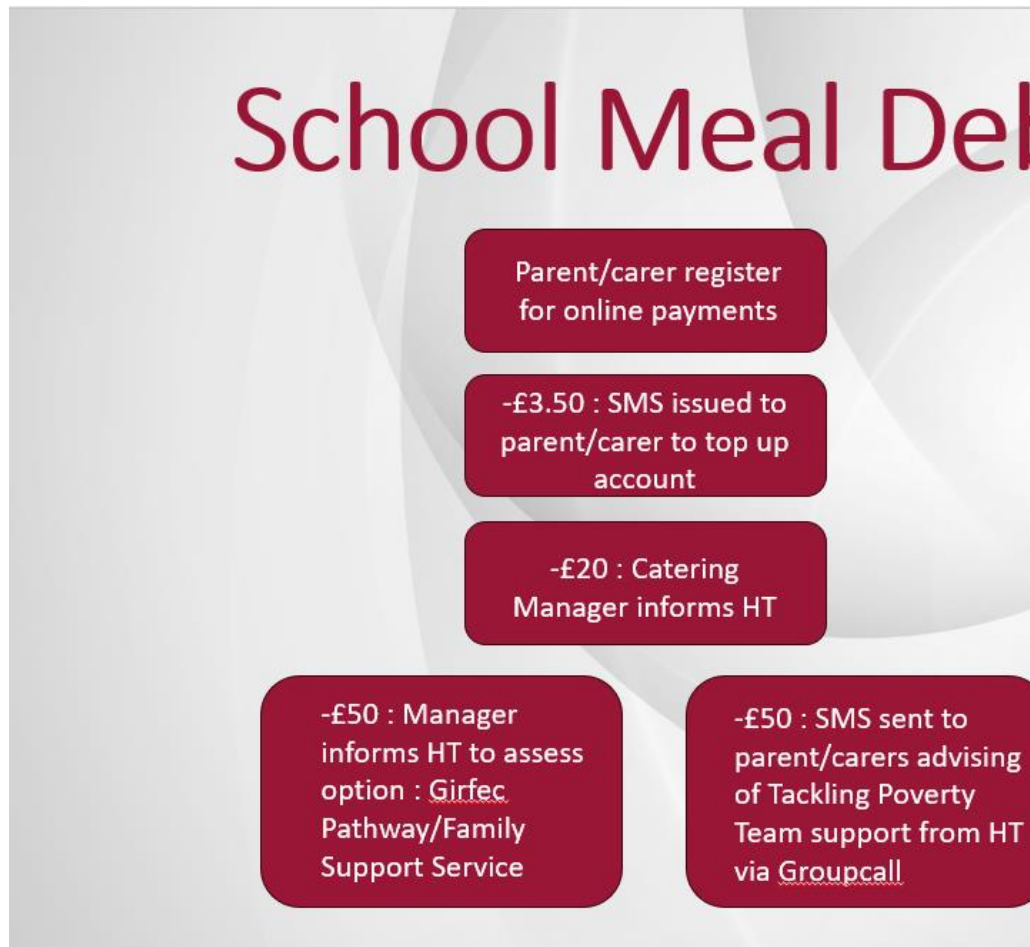
By adopting the principles, outlined below, a process map (Appendix 1) details the stages to support the repayment of outstanding schools meal debt. It is proposed to ensure the council is proactive in reclaiming this debt by adopting the principles outlined in COSLA guidance and include the following:

Good Practice Principles for School Meal Debt Management

- Are compassionate, proportionate and seek to minimise as far as possible the stigmatisation of children, young people, and their families.
- Processes for school meal debt management will be clear and accessible as possible. Online, is the main payment method for parents /carers however there is still an option for cash to be paid.
- A collaborative approach is being adopted to involve education, catering, finance, and Tackling poverty section, as well as individual school staff, to support all parents/carers who find themselves with financial difficulties in paying for school meals.
- As recommended a threshold at which unpaid sums will formally become 'debt' and be treated as such. When an account goes into a negative balance an email alert will automatically go to the parent/carers, with a further reminder as soon as £50 is reached.
- A period review will be undertaken at school level and with the senior management of FSS to reduce the risk of families accumulating large debts without the authority or school being aware of this and enable the timely provision of support where this is needed.
- Consideration has been given to ensure consistency with the current practise where the Head Teacher will be able to effectively communicate with parents/carers to ensure they receive the right information, at the right time, in an accessible manner. This may include engaging within the GIRFEC pathway or Family Support Service.
- FSS will continue to work with HTs to ensure that all efforts are made to promote, maximise, and address any barriers to accessing free school meals (and other available support

e.g. the school clothing grant: free bus travel for under 22s) for those families who are eligible.

Appendix 1



In addition to the above, a communications exercise will be undertaken during the summer break to encourage P6 and P7 parent/carers to create an account for online payments if they have not already done so.

DOCUMENT 7 – Return from Perth and Kinross Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@pkc.gov.uk>

Sent: 27 August 2024 14:59

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@pkc.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)] [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@pkc.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@pkc.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Letter from First Minister

Good afternoon [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Here is the information requested in your earlier email –

- How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years. – **one financial year 2023/24.**
- If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split? – **n/a**
- How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year.- **for 2023/24, 877 pupils will be supported.**

Regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Strategic Lead – Finance & Business Support

Perth & Kinross Council

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@pkc.gov.uk

Previous text [redacted – out of scope]

DOCUMENT 8 – Return from Dumfries and Galloway Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@dumgal.gov.uk>

Sent: 28 August 2024 08:03

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@dumgal.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]
[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@dumgal.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: EXTERNAL: RE: Dumfries and Galloway School Meal Debt Return

OFFICIAL

Dear [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Please find below the responses to your questions:

- How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years. - **This relates to the financial year 2023 / 24**
- If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split? – **N/A**
- How many children/families have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. **Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year. – 483 children.**

If you require any further information, please let me know.

Kind regards,

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Education Resources

Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing

Mobile No: 07825506156

Working Hours – Monday to Thursday 8am-5.30pm



Previous text [redacted - out of scope]

DOCUMENT 9 – Return from Aberdeen City Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@aberdeencity.gov.uk>

Sent: 29 August 2024 08:30

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@aberdeencity.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Letter from First Minister

[Attached: Document X.X]

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Please find attached the information requested below, you will notice there is a small variation of £312 to the original submission.

If you require any further information, please let me know.

Regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]



[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Aberdeen City Council | Accounting | Finance | Corporate Services

Marischal College | 1st Floor West | Broad Street| Aberdeen | AB10 1AB

Direct Dial: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk | Twitter: @AberdeenCC | Facebook.com/AberdeenCC

Previous text [redacted – out of scope]

ANNEX A

9.1 BID FOR GRANT SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL MEAL DEBT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

Please ensure completion 1 August 2024

Bid should be returned to:

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] Learning Directorate

Free School Meal Team

Area 2-B North

Victoria Quay

Edinburgh
 EH6 6QQ
 Email - [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

NAME OF LOCAL AUTHORITY: Aberdeen City Council

Amount of debt accrued to 31 March 2024	£411,917.90
Level of support requested from School Meal Debt Fund	£411,917.90
How is the Local Authority following the COSLA best practice guidance: COSLA Good Practice Principles for School Meal Debt Management.	ACC is following the COSLA best practice guidance for school meal debt, by setting out a clear list of steps which involve communicating with parents on a regular basis if debt is accumulated, setting an amount of £50 where the unpaid sums will formally become debt & treated as such and communicating with school administrators to ensure the catering team are aware of any known issues (social need etc) relating to school meal debt before invoices are issued to chase any debt.

Year	value	volume
2023-24	27,596.92	1,354
2022-23	168,205.89	2,968
2021-22	174,159.79	1,372
2020-21	42,015.30	799
	411,977.90	6,493

Volume is based on Children

DOCUMENT 10 – Return from Argyll and Bute Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@argyll-bute.gov.uk>

Sent: 29 August 2024 16:47

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@argyll-bute.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@argyll-bute.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Bid for Grant Support FSM [OFFICIAL]

Classification: OFFICIAL

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Responses to your questions below in red.

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Education Services

Argyll House, Alexandra Parade, Dunoon, PA23 8AJ

Tel: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Mob: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Email: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@argyll-bute.gov.uk



Previous text [redacted - out of scope]

DOCUMENT 11 – Return from Glasgow City Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@glasgow.gov.uk>

Sent: 29 August 2024 12:18

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@glasgow.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@glasgow.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@glasgow.gov.uk>

Subject: FW: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Letter from First Minister (OFFICIAL)

OFFICIAL

Dear [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Please see answers on the breakdown of the debt levels for Glasgow. I would be happy to talk you through any of this in terms of processes or experiences.

- How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years.

Glasgow receives cumulative balance reports from Parent Pay, which is where details of school meal debt levels are taken from.

The claim covers a cumulative balance, which has been steadily increasing since May 2022 when the first Parent Pay summary report was provided.

Glasgow had previously written off any historic debt in the system prior to the implementation of Parent Pay.

Therefore the claim covers 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years. A further balance which has built up in 2024/25 has not been claimed.

- If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split?

The bid covers recorded debt balances in Parent Pay which have built up since May 2022. At May 2022 the debt balance was £80,347, rising to £341,956 by the end of March 2023.

In 2023/24, the balance at the year end was £456,351, as detailed in the return, with an amount already having been written off of £198,681.

Therefore the split is as follows:

Year	Timing	Calculation	Total	Percentage
2022/23	Year end	£341,956	£341,956	52%
2023/24	Year end	£456,351	£313,076	48%

	Less: 22/23 balance	-£341,956		
	Add back: Written off amount	£198,681		
Total			£655,032	

- How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year.

The total number of pupil accounts which the balance at 31st March 2024 related to was 15,791. At the end of March 2023, the number of debt pupil accounts was 12,720.

The number of accounts affected by the council write off previously was **2,113**, as these were the families who met the criteria for write off through the council motion.

Please note, the numbers of pupils are cumulative and many at the end of March 2024 would also have been in the 2022/23 numbers.

Year	Timing	Calculation	Total
2022/23	Year end	12,720	12,720
2023/24	Year end Less: 22/23 balance	15,791 -12,720	3,071
Total			15,791

The previous write off was applied to all children who had accrued a debt of more than an average of one month of meals, equating to £38 (average of primary and secondary costs for one month). This still left families with one months of meals arrears to clear. The levels of debt held within parent pay mainly, relate to the majority of these families re-accruing balances. Therefore, if we were to apply a blanket approach to the eradication of the total meal debt figure we would require £655,032.

Redacted [section 30(b)(ii)]

Regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]Education Services

Glasgow City Council
40 John Street
Glasgow
G1 1JL
Phone Number
[redacted under s38(1)(b)] Mobile : [redacted under s38(1)(b)]
Email : [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@glasgow.gov.uk
www.glasgow.gov.uk
twitter@GlasgowCC

Previous text [redacted – out of scope]

ANNEX A

**11.1 BID FOR GRANT SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL MEAL DEBT
- FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25**

Please ensure completion 1 August 2024

Bid should be returned to:

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] Learning Directorate
Free School Meal Team
Area 2-B North
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ
Email - [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

NAME OF LOCAL AUTHORITY:

Amount of debt accrued to 31 March 2024	<p>Pupil debt of £456,351.39 in Parent Pay. This is in addition to the £198,681 which was written off in Parent Pay as a result of a council motion at the Glasgow City Council meeting on Tuesday 30th March 2023.</p> <p>Inclusive of both, this is £655,032.39</p>
Level of support requested from School Meal Debt Fund	<p>Based on the previous write off, Glasgow left a balance of £38 in pupils' accounts. This was roughly equivalent to one months of meals. If the same logic is applied to the balance at 31st March 2024, this would be a write off of £226,855.76 Added to the £198,681, this would be a total request of £425,536.76</p>

How is the Local Authority following the COSLA best practice guidance: [COSLA Good Practice Principles for School Meal Debt Management.](#)

Glasgow has two guidance documents for schools in relation to bad debt, both are attached for reference.

In Summary:

- For debts up to £20 per child, schools should contact parents/ carers advising of the accrued debt and of how to pay on ParentPay.
- If the child continues to arrive at school without money or the ParentPay account has not had any funds added to it within a reasonable time (determined on an individual basis by the headteacher), a reminder will be issued and all appropriate contacts/supports will be used to help the parent/carer to ensure that the debt does not escalate further.
 -
- If the debt reaches £100, upon the Headteacher's confirmation to proceed, the debt is passed to CBS and an invoice will be issued for the debt along with a letter explaining why the invoice has been sent. This invoice should be paid using the bank details on the invoice, and not by adding money to parent pay or bringing cash into the school. Once the invoice is paid, the Customer and Business Service Hub (Central processing and administration hub for GCC, now referred to as CBS) will contact the school and an adjustment will be made to the pupil's account.
 -
- Headteachers can approach HQ to ask for a discretionary credit in line with the COSLA principles. This has been exercised on occasions where the Headteacher feels that the family's circumstances merit a credit. These are approved centrally by the Head of Resources. These have included where a family is waiting on a universal credit decision, immigration status, a kinship care arrangement, and illness of a parent but are not limited to these reasons.
 -

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- No child who has accrued debt is refused a meal at lunchtime. This is in line with the COSLA principles.•- The first line of the debt process is exercised at the schools as they know the families best.
--	---

DOCUMENT 12 – Return from Renfrewshire Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@renfrewshire.gov.uk>

Sent: 29 August 2024 08:59

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@renfrewshire.gov.uk>;

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@renfrewshire.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Letter from First Minister

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Thank you for your e-mail below.

Our initial bid of £106,077.68 includes school meal debts which have accrued over the last 5 years and the table below provides a breakdown across that period. I have also included pupil numbers as requested for each year. For clarity however, the decision on write-off was made in 2023/24 financial year with the costs being realised in that year.

School Year	Value (£)	Pupil Numbers
2019/20	£3,333.13	169
2020/21	£17,431.00	1362
2021/22	£20,309.42	783
2022/23	£20,657.29	908
2023/24	£44,346.84	2885
TOTAL	£106,077.68	6,107

I would like to note that pupil numbers may include the same pupil across different years and with multiple values in the same year.

I trust this provides you with the additional information you require, although please let me know if you need anything further.

Regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Previous text [redacted – out of scope]

DOCUMENT 13 – Return from North Ayrshire Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] (Head of Service (Financial Services) / Chief Officer) <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@north-ayrshire.gov.uk>

Sent: 29 August 2024 16:25

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] (Senior Manager (Facilities Management) / Facilities Management) <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@north-ayrshire.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)] (Senior Manager (Strategic Business Partner) / Financial Mgmt&Revenues) <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@north-ayrshire.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)] (Team Manager / Financial Mgmt&Revenues) <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@north-ayrshire.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Claim Form

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

See below for a breakdown of North Ayrshire Council's bid across the financial years as requested. Our last write off of debt was in June 2023. We continue to accumulate debt from August 2023 and the outstanding debt figure as at 31 March 2024 is also shown below.

School Meal Debt Previous Write Offs (by financial year)

	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	Running Total
Primary School	£107,629	£0	£114,823	£222,452
Number of Pupils	1520	0	392	
Secondary School	£13,159	£9,741	£7,837	£30,737
Number of Pupils	1392	994	784	
Total Written Off	£120,788	£9,741	£122,660	£253,189
Total Pupil a/cs Written Off	2912	994	1176	

Debt as at 31 March 2024

Primary School	£48,183
Number of Pupils	654
Secondary School	£13,381
Number of Pupils	1421
Total Debt as at 31/03/2024	£61,564
Number of pupils with debt	2075

Kind regards,

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]for

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]Head of Finance

Chief Executive's Service

North Ayrshire Council

Cunninghame House

Friar's Croft

Irvine

KA12 8EE

Phone number: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

E-mail: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

Previous text – [redacted – out of scope]

DOCUMENT 14 – Return from South Lanarkshire Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>

Sent: 29 August 2024 08:57

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Letter from First Minister

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

In response to your questions below, I can advise;

The claim relates to 2 financial years 22/23 and 23/24. The split across the years and number of children that have been supported is outlined in the table below. As per the bid paperwork £83,931 has been written off and £140,284 is the balance of outstanding debt at 31/03/24

	2223	2324	Total
No. of children	2,300	3,490	5,790
2,594	£76,622	£7,309	£83,931
3,196		£140,284	£140,284
5,790	£76,622	£147,593	£224,215

If you require anything further please do not hesitate to get in touch .

Kind regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Previous text [redacted – out of scope]

DOCUMENT 15 – Return from Shetland Islands Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@shetland.gov.uk <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@shetland.gov.uk>
Sent: 30 August 2024 16:05
To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Letter from First Minister

Forwarding requested data following receipt of [redacted under s38(1)(b)]out of office.

Thank you,

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]Management Accountant
Shetland Islands Council
Tel - [redacted under s38(1)(b)]
[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@shetland.gov.uk

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@Finance Services
Sent: 30 August 2024 16:03
To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot' <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Letter from First Minister

Good afternoon [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

The table below shows the requested data, please note some families had debt relating to multiple years I've include a unique count line to show the actual number of children/families who have been supported by writing off this school meal debt.

Financial year	School meal debt previously written off			School meal debt outstanding as at 31/03/24 written off relating to families now claiming FSMs			Total		
	Families	Children	£	Families	Children	£	Families	Children	£
16/17				[redacted under s38(1)(b)]	[redacted under s38(1)(b)]	160	[redacted under s38(1)(b)]	[redacted under s38(1)(b)]	160
18/19				[redacted under s38(1)(b)]	[redacted under s38(1)(b)]	86	[redacted under s38(1)(b)]	[redacted under s38(1)(b)]	86
20/21	9	13	1,578	[redacted under s38(1)(b)]	[redacted under s38(1)(b)]	284	12	16	1,861

21/22	24	33	3,769	10	14	5,370	34	47	9,139
22/23	[redacted under s38(1)(b)]	8	954	12	18	1,236	17	26	2,190
23/24	7	11	2,055	[redacted under s38(1)(b)]	6	458	11	17	2,513
Total	45	65	8,356	31	44	7,593	76	109	15,950
Uniqu e	35	49		19	30		54	79	

Regards,

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] Management Accountant
Shetland Islands Council
Tel - [redacted under s38(1)(b)]
[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@shetland.gov.uk

Previous text [redacted – out of scope]

DOCUMENT 16 – Return from East Renfrewshire Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk>

Sent: 30 August 2024 15:41

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk>

Subject: Fw: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Letter from First Minister

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)],

Please see responses below.

I hope this is helpful.

Kind Regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] Education Resources Senior Manager
Education Department

Tel: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

East Renfrewshire: Your Council, Your Future

www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Please consider the environment - do you need to print this email?

Protective Marking – ‘Mark to Protect’

OFFICIAL - *No special handling controls and no requirement to mark (routine business information)*

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE - *Protective measures/controls required (business sensitive, personal or special category information)*

Please note - If I am sending this email out of hours, I don't expect you to read, respond or action it out of your own regular hours.

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Sent: 23 August 2024 12:44

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk>

s38(1)(b)]@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Letter from First Minister

Good Afternoon [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Thank for your return in response to my email dated 15 May 2024, on behalf of the First Minister, which invited local authorities to bid for support from the Scottish Government's School Meal Debt Fund. The closing date for applications has now passed and we are now considering the bids you have submitted.

To help us in the decision process, I would be most grateful if you could provide the following information:

- How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years.

Claim covers the value of debt accrued as at the end of financial year 2023/24 as well as historical debt accrued over a number of previous years which was written off following elected member approval in January 2023 - £38,845.86 amount written off at 31 March 2023 and £3287.24 written off during 2023/24.

- If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split?
 - 2022/23 - £38,845.86 which mainly related to debt for pupils who had already left the relevant school (systems don't allow us to easily break this figure down into amounts per year)
 - 2023/24 - £3,287.24 written off for leavers at June 2023
 - 2023/24 - £11,627.67 relates to proposed write-off of all outstanding debt as at 31 March 2024, adjusted for any debt subsequently cleared before the end of the school session in June 2024.

- How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year.

2022/23 - 1,923 children supported by write-off
2023/24 - 211 children supported by write-off
2023/24 - further 460 children would be supported by further write-off proposed.

Once I have received your response we will then consider your claim and notify you of its outcome. I would be grateful if you could reply to this email by close on Friday 30 August. I have re-attached your bid form for reference.

Kind regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

[redacted – out of scope]

DOCUMENT 17 – Return from Scottish Borders Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@scotborders.gov.uk>
Sent: 30 August 2024 11:35
To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@scotborders.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: [OFFICIAL] School Meal Debt - Bid

Good Morning [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Please see responses to your questions in blue below. Please note that the reports we receive from our system, used for managing school meal debt, do not provide sufficient detail to break the debt into financial periods so I am unable to provide a definitive answer to your first two questions.

Regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]
From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: Friday, August 23, 2024 1:06 PM
To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@scotborders.gov.uk>
Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@scotborders.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: [OFFICIAL] School Meal Debt - Bid

CAUTION: External Email

Good Afternoon [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Thank for your return in response to my email dated 15 May 2024, on behalf of the First Minister, which invited local authorities to bid for support from the Scottish Government's School Meal Debt Fund. The closing date for applications has now passed and we are now considering the bids you have submitted.

To help us in the decision process, I would be most grateful if you could provide the following information:

- How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years.

The reports we receive from our school meal debt system do not specify dates so we cannot determine the financial year to which the debts relate; however, the majority will relate to 2023/24 but we have also included debts written-off during the 2022/23 financial year of £452.90

- If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split?

We cannot determine the split over multiple years

- How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year.

Our claim for £3,908.12 supports writing off the debt of 282 children

Once I have received your response we will then consider your claim and notify you of its outcome. I would be grateful if you could reply to this email by close on Friday 30 August. I have re-attached your bid form for reference.

Kind regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

Previous text [redacted – out of scope]

DOCUMENT 18 – Return from East Lothian Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] (Education) <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastlothian.gov.uk>

Sent: 30 August 2024 13:44

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastlothian.gov.uk>

Subject: FW: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Annex A return

Good afternoon [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

As requested, see below further information on our school meal debt:

- *How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years.*

The claim is for six financial years, from 2018-19 to 2023-24.

- *If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split?*

The information we hold is cumulative but we have specific figures for 2022-23 & 2023-24:

The debt balance cumulative to 2021-22 is £36,978.09.

The debt balance for 2022-23 is £6,820.20

The debt balance for 2023-24 is £10,556.42.

- *How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year.*

The claim is for a total of 1,527 children, the information we hold is cumulative and cannot be split by financial year.

Regards,

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]**Principal Officer – Education Finance**

Education Department

East Lothian Council

John Muir House, Brewery Park, Haddington EH41 3HA

Phone No. [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Mobile [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Email [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastlothian.gov.uk

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastlothian.gov.uk>

Sent: Friday, August 23, 2024 5:15 PM

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] (Education) <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@eastlothian.gov.uk>

Subject: FW: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Annex A return

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

You put this together with info from the Online Payments Team, can you draw the response to SG together [redacted under s38(1)(b)]?

Thanks

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Previous text [redacted – out of scope]

DOCUMENT 19 – Return from Dundee City Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@dundeecity.gov.uk>
Sent: 02 September 2024 09:40
To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: Re: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Letter from First Minister

Good morning [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Sorry for the delay - I'll have this completed and over to you tomorrow - I've been on leave lately, apologies for the lateness of this reply.

Regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Accountant

Corporate Services

Corporate Services Department

Dundee City Council

Dundee House

Floor 4

50 North Lindsay Street

Dundee DD1 1NZ

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@dundeecity.gov.uk

Previous text [redacted – out of scope]

DOCUMENT 20 – Briefing for debate on eradicating child poverty

[Most of the material in this document falls out of the scope of the request therefore the material is provided by extraction rather than redaction].

What: Scottish Government debate – Programme for Government: Eradicating Child Poverty

When: 5 September 2024 from 14:55 until 17:00

Opening Speech (12 minutes): Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Closing speech (9 minutes): Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice

Key messages: [redacted - out of scope]

Official support

[redacted s.38(1)(b)], Child Poverty Briefing and Strategy Team Leader [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)], Head of Sector Sustainability, Childminding and 1140 Unit, [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)], Head of School Food, Nutrition and Clothing, [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Comms Activity: Comms to provide under separate cover

Contents

[redacted - out of scope]

Annex F – Education

F1 [redacted - out of scope]

F2 Free School Meals/Breakfasts

F3 [redacted - out of scope]

[redacted - out of scope]

SCHOOL MEAL DEBT

School meal debt is a matter for local authorities in the first instance, and the Scottish Government expects them to use the powers available to them to support families struggling with school meal debt.

- We recognise that we are currently in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis which is hurting families across the country.
- In that spirit, the Scottish Government announced on 16 May a one-off, emergency fund of £1.5m to support councils to help remove the impact of school meal debt on families.
- 28 local authorities have applied for support from the Fund and we are currently working to distribute this support.

- COSLA have published a set of good practice principles for the management of school meal debt. It is our expectation that local authorities will implement COSLA's guidance on school meal debt going forward.
- Councils have the power to make discretionary offers of free school meals to families, where they are experiencing financial hardship due to exceptional circumstances, who do not meet the regular eligibility criteria.

[redacted - out of scope]

DOCUMENT 21 – Return from East Ayrshire Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@east-ayrshire.gov.uk>

Sent: 04 September 2024 13:38

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE:FW: FW: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Letter from First Minister [OFFICIAL]

CLASSIFICATION: OFFICIAL

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Apologise for the delay, took a bit of work to get the breakdown. Hopefully the table below provides you with the information you need.

regards

Debt accrued in Financial Year	Amount	No of Pupils
2018-19	£329.03	[redacted under s38(1)(b)]
2019-20	£1,144.89	10
2020-21	£2,633.27	47
2021-22	£7,764.90	192
2022-23	£30,538.60	234
2023-24	£39,769.94	466
	£82,180.63	954

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] **Head of Facilities and Property Management**
East Ayrshire Council

Office : [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Mobile: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]



Previous text [redacted – not in scope]

DOCUMENT 22 – Return from Dundee City Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@dundeecity.gov.uk>
Sent: 04 September 2024 11:36
To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: Re: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Letter from First Minister

Morning [redacted under s38(1)(b)],

Please accept my apologies for the lateness of my return. Hoping the attached meet with your requirements. If you require any additional information please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Regards
[redacted under s38(1)(b)]
[redacted under s38(1)(b)]
Accountant
Corporate Services
Corporate Services Department

Dundee City Council
Dundee House
Floor 4
50 North Lindsay Street
Dundee DD1 1NZ
[redacted under s38(1)(b)]
[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@dundeecity.gov.uk

Previous text [redacted – not in scope]

ANNEX A

22.1 BID FOR GRANT SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL MEAL DEBT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

Please ensure completion 1 August 2024

Bid should be returned to:
[redacted under s38(1)(b)] Learning Directorate
Free School Meal Team
Area 2-B North
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ
Email - [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

NAME OF LOCAL AUTHORITY:

Amount of debt accrued to 31 March 2024	<p>£21,318.68</p> <p>2022/23 – £8,600.21 – 531 pupils 2023/24 - £12,718.47 – 323 pupils</p>
Level of support requested from School Meal Debt Fund	<p>£21,318.68</p>
How is the Local Authority following the COSLA best practice guidance: COSLA Good Practice Principles for School Meal Debt Management.	<p>Dundee City Council has included the good practice principles outlined by COSLA into our current School Meal Debt guidance.</p>

DOCUMENT 23 – reminder to local authorities who had not responded

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Sent: 05 September 2024 17:10

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Importance: High

Good afternoon colleagues

On Monday 23 August, I issued an email asking if you could provide further information in relation to your recent bids for funding from the Scottish Government's School Meal Debt Fund by Friday 30 August.

I recognise there are many people on annual leave at this time of year however, in order to allow us to process all bids, could I ask if you could send your returns to me by close of play on Monday 16 September, since this will enable us to receive all returns following our return from the Edinburgh September long weekend next week.

To recap, I would be most grateful if you could provide the following information:

- How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years.
- If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split?
- How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year.

I enclosed your individual bid forms with my email on 23 August however, should you wish me to send this again, please contact me next week and I will forward it to you.

I look forward to receiving your replies.

Kind regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

DOCUMENT 24 – Angus Council request for extension to deadline

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 05 September 2024 16:49
To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@angus.gov.uk>
Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@angus.gov.uk>;
[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@angus.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: School Meal Debt - Angus Council

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

That is okay with us, some other councils have also requested extensions. If possible could you please send to us by close next Thursday so we have received all ahead of the September long weekend.

Kind regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@angus.gov.uk>
Sent: Friday, August 30, 2024 12:08 PM
To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@angus.gov.uk>;
[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@angus.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: School Meal Debt - Angus Council

Dear [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Would it be possible to request a short extension to this request? Colleagues have advised they will have the information available next week.

Kind regards, [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] Service Leader (Support Services)| Education and Lifelong Learning | Angus Council | Contact via Teams | readerb@angus.gov.uk | www.angus.gov.uk

Previous text [redacted – out of scope]

DOCUMENT 25 – Return from Highland Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] (Revenues) <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@highland.gov.uk>

Sent: 05 September 2024 08:42

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)] (Revenues and Customer Services) <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@highland.gov.uk>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] (Revenues) <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@highland.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Write-off Fund - The Highland Council

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)],

Thank you for your email, please accept my apologies for the late response to your questions. On a positive our claim has reduced from £121,502.03 to £115,747.76.

- How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years.

Multiple years

- If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split?

2011/12	£1,277.40
2012/13	£102.71
2013/14	£239.73
2014/15	£382.43
2015/16	£842.35
2016/17	£1,323.90
2017/18	£1,872.98
2018/19	£1,292.99
2019/20	£25,707.15
2020/21	£15,518.73
2021/22	£22,028.43
2022/23	£23,489.64
2023/24	£21,669.32
Totals	£115,747.76

- How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year.

There would be 697 households supported. Unfortunately due to date formatting issues I am unable to break this down for you. Further analysis would require significant resource.

Regards,

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Revenues Manager | Revenues and Business Support | Corporate | The Highland Council | Glenurquhart Road Inverness IV3 5NX

Previous text [redacted – not in scope]

DOCUMENT 26 – Acknowledgement of receipt from Councils whom have responded

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Sent: 05 September 2024 17:29

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Good afternoon colleagues

On Monday 23 August, I issued an email asking if you could provide further information in relation to your recent bids for funding from the Scottish Government's School Meal Debt Fund by Friday 30 August.

Please treat this email as confirmation that we have received your returns, we will be in touch with you once we have considered all returns sent to me over the past 2 weeks.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to reply to this email.

Kind regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

DOCUMENT 27 – Briefing for Conservative debate on free school meals

Doc 27 [Most of the material in this document falls out of the scope of the request therefore the material is provided by extraction rather than redaction].

What: Conservative debate – Free School Meals Programme

When: 11 September 2024 from 14:55 until 17:00

Opening speech (5 minutes): Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Key messages: [redacted - out of scope]

Official support

[redacted s.38(1)(b)], Support and Wellbeing Unit Head, [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)], Free School Meals

[redacted s.38(1)(b)], Food, Nutrition and Clothing, [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted - out of scope]

Annex C: Free School Meals

[redacted - out of scope]

SCHOOL MEAL DEBT

School meal debt is a matter for local authorities in the first instance, and the Scottish Government expects them to use the powers available to them to support families struggling with school meal debt.

- We recognise that we are currently in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis which is hurting families across the country.
- In that spirit, the Scottish Government announced on 16 May a one-off, emergency fund of £1.5m to support councils to help remove the impact of school meal debt on families.
- 28 local authorities have applied for support from the Fund and we are currently working to distribute this support.
- COSLA have published a set of good practice principles for the management of school meal debt. It is our expectation that local authorities will implement COSLA's guidance on school meal debt going forward.
- Councils have the power to make discretionary offers of free school meals to families, where they are experiencing financial hardship due to exceptional circumstances, who do not meet the regular eligibility criteria.

[redacted - out of scope]

DOCUMENT 28 – Return from Angus Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@angus.gov.uk>

Sent: 10 September 2024 10:15

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

<[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

<[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@angus.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@angus.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: School Meal Debt - Angus Council

Dear [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

please find further details below:

1. The claim includes six financial years.
2. The split is detailed below:

2018/19	£10,101.79
2019/20	£8,412.81
2020/21	£2,461.84
2021/22	£1,909.30
2022//23	£1,578.06
202324	£1,409.10

Please note that there is a slight difference between the total of the table above compared to what was initially submitted for our claim. The difference relates to financial year-end processing, which resulted in coding changes within our financial systems. The revised total value is: **£25,872.**

3. In total, 221 families have benefited. The number of families supported each year is detailed in the table below. The table total is more than 221 as some individual families had debts spanning multiple years, so are counted more than once.

2018/19	88
2019/20	149
2020/21	67
2021/22	56
2022/23	27
2023/24	32

Kind regards, [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] Service Leader (Support Services) | Education and Lifelong Learning | Angus Council | Contact via Teams | readerb@angus.gov.uk | www.angus.gov.uk

[redacted – out of scope]

DOCUMENT 29 – Briefing for Cab Sec Social Justice meeting with Aberlour

What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with Aberlour Children’s Charity to discuss [redacted – out of scope], School Meal Debt and [redacted – out of scope]
When	18 th September 2024 – 12:00 – 12:30
Where	Online via Microsoft Teams
Who	[redacted under s38(1)(b): Chief Executive of Aberlour Children’s Charity [redacted under s38(1)(b)]Head of Policy and Participation at Aberlour Children’s Charity
Why	An opportunity to meet the Chief Executive and Head of Policy and Participation [redacted – out of scope] [redacted – out of scope]
Key messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [redacted – out of scope] We have now opened a one-off, £1.5 million fund to support councils who wish to address the matter of school meal debt and its impact on families. [redacted – out of scope]
Official support	[redacted under s38(1)(b)]Welfare and Debt Advice Services Team, Financial Wellbeing Unit [redacted under s38(1)(b)], Free School Meals Expansion [redacted under s38(1)(b)]
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [redacted – out of scope] <u>School Meal Debt</u> – Aberlour letter referenced including increasing eligibility for free school meals [redacted – out of scope]
Main objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [redacted – out of scope]

ITEM 1	[redacted – out of scope]
Issue/ background	[redacted – out of scope]
Key message(s)	[redacted – out of scope]
Suggested question(s)	[redacted – out of scope]
Contact point	[redacted – out of scope]
ITEM 2	School Meal Debt
Issue/ background	<p>Aberlour have been campaigning for the Scottish Government to clear school meal debt since 2022. Aberlour won ‘Campaign of the year’ at the Scottish Charity awards in June 2024 for their work on school meal debt.</p> <p>In May 2024, the First Minister announced the opening of a £1.5m fund to help local authorities alleviate the impact of school meal debt on families. Local authorities were invited to submit bids for this funding over the summer.</p> <p>[redacted under s30(b)(i)]</p> <p>[redacted – out of scope]</p>
Key message(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School meal debt is a matter for local authorities in the first instance, and Scottish Government expects them to use the powers available to them to support families struggling with school meal debt. • We recognise that we are currently in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis which is hurting families across the country, which is why we have opened a one off emergency fund of £1.5m to support councils to help remove the impact of school meal debt on families. • 28 local authorities have applied for support from the Fund and we are currently working to distribute this support. • [redacted – out of scope]
Contact point	[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

ITEM 3	[redacted – out of scope]
Issue/ background	[redacted – out of scope]
[redacted – out of scope]	[redacted – out of scope]
[redacted – out of scope]	[redacted – out of scope]
[redacted – out of scope]	[redacted – out of scope]

[redacted – out of scope]

[redacted – out of scope]

[redacted – out of scope]

[redacted – out of scope]

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

[redacted – out of scope] AND SCHOOL MEALS DEBT

- [redacted – out of scope]

SCHOOL MEAL DEBT

School meal debt is a matter for local authorities in the first instance, and the Scottish Government expects them to use the powers available to them to support families struggling with school meal debt.

- We recognise that we are currently in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis which is hurting families across the country.
- In that spirit, the Scottish Government announced on 16 May a one-off, fund of £1.5m to support councils to help remove the impact of school meal debt on families.
- 28 local authorities have applied for support from the Fund and we are currently working to distribute this support.
- COSLA have published a set of good practice principles for the management of school meal debt. It is our expectation that local authorities will implement COSLA's guidance on school meal debt going forward.

- Councils have the power to make discretionary offers of free school meals to families, where they are experiencing financial hardship due to exceptional circumstances, who do not meet the regular eligibility criteria.
- [redacted – out of scope]

DOCUMENT 30 – Return from Clackmannanshire Council

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@clacks.gov.uk>

Sent: 11 September 2024 13:11

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@clacks.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@clacks.gov.uk>

Subject: Fw: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Thanks for your e mail. The split of our claim was as follows:

2022/23 £14,490 and 156 pupils

2023/24 £16,134 and 153 pupils

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Education Business Manager

Clackmannanshire Council

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

----- Forwarded by [redacted under s38(1)(b)]/CLACKS on 06/09/2024 11:06 -----

From: <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

To: <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>, <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Date: 05/09/2024 17:10

Subject: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Good afternoon colleagues

On Monday 23 August, I issued an email asking if you could provide further information in relation to your recent bids for funding from the Scottish Government's School Meal Debt Fund by Friday 30 August.

I recognise there are many people on annual leave at this time of year however, in order to allow us to process all bids, could I ask if you could send your returns to me by close of play on Monday 16 September, since this will enable us to receive all returns following our return from the Edinburgh September long weekend next week.

To recap, I would be most grateful if you could provide the following information:

- How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years.
- If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split?

- How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year.

I enclosed your individual bid forms with my email on 23 August however, should you wish me to send this again, please contact me next week and I will forward it to you.

I look forward to receiving your replies.

Kind regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B
North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

DOCUMENT 31 – Return from Midlothian Council

[Attachment: Document 31.1]

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@midlothian.gov.uk>

Sent: 12 September 2024 15:37

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Good afternoon [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Please find below response for Midlothian Council

- How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years. The bid includes debt over multiple years
- If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split? £17,771 was the debt figure for 23/24 financial year, £32,259 was the figure at the end of the 22/23 financial year – the debt report for 22/23 shows accumulated totals for accounts, it does not identify dates at which the debt was incurred therefore some of this debt may have been incurred prior to 22/23 financial year.
- How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year. The £17,771 from 23/24 relates to 757 accounts. The £32,259 from prior years relates to 4,244 accounts. Information is not held on how many families these accounts relate to.

I hope this response is adequate, but if anything else is required please let me know.

Regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 5:10 PM

To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

Subject: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Importance: High

CAUTION: This email originated from outside Midlothian Council. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Good afternoon colleagues

On Monday 23 August, I issued an email asking if you could provide further information in relation to your recent bids for funding from the Scottish Government's School Meal Debt Fund by Friday 30 August.

I recognise there are many people on annual leave at this time of year however, in order to allow us to process all bids, could I ask if you could send your returns to me by close of play on Monday 16 September, since this will enable us to receive all returns following our return from the Edinburgh September long weekend next week.

To recap, I would be most grateful if you could provide the following information:

- How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years.
- If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split?
- How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year.

I enclosed your individual bid forms with my email on 23 August however, should you wish me to send this again, please contact me next week and I will forward it to you.

I look forward to receiving your replies.

Kind regards

[redacted under s38(1)(b)] Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

BID FOR GRANT SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL MEAL DEBT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

Please ensure completion 1 August 2024

Bid should be returned to:

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Learning Directorate

Free School Meal Team

Area 2-B North

Victoria Quay

Edinburgh

EH6 6QQ

Email - [redacted under s38(1)(b)] @gov.scot

NAME OF LOCAL AUTHORITY:

<p>Amount of debt accrued to 31 March 2024</p>	<p>At 31 March 2024 there was a total of £17,771 of outstanding School Meal debt. In addition there was a total of £32,259 of school meal debt previously written off.</p>
<p>Level of support requested from School Meal Debt Fund</p>	<p>A total of £50,030 would be requested</p>
<p>How is the Local Authority following the COSLA best practice guidance: COSLA Good Practice Principles for School Meal Debt Management.</p>	<p>We have a draft school meal debt policy which is underpinned by the COSLA guidance. In the interim, the central team support schools in managing school meal debt and we work with other services to ensure families are accessing the support and assistance they are entitled to. Schools offer a wide range of support for families who might need it including access to school uniforms, providing breakfasts, and providing parents/carers with advice and assistance to complete forms to access FSMs and other funding. We also have the cost of living taskforce which includes elected members and staff, and they can provide further support, if required.</p>

DOCUMENT 32 – Correspondence with Aberlour on school meal debt

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@aberlour.org.uk>
Sent: 20 September 2024 14:58
To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: Re: Aberlour - School Meal Debt

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

10am on Wednesday would suit me. Feel free to send a Teams invite.

Thanks,
[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 20 September 2024 11:25
To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@aberlour.org.uk>
Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Aberlour - School Meal Debt

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Morning [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Likewise. I am off after next week until mid-October, but [redacted under s38(1)(b)] and I are fairly free between 10 and 12:30 next Wednesday. Can potentially move things about on the Thursday too around the similar times if that helps.

Let me know how you are placed.

All the very best

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Free School Meals Expansion – Support and Wellbeing Unit, Learning Directorate
Leudachadh air Biadh Sgoile An-Asgaidh – Aonad Taice is Maith, Buidheann-
stùiridh an Ionnsachaidh
Area 2-C(North) Victoria Quay Edinburgh Scotland EH6 6QQ/Raon 2-C Cidhe
Bhictòria, Dùn Èideann, Alba EH6 6QQ
Plana Gàidhlig Riaghaltas na h-Alba 2022-2027 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
Gaelic language plan 2022 to 2027 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@aberlour.org.uk>
Sent: Friday, September 20, 2024 11:18 AM
To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]>

@gov.scot>

Subject: Aberlour - School Meal Debt

Hi [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Nice to chat the other day. Would be great have a further conversation about the school meal debt fund and what we are seeing around delivery.

Let me know if you have any time in the next few weeks.

Thanks


[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Glasgow Regional Office

Southside House, 135 Fifty Pitches Road, Glasgow, G51 4EB

 [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

 [redacted under s38(1)(b)]

 www.aberlour.org.uk

DOCUMENT 33

Minutes of Meeting between Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice and Aberlour Children's Charity Wednesday 18th September 2024

Present:

Shirley-Anne Somerville, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice
SallyAnn Kelly, Chief Executive, Aberlour (SAK)
[redacted under s38(1)(b)], Aberlour ([redacted under s38(1)(b)])
[redacted under s38(1)(b)], Financial Wellbeing Unit
[redacted under s38(1)(b)], Free School Meals Expansion Team ([redacted
under s38(1)(b)])

[redacted – out of scope]

School Meals Debt Fund (“the Fund”)

1. Aberlour had received a number of applications from families for funding support to help meet school meal debt that they had accrued. This had led Aberlour to question why there was an increase in these applications and they reported that local authorities appeared to have increased efforts to reclaim debt while the School Meals Debt Fund had been open. Aberlour raised concerns about the activity of local authorities and suggested that there was a lack of awareness that the Fund existed and inconsistent in approach by local authorities.
2. [redacted under s38(1)(b)] shared an update on the operation of the Fund from Scottish Government's perspective and advised that 28 local authorities have bid into the fund and bids are greater than the available funds. Scottish Government wasn't aware that some local authorities were still pursuing families for school meals debt. [redacted under s38(1)(b)] thanked Aberlour for sharing that information and invited Aberlour to contact him with further information.

ACTION - Aberlour to send details of its concerns regarding the operations of the Fund to officials for further information. Aberlour and FSM Team are to meet on 25 September.

[redacted – out of scope]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]
23 September 2024

DOCUMENT 34 – Freedom of Information request and response

[redacted section 25(1) information otherwise available – information available from [The School Meal Debt Fund: FOI release - gov.scot](#)]

DOCUMENT 35 - Freedom of Information request and response

[redacted section 25(1) – information otherwise available [School Meal Debt Fund: FOI release - gov.scot](#)]

DOCUMENT 36 – Exchange between SG and COSLA

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)] <[redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 26 September 2024 09:34
To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@cosla.gov.uk>
Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@cosla.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@cosla.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: School Meal Debt

Thanks [redacted under s38(1)(b)].

Yes, happy to do that.

We have followed up with LAs for some clarity on their applications for support. Once we have that we'll [redacted under 29(1)(a)]. Feel free to send any queries/individuals in our direction.

Cheers

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

Free School Meals Expansion – Support and Wellbeing Unit, Learning Directorate
Leudachadh air Biadh Sgoile An-Asgaidh – Aonad Taice is Maith, Buidheann-
stiùiridh an Ionnsachaidh

Area 2-C(North) Victoria Quay Edinburgh Scotland EH6 6QQ/Raon 2-C Cidhe
Bhictòria, Dùn Èideann, Alba EH6 6QQ

[Plana Gàidhlig Riaghaltas na h-Alba 2022-2027 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

[Gaelic language plan 2022 to 2027 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

From: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@cosla.gov.uk>
Sent: Thursday, September 26, 2024 9:28 AM
To: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@cosla.gov.uk>; [redacted under s38(1)(b)]< [redacted under s38(1)(b)]@cosla.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: School Meal Debt

Morning [redacted under s38(1)(b)],

[redacted – out of scope]

But while we are on the topic, we are getting a bit of traffic on what comes next with the School Meal Debt fund – wondering if you were able to give a bit of an update?

Cheers,

[redacted under s38(1)(b)]

[redacted -out of scope]

Document 37 – Follow-up to Aberdeenshire Council

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Sent: 26 September 2024 15:57

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>

Subject: FW: School Meal Debt

[Attachment: Document 37.1]

Good afternoon [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

I am looking to finalise all responses from local authorities in relation to bids from the School Meal Debt Fund, which was announced in May.

I was wondering if it would be possible to let me have Aberdeenshire Council's returns in response to the asks set out in my email of 5 September (below). I enclose Aberdeenshire Council's original bid template for reference.

If possible, could your council send your return back to me by close on Monday 30 September.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries about this email.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

Document 37.1

BID FOR GRANT SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL MEAL DEBT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

Please ensure completion 1 August 2024

Bid should be returned to:

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Learning Directorate

Free School Meal Team

Area 2-B North

Victoria Quay

Edinburgh

EH6 6QQ

Email - [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

NAME OF LOCAL AUTHORITY: Aberdeenshire Council

Amount of debt accrued to 31 March 2024	£145,751.82
Level of support requested from School Meal Debt Fund	£145,751.82
How is the Local Authority following the COSLA best practice guidance: COSLA Good Practice Principles for School Meal Debt Management.	<p>Aberdeenshire Council follow best practise guidance for debt management using the below procedures and the introduction of the Discretionary FSM panel to assess all case.</p> <p>Aberdeenshire Council Debt Recovery Process</p> <p>This process is communicated with the kitchens so as to not overwhelm any parent or carer that may be experiencing financial difficulty only to make them aware. No pupil will every be refused a meal or identified as having debt this will be dealt with through the back of house procedures detailed below.</p> <p><i>It is important that this procedure is followed correctly.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• As part of the process this task is to be completed once a week only.

- Use the 'Fund Arrears Report' as a reference. This report contains sensitive data. It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that you adhere to GDPR guidance. This report **MUST** be stored in the safe or in a lockable cash box. It must be disposed of each week by shredding.
- Unit supervisors are responsible for Stage 1 and Stage 2 **only**.
- It is important that only one email is sent weekly to parents who have either a low balance (£0.00 to £5.00) – Stage 1 OR are in debt (between -0.01 to -£20.00) – Stage 2.
- It is therefore important that you tick only the relevant balances appropriate to the email template that you wish to send.
 - Stage 1 – Reminder of Low Balance Alert (£0.00 to £5.00)
or
 - Stage 2 – Notification of Debt (-£0.01 to -£20.00)
 - **Please note:** Any pupil with debt over -£20.00 will be managed by the School Meal Debt Team and must **NOT** be ticked.
- Stage 3 and Stage 4 will be managed by the School Meal Debt Team at Gordon House. It is important that these emails are not sent from the school.

Whilst we have removed the chasing of debt from the school kitchens please note that support from yourselves and the Head Teacher is often the best way to ensure that we do reduce debt.

**School Meal Debt Team (Gordon House)
Responsibility –**

*Overdue Payments for -£20.00 and over
to be sent 7 days after stage 2*

*Only select the appropriate accounts of
balances of -£20.00 and over to be
emailed THEN select the template (or it will
automatically default to 1. School Kitchen
– Stage 1 Reminder Low Balance Alert).*

*VERY IMPORTANT – this email MUST only be
sent once if the debt remains over –£20.00.*

*Stage 4:
School Meal Debt Team (Gordon House)
Responsibility –*

*Notification for referral for formal invoicing
(when all previous communication has
failed) stage 4 email sent.*

*Email notification also sent to the Unit
Supervisor, Area Catering Officer, and
SchoolMealDebt in box to make aware.*

*Debt then taken off ipay – all above
notified by email.*

*If any further debt builds up the process
must start again, with communication to
the school or discretionary FSM panel is
appropriate.*

Discretionary FSM Panel

To achieve consistency and equity and as a mechanism for supporting families facing financial hardship a panel consisting of the following officers is convened to assess cases which fall outside Statutory FSM.

The panel includes:

QIM
Representative Headteacher- Cluster Chair
Catering Manager

	<p>Finance Officer Tackling Poverty and Inequality Co-ordinator</p> <p>This panel meets within 48hrs of a referred case submitted by a School or Children's Services. This referral is completed through a Microsoft forms link, once this is submitted an alert is received and a panel meeting is convened.</p> <p>This process enables information to be retained and provide an audit. All cases should be regularly reviewed by the designated person completing the submission. This panel also meet annually to review all cases</p>
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Document 38 – Acknowledgement to Inverclyde Council

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]
Sent: 26 September 2024 09:06
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@inverclyde.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Thanks [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

That is very helpful. I have recorded this and we will be in touch once we have considered the bids.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@inverclyde.gov.uk>
Sent: Monday, September 16, 2024 5:03 PM
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@inverclyde.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests
Importance: High

Classification : Official

Good afternoon [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Inverclyde Council's school meal debt fund update. Please note that we cannot break down into amount of families so we have given pupil numbers. Also, we cannot break down debt per year per child so our figures align with the pupil's last transaction year but this amount may include debt from previous years.

2016/17	£7.00	[redacted S.38 (1)(b)]
2017/18	£217 .00	41 pupils
2018/19	£894.00	79 pupils
2019/20	£11,243.61	262 pupils
2020/21	£13,573.63	192 pupils
2021/22	£17,530.89	290 pupils
2022/23	£18,268.86	320 pupils
2023/24	£12,307.00	281 pupils

Overall total £ 74,041.99 This is less than initial submission of £76,364.

Any questions please do not hesitate to ask.

Thanks

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]
Policy & Commissioning Team Leader
Education Services
Inverclyde Council
1 Wallace Place
Greenock
PA15 1JB

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 5:10 PM
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot
Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot
Subject: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests
Importance: High

Good afternoon colleagues

On Monday 23 August, I issued an email asking if you could provide further information in relation to your recent bids for funding from the Scottish Government's School Meal Debt Fund by Friday 30 August.

I recognise there are many people on annual leave at this time of year however, in order to allow us to process all bids, could I ask if you could send your returns to me by close of play on Monday 16 September, since this will enable us to receive all returns following our return from the Edinburgh September long weekend next week.

To recap, I would be most grateful if you could provide the following information:

- How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years.
- If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split?
- How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year.

I enclosed your individual bid forms with my email on 23 August however, should you wish me to send this again, please contact me next week and I will forward it to you.

I look forward to receiving your replies.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

Document 39 – Follow-up to Moray Council

[attachment document 39.1]

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 26 September 2024 15:56
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@moray.gov.uk>
Subject: FW: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests
Importance: High

Good afternoon [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

I am looking to finalise all responses from local authorities in relation to bids from the School Meal Debt Fund, which was announced in May.

I was wondering if it would be possible to let me have Moray Council's returns in response to the asks set out in my email of 5 September (below). I enclose Moray Council's original bid template for reference.

If possible, could your council send your return back to me by close on Monday 30 September.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries about this email.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 5:10 PM
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests
Importance: High

Good afternoon colleagues

On Monday 23 August, I issued an email asking if you could provide further information in relation to your recent bids for funding from the Scottish Government's School Meal Debt Fund by Friday 30 August.

I recognise there are many people on annual leave at this time of year however, in order to allow us to process all bids, could I ask if you could send your returns to me by close of play on Monday 16 September, since this will enable us to receive all returns following our return from the Edinburgh September long weekend next week.

To recap, I would be most grateful if you could provide the following information:

- How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years.
- If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split?
- How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year.

I enclosed your individual bid forms with my email on 23 August however, should you wish me to send this again, please contact me next week and I will forward it to you.

I look forward to receiving your replies.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

Document 39.1

BID FOR GRANT SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL MEAL DEBT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

Please ensure completion 1 August 2024

Bid should be returned to:

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Learning Directorate

Free School Meal Team

Area 2-B North

Victoria Quay

Edinburgh

EH6 6QQ

Email - [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

NAME OF LOCAL AUTHORITY: Moray Council

Amount of debt accrued to 31 March 2024	£38295.85
Level of support requested from School Meal Debt Fund	£38295.85
How is the Local Authority following the COSLA best practice guidance: COSLA Good Practice Principles for School Meal Debt Management.	<p>Moray is following the principles of the COSLA Good Practice Principles for School Meal Management in the following ways:</p> <p>Principle 1: Not all children and young people are aware that they are in receipt of free school meals so, to maintain discretion, views are not routinely considered in terms of school meal debt specifically. However, children and young people are canvassed for their views as part of the cost of the school day agenda. Strategies are deployed locally within schools to support the welfare of children and young people by utilising PEF. Moray will give consideration as to how we can further include the views of parents/carers in our school meal debit policy and practice.</p> <p>Principle 2: If an account is in debt the parent/carers is informed either via (if they use our online system) or a letter that is discreetly given to the child to take home in a sealed envelope.</p>

Principle 3: Our email/letter has information on how to pay online or in person, plus a link to information regarding free school meals.

Principle 4: Processes for school debt includes all departments (schools, education management, catering, finance and revenues & benefits).

Principle 5: Email/letter reminders are sent to parents weekly during term time to minimise the potential for escalating debt. Invoices are raised twice an academic year for any account in arrears of £24.00 and above.

Principle 6: As above.

Principle 7: As above for reminders. When invoices are sent out, all the relevant information is added to the invoice. For example, dates when meals were taken, total amount due, how to pay, who to contact if there is any difficulty in paying.

Principle 8: Entitlement to free school meals and school clothing grants is automatically assessed when Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction is claimed, as these are also means tested.

Principle 9: Moray actively promotes and signposts parents/carers to all sources of support available to them.

Principle 10: Entitlement to free school meals and school clothing grants is automatically assessed when Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction is claimed, as these are also means tested. No additional eligibility evidence is required. We are aware we have discretionary power. We consider requests on a case-by-case basis, as a situation becomes known to us. We currently have 3 young people in receipt of FSM through discretionary power.

Principle 11: Clearing of school debt is at the local authority discretion.

Principle 12: PEF is generally used to support groups of vulnerable children and young people

	<p>but our schools are aware that PEF can be used to support discretionary meal provision or debt clearance in particular cases. In general, clearing of school debt is at the local authority discretion and unpaid debt is more likely to be written off, causing a budget pressure for the local authority.</p>
--	--

Document 40 – Invitation for bid from City of Edinburgh Council

[attachment document 40.1]

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Sent: 27 September 2024 09:48

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@edinburgh.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Letter from First Minister

Importance: High

Good morning [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

I attach a bid form template for completion. Could you return it to me, along with responses to the requests below, by close on **Wednesday 9 October** [redacted - out of scope].

To help us our the decision process, we have asked all local authorities if they could provide the following information:

- How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years.
- If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split?

How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further enquiries about this email.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@edinburgh.gov.uk>

Sent: Friday, September 27, 2024 7:44 AM

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Letter from First Minister

Dear [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

It has just come to my attention that we don't seem to have submitted our application for the School Meal Debt Fund. I appreciate that we are now well beyond the deadline for claims of 1 August, but wondered if there may still be an opportunity to submit a late claim?

Thank you for your consideration

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Previous text [redacted - out of scope]

Document 40.1

BID FOR GRANT SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL MEAL DEBT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

Please ensure completion 1 August 2024

Bid should be returned to:

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Learning Directorate

Free School Meal Team

Area 2-B North

Victoria Quay

Edinburgh

EH6 6QQ

Email - [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

NAME OF LOCAL AUTHORITY:

Amount of debt accrued to 31 March 2024	
Level of support requested from School Meal Debt Fund	
How is the Local Authority following the COSLA best practice guidance: COSLA Good Practice Principles for School Meal Debt Management.	

Document 41 – email to Highland Council re: bid progress

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Sent: 01 October 2024 14:43

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] (Highland Council) <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@highland.gov.uk>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] (Revenues) <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@highland.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: School meal debt write off fund

Good afternoon both

We are currently in the process of analysing both the bids, and the follow-up information, we have received from local authorities in recent weeks. We will notify all local authorities once these have been considered.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] (Highland Council) <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@highland.gov.uk>

Sent: Tuesday, October 1, 2024 6:38 AM

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> [redacted s.38(1)(b)] (Revenues) <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@highland.gov.uk>

Subject: School meal debt write off fund

Good morning, [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

We're just wondering when the SG is intending to notify councils of bid outcomes?

With thanks

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Chief Officer Revenues & Commercialisation | Corporate | Glenurquhart Road | Inverness, IV3 5NX | 01463 702411

Unless related to the business of The Highland Council, the views or opinions expressed within this e-mail are those of the sender and do not necessarily reflect those of The Highland Council, or associated bodies, nor does this e-mail form part of any contract unless so stated.

Mura h-eil na beachdan a tha air an cur an cèill sa phost-d seo a' buntainn ri gnothachas Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd, 's ann leis an neach fhèin a chuir air falbh e a tha iad, is chan eil iad an-còmhnaidh a' riochdachadh beachdan na Comhairle, no buidhnean buntainneach, agus chan eil am post-d seo na phàirt de chunnradh sam bith mura h-eil sin air innse.

Document 42 – Return from Moray Council

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@moray.gov.uk>

Sent: 01 October 2024 14:01

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Sincere apologies for the delay in responding to you.

The information is as follows:

- How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years.

This includes previous financial years

- If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split?

Financial Year	School meal debt
20/21	501.90
21/22	357.10
22/23	11682.26
23/24	25754.59

- How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year.

Financial Year	Number of Families
20/21	6
21/22	[redacted S.38 (1)(b)]
22/23	113
23/24	439

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Sent: 26 September 2024 15:56

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@moray.gov.uk>

Subject: FW: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Importance: High

Warning. This email contains one or more attachments and originates from outside of the Moray Council network.

You should only open these attachments if you are certain that the email is genuine and the content is safe.

Warning. This email contains web links and originates from outside of the Moray Council network.

You should only click on these links if you are certain that the email is genuine and the content is safe.

Good afternoon [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

I am looking to finalise all responses from local authorities in relation to bids from the School Meal Debt Fund, which was announced in May.

I was wondering if it would be possible to let me have Moray Council's returns in response to the asks set out in my email of 5 September (below). I enclose Moray Council's original bid template for reference.

If possible, could your council send your return back to me by close on Monday 30 September.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries about this email.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 5:10 PM

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Importance: High

Good afternoon colleagues

On Monday 23 August, I issued an email asking if you could provide further information in relation to your recent bids for funding from the Scottish Government's School Meal Debt Fund by Friday 30 August.

I recognise there are many people on annual leave at this time of year however, in order to allow us to process all bids, could I ask if you could send your returns to me by close of play on Monday 16 September, since this will enable us to receive all returns following our return from the Edinburgh September long weekend next week.

To recap, I would be most grateful if you could provide the following information:

- How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years.
- If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split?
- How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year.

I enclosed your individual bid forms with my email on 23 August however, should you wish me to send this again, please contact me next week and I will forward it to you.

I look forward to receiving your replies.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

Document 43 – email to South Lanarkshire Council on bid progress

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Sent: 07 October 2024 15:59

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>;

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Hi [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

We're in the process of assessing the bids received from local authorities and will be in touch in due course to confirm allocations.

Thanks,

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Free School Meals Expansion Policy Manager | Support and Wellbeing Unit |
Learning Directorate | Scottish Government | T: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>

Sent: Monday, October 7, 2024 9:53 AM

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Good Morning [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Just wanted to check to see if there is any update on the allocation of funding for the school meal debt write off?

Thanks for any update.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

South Lanarkshire Council
Finance & Corporate Resources

Almada Street

Hamilton

ML3 0AA

Tel [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

email [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@southlanarkshire.gov.uk



Contact us via an online
Sign Language Interpreter
Contact Scotland BSL

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 5:29 PM

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

Subject: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Good afternoon colleagues

On Monday 23 August, I issued an email asking if you could provide further information in relation to your recent bids for funding from the Scottish Government's School Meal Debt Fund by Friday 30 August.

Please treat this email as confirmation that we have received your returns, we will be in touch with you once we have considered all returns sent to me over the past 2 weeks.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to reply to this email.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

Document 44 – exchanges between SG and Aberlour

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Sent: 07 October 2024 15:59

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Aberlour CPW event on Wednesday

That's great. Thanks [redacted S.38 (1)(b)], just helpful to know generally what was discussed.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Financial Wellbeing Unit

Tackling Child Poverty and Financial Wellbeing Division

Scottish Government

Victoria Quay

Leith

Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Sent: 07 October 2024 15:57

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Aberlour CPW event on Wednesday

Hi [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Thanks for getting in touch.

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] and I met with [redacted s.38(1)(b)] a couple of weeks ago to follow up on what was discussed at the meeting with Cab Sec Social Justice.

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] gave a bit more detail about the issues raised in the meeting with Cab Sec, particularly the approach that one local authority was taking in relation to school meal debt and [redacted S.38 (1)(b)] and I agreed to raise the matter with COSLA, which we have done.

Hope that is helpful – please let me know if anything further is needed.

Thanks,
[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] (she/her)
Free School Meals Expansion Policy Manager | Support and Wellbeing Unit |
Learning Directorate | Scottish Government | T: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Sent: Monday, October 7, 2024 3:50 PM

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)]
<[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted
s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: Aberlour CPW event on Wednesday

Hi [redacted s.38(1)(b)] and [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted - out of scope]

Just in case it comes up at any point could you please send me some feedback on how your meeting with Aberlour went on the 25th please? [redacted S.38 (1)(b)] mentioned that you were meeting them after their meeting with Cab Sec SJ.

It would be helpful to know if any commitments were made so that I'm aware.

Thanks

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Financial Wellbeing Unit

Tackling Child Poverty and Financial Wellbeing Division

Scottish Government

Victoria Quay

Leith

Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

Document 45 – City of Edinburgh Council bid return

[Attachment document 45.1]

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@edinburgh.gov.uk>
Sent: 08 October 2024 07:59
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@edinburgh.gov.uk>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@edinburgh.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Letter from First Minister

Hi [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Thank you for allowing our late claim for this fund.

Please find the template attached.

With regard to years covered our total debt was as follows

March 2019	£44,867
March 2020	£66,244
March 2021	£67,580
March 2022	£63,605
March 2023	£76,869 (fully written off per template)
March 2024	£12,632

I can confirm that I have requested numbers of children/families assisted from the service but haven't received these yet. I will chase this up and forward them on asap.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 27 September 2024 09:48
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@edinburgh.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Letter from First Minister
Importance: High

Good morning [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

I attach a bid form template for completion. Could you return it to me, along with responses to the requests below, by close on **Wednesday 9 October** (I will return from leave on the 10th).

To help us our the decision process, we have asked all local authorities if they could provide the following information:

- How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years.
- If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split?

How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further enquiries about this email.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@edinburgh.gov.uk>
Sent: Friday, September 27, 2024 7:44 AM
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Letter from First Minister

Dear [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

It has just come to my attention that we don't seem to have submitted our application for the School Meal Debt Fund. I appreciate that we are now well beyond the deadline for claims of 1 August, but wondered if there may still be an opportunity to submit a late claim?

Thank you for your consideration

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]
[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[Previous text redacted - Out of Scope]

Document 45.1

BID FOR GRANT SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL MEAL DEBT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

Please ensure completion 1 August 2024

Bid should be returned to:

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Learning Directorate

Free School Meal Team

Area 2-B North

Victoria Quay

Edinburgh

EH6 6QQ

Email - [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

NAME OF LOCAL AUTHORITY: City of Edinburgh Council

Amount of debt accrued to 31 March 2024	£12,632 outstanding at 31 March 2024 £76,869 written off in March 2023
Level of support requested from School Meal Debt Fund	£89,321
How is the Local Authority following the COSLA best practice guidance: COSLA Good Practice Principles for School Meal Debt Management.	The City of Edinburgh Council fully comply with the guidance and principles of the COSLA Good Practice Principles for School Meal Debt Management

Document 46 – Reminder to Aberdeenshire Council

[Attachment document 48.1]

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Sent: 24 October 2024 16:54

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>

Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>

Subject: FW: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Importance: High

Good afternoon [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

I am looking to finalise all responses from local authorities in relation to bids from the School Meal Debt Fund, which was announced in May.

I was wondering if it would be possible to let me have Aberdeenshire Council's returns in response to the asks set out in my email of 5 September (below). I enclose Aberdeenshire Council's original bid template for reference.

Could your council send your return back to me by close on Wednesday 30 October to allow me to begin work on processing requests.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries about this email.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 5:10 PM

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Importance: High

Good afternoon colleagues

On Monday 23 August, I issued an email asking if you could provide further information in relation to your recent bids for funding from the Scottish Government's School Meal Debt Fund by Friday 30 August.

I recognise there are many people on annual leave at this time of year however, in order to allow us to process all bids, could I ask if you could send your returns to me

by close of play on Monday 16 September, since this will enable us to receive all returns following our return from the Edinburgh September long weekend next week.

To recap, I would be most grateful if you could provide the following information:

- How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years.
- If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split?
- How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year.

I enclosed your individual bid forms with my email on 23 August however, should you wish me to send this again, please contact me next week and I will forward it to you.

I look forward to receiving your replies.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

Document 46.1

BID FOR GRANT SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL MEAL DEBT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

Please ensure completion 1 August 2024

Bid should be returned to:

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Learning Directorate

Free School Meal Team

Area 2-B North

Victoria Quay

Edinburgh

EH6 6QQ

Email - [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

NAME OF LOCAL AUTHORITY: Aberdeenshire Council

Amount of debt accrued to 31 March 2024	£145,751.82
Level of support requested from School Meal Debt Fund	£145,751.82
How is the Local Authority following the COSLA best practice guidance: COSLA Good Practice Principles for School Meal Debt Management.	<p>Aberdeenshire Council follow best practise guidance for debt management using the below procedures and the introduction of the Discretionary FSM panel to assess all case.</p> <p>Aberdeenshire Council Debt Recovery Process</p> <p>This process is communicated with the kitchens so as to not overwhelm any parent or carer that may be experiencing financial difficulty only to make them aware. No pupil will every be refused a meal or identified as having debt this will be dealt with through the back of house procedures detailed below.</p> <p><i>It is important that this procedure is followed correctly.</i></p>

- As part of the process this task is to be completed **once a week only**.
- Use the 'Fund Arrears Report' as a reference. This report contains sensitive data. It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that you adhere to GDPR guidance. This report **MUST** be stored in the safe or in a lockable cash box. It must be disposed of each week by shredding.
- Unit supervisors are responsible for Stage 1 and Stage 2 **only**.
- It is important that only one email is sent weekly to parents who have either a low balance (£0.00 to £5.00) – Stage 1 OR are in debt (between -0.01 to -£20.00) – Stage 2.
- It is therefore important that you tick only the relevant balances appropriate to the email template that you wish to send.
 - Stage 1 – Reminder of Low Balance Alert (£0.00 to £5.00)
or
 - Stage 2 – Notification of Debt (-£0.01 to -£20.00)
 - **Please note:** Any pupil with debt over -£20.00 will be managed by the School Meal Debt Team and must **NOT** be ticked.
- Stage 3 and Stage 4 will be managed by the School Meal Debt Team at Gordon House. It is important that these emails are not sent from the school.

Whilst we have removed the chasing of debt from the school kitchens please note that support from yourselves and

the Head Teacher is often the best way to ensure that we do reduce debt.

**School Meal Debt Team (Gordon House)
Responsibility –**

Overdue Payments for -£20.00 and over to be sent 7 days after stage 2

Only select the appropriate accounts of balances of -£20.00 and over to be emailed THEN select the template (or it will automatically default to 1. School Kitchen – Stage 1 Reminder Low Balance Alert).

VERY IMPORTANT – this email MUST only be sent once if the debt remains over –£20.00.

*Stage 4:
School Meal Debt Team (Gordon House)
Responsibility –*

Notification for referral for formal invoicing (when all previous communication has failed) stage 4 email sent.

Email notification also sent to the Unit Supervisor, Area Catering Officer, and SchoolMealDebt in box to make aware.

Debt then taken off ipay – all above notified by email.

If any further debt builds up the process must start again, with communication to the school or discretionary FSM panel is appropriate.

Discretionary FSM Panel

To achieve consistency and equity and as a mechanism for supporting families facing financial hardship a panel consisting of the following officers is convened to assess cases which fall outside Statutory FSM.

The panel includes:

	<p>QIM Representative Headteacher- Cluster Chair Catering Manager Finance Officer Tackling Poverty and Inequality Co-ordinator</p> <p>This panel meets within 48 hrs of a referred case submitted by a School or Children's Services. This referral is completed through a Microsoft forms link, once this is submitted an alert is received and a panel meeting is convened.</p> <p>This process enables information to be retained and provide an audit. All cases should be regularly reviewed by the designated person completing the submission. This panel also meet annually to review all cases</p>
--	---

Document 47 – email to Dundee City Council on progress

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 30 October 2024 11:06
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@dundeecity.gov.uk>
Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Good morning [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted - out of scope]

With regards to an update, we have been collecting information from all local authorities about the number of children and families being covered by school meal debt cancelling and are currently in the process of collating those returns. As soon as we are in a position to announce allocations, we will write to all local authorities to inform them.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@dundeecity.gov.uk>
Sent: Wednesday, October 30, 2024 11:02 AM
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: Re: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Hi [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted - out of scope]. Do you have an update for me on this ?

Regards
[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]
[redacted s.38(1)(b)]
Corporate Services
Corporate Services Department

Dundee City Council
Dundee House
Floor 4
50 North Lindsay Street
Dundee DD1 1NZ
[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@dundeecity.gov.uk

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 05 September 2024 17:28
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Good afternoon colleagues

On Monday 23 August, I issued an email asking if you could provide further information in relation to your recent bids for funding from the Scottish Government's School Meal Debt Fund by Friday 30 August.

Please treat this email as confirmation that we have received your returns, we will be in touch with you once we have considered all returns sent to me over the past 2 weeks.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to reply to this email.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

Document 48 – Aberdeenshire Council’s return

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>
Sent: 31 October 2024 09:41
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Hi [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Thank you, confirm agreement in the breakdown figures by year %.

Kind Regards
[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]
Strategic Finance Team
Aberdeenshire Council – Woodhill House – Westburn Road – Aberdeen – AB15 6GB

Tel: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]
Email: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 30 October 2024 16:38
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>
Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot
Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Good afternoon all

Please see my calculations below, broken down by year, in the figures in red from Diane’s reply at 13:59 this afternoon. Grateful if you could confirm agreement.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: Wednesday, October 30, 2024 4:19 PM
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>
Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>; [redacted

s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Thank you [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

We may be back in touch just to make sure our figures tally with yours.

Cheers

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Free School Meals Expansion – Support and Wellbeing Unit, Learning Directorate
Leudachadh air Biadh Sgoile An-Asgaidh – Aonad Taice is Maith, Buidheann-
stiùiridh an Ionnsachaidh

Area 2-C(North) Victoria Quay Edinburgh Scotland EH6 6QQ/Raon 2-C Cidhe
Bhictòria, Dùn Èideann, Alba EH6 6QQ

Plana Gàidhlig Riaghaltas na h-Alba 2022-2027 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

Gaelic language plan 2022 to 2027 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>

Sent: Wednesday, October 30, 2024 1:59 PM

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Hi [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Please see responses below

- How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years.

This claim relates to 8 years debt

- If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split?

2017 -	4% (£5,830.07)
2018 -	11% (£16,032.70)
2019 -	20% (£29,150.36)
2020 -	11% (£16,032.70)
2021 -	14% (£20,405.26)

2022 - 15% (£21,862.77)
2023 - 18% (£26,235.33)
2024 - 7% (£10,202.63)

Total: £145,751.82

- How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year.

When we receive the allowance the number of families support will be 837

2017 - 39
2018 - 105
2019 - 210
2020 - 179
2021 - 181
2022 - 230
2023 - 245
2024 - 151

This total equates to 1340 as some families will be helped over multiple years so counted more than once in the annualised breakdown.

Kind Regards
[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Strategic Finance Team

Aberdeenshire Council – Woodhill House – Westburn Road – Aberdeen – AB15 6GB

Tel: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Email: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Sent: 30 October 2024 12:17

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>

Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot; [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

Subject: FW: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot. Learn why this is important

Good afternoon, [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

I hope you are keeping well.

My colleague [redacted s.38(1)(b)] was in touch last week regarding the return for support for funding from the school meal debt fund. We have now completed the process for the bids from the other LAs who asked for support, and we are keen to ensure Aberdeenshire is supported. Can you let us know if we are likely to receive the information requested on 5 September? Very happy to chat.

Best wishes

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

Free School Meals Expansion – Support and Wellbeing Unit, Learning Directorate
Leudachadh air Biadh Sgoile An-Asgaidh – Aonad Taice is Maith, Buidheann-
stiùiridh an Ionnsachaidh

Area 2-C(North) Victoria Quay Edinburgh Scotland EH6 6QQ/Raon 2-C Cidhe
Bhictòria, Dùn Èideann, Alba EH6 6QQ

Plana Gàidhlig Riaghaltas na h-Alba 2022-2027 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

Gaelic language plan 2022 to 2027 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Sent: Thursday, October 24, 2024 4:54 PM

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>

Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>

Subject: FW: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Importance: High

Good afternoon [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

I am looking to finalise all responses from local authorities in relation to bids from the School Meal Debt Fund, which was announced in May.

I was wondering if it would be possible to let me have Aberdeenshire Council's returns in response to the asks set out in my email of 5 September (below). I enclose Aberdeenshire Council's original bid template for reference.

Could your council send your return back to me by close on Wednesday 30 October to allow me to begin work on processing requests.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries about this email.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 5:10 PM
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests
Importance: High

Good afternoon colleagues

On Monday 23 August, I issued an email asking if you could provide further information in relation to your recent bids for funding from the Scottish Government's School Meal Debt Fund by Friday 30 August.

I recognise there are many people on annual leave at this time of year however, in order to allow us to process all bids, could I ask if you could send your returns to me by close of play on Monday 16 September, since this will enable us to receive all returns following our return from the Edinburgh September long weekend next week.

To recap, I would be most grateful if you could provide the following information:

- How many financial years your claim relates to, i.e. is the claim for the 2023-24 financial year, or does it include previous financial years.
- If the bid is over multiple years, what is the split?
- How many children/families is have been supported by writing off this school meal debt for, up to 31 March 2024. Again, if multiple years we would appreciate the numbers per year.

I enclosed your individual bid forms with my email on 23 August however, should you wish me to send this again, please contact me next week and I will forward it to you.

I look forward to receiving your replies.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

Document 49 – email to Falkirk Council re: bid progress

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 07 November 2024 17:34
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@falkirk.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Falkirk Council - BID FOR GRANT SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL MEAL DEBT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

Hi [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

I have been doing work on this during this week.

Once we have received clearance, we will write to all local authorities to let you know the allocations.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@falkirk.gov.uk>
Sent: 04 November 2024 14:09
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Falkirk Council - BID FOR GRANT SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL MEAL DEBT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

Hi [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

I hope you are well.

Just checking as there have been a few changes in Falkirk.

Has a decision been made on allocating this funding?

Thanks, [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]
Children Services Resources Manager

Suite 1A, Falkirk Community Stadium,
4 Stadium Way, Grangemouth, Falkirk FK2 9EE

T: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]
E: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@falkirk.gov.uk



From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 23 August 2024 14:33
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@falkirk.gov.uk>
Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot
Subject: RE: Falkirk Council - BID FOR GRANT SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL MEAL DEBT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

Hi [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted - out of scope]

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

Previous text [redacted - out of scope]

Document 52

Pam Duncan-Glancy has tabled 6 PQ's related to school meal debt during the period of your request from 26 August to 25 November 2024. The reference numbers for those PQs are S6W-30642, S6W-30643, S6W-30644, S6W-30645, S6W-30646 and S6W-30647.

This information is redacted under section 25(1) - information otherwise available. These questions, and their associated answers, are available through the following web links:

S6W-30642: [Written question and answer: S6W-30642 | Scottish Parliament Website](#)

S6W-30643: [Written question and answer: S6W-30643 | Scottish Parliament Website](#)

S6W-30644: [Written question and answer: S6W-30644 | Scottish Parliament Website](#)

S6W-30645: [Written question and answer: S6W-30645 | Scottish Parliament Website](#)

S6W-30646: [Written question and answer: S6W-30646 | Scottish Parliament Website](#)

S6W-30647: [Written question and answer: S6W-30647 | Scottish Parliament Website](#)

Document 53 – correspondence with South Ayrshire Council

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@south-ayrshire.gov.uk>

Sent: 13 November 2024 09:35

To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund 2024-25 - Letter from First Minister

Hi [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

I was wondering if there was any update on the allocation of funding for the clearance of school meal debt.

Many thanks

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | [redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Housing, Operations & Development | [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@south-ayrshire.gov.uk | Direct Line: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Mobile: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] | South Ayrshire Council | County Buildings | Wellington Square | Ayr | KA7 1DR | www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Stiùiriche Seirbheis - Riaghladh Goireasan | Taigheadas, Obraichean agus Leasachadh | [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@south-ayrshire.gov.uk | Direct Line: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Mobile: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] | www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk



**I support South Ayrshire's
Parenting Promise**

Previous text [redacted - out of scope]

Document 54 – Advice for Cab Sec Education on school meal debt

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]
Food, Nutrition and Clothing Team, IAW
November 2024

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

School Meal Debt Fund – [redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

Priority and Purpose

1. Routine. This advice offers you an update on the outcome of the bidding process by Local Authorities to the School Meal Debt Fund [redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

Recommendation

2. Recommends that you:
 - Note the update on the outcome of the bidding process for Local Authorities seeking support to clear school meal debt.
 - [redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

Context and Issues

3. In June 2022, Aberlour published a report with the findings of research they had commissioned on school meal debt in Scotland. The research is based on FOI requests made to local authorities in December 2021. The research suggests that there is approximately £1.5m of meal debt in Scotland. Aberlour subsequently published their report on [Universal Credit Deductions for Households with Children Report](#) in November 2022. This was followed by a campaign in early 2024 with the Scottish Sun calling for the Scottish Government, and local authorities, to work together to cancel existing school meal debt for struggling families.
4. [redacted - section 30(b)(i)]. To help the management of school meal debt COSLA issued guidance for Local Authorities to ensure good practice in February 2023. [redacted - section 30(b)(i)].
5. In December 2023, the former First Minister wrote to the Scottish Sun and Aberlour resolving to address the issue of school meal debt and highlighting plans to provide one-off financial support to local authorities who wish to cancel school meal debt as part of the budget process.

Bids from Local Authorities

6. The First Minister wrote to Local Authorities on 15 May 2024 advising them of the creation of a one-off emergency fund of £1.5m to support any Local

Authorities who wished to take steps to cancel school meal debt while adhering to the guidance produced by COSLA on the issue.

7. The funding was made available to support retrospective debt which local authorities may have accrued prior to April 2024. Debt accrued after April 2024 was not considered as part of this offer. In order to ensure equity of approach across all Local Authorities, the scheme was made available to those authorities who had previously taken action to clear school meal debt, as well as those who have not previously cleared debt.
8. As part of the bid, Local Authorities were asked to highlight the amount of school meal debt accrued as of 31 March 2024, as well as the amount that they were seeking to write off, with returns due back to the Free School Meals Team by 1 August. Due to the holiday period an extension was given to a number of Local Authorities, and this was then followed up with a further period where the team sought clarification on the contents of bids.

Analysis of Bids

9. 29 Local Authorities have sought a total of £2,877,287.97 support, with bids ranging in scale from £7,330 to £655,032. A breakdown of debt accrued and the request for support by each authority can be found at Annex A. [redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

10. [redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

11. [redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

12. [redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

13. [redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

14. [redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

15. [redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

16. [redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

Officials Copy List

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]
Comms Ed

Bid and Proposed Allocations

Local Authority	Total Bid	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Aberdeen City	£411,977.90	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Aberdeenshire	£145,751.82	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Angus	£25,872.90	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Argyll and Bute	£24,348.66	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Clackmannanshire	£30,624	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Dumfries and Galloway	£29,439.63	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Dundee City	£21,318.68	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
East Ayrshire	£82,180.63	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
East Dunbartonshire	£74,230.69	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
East Lothian	£54,354.71	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
East Renfrewshire	£53,760.77	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Edinburgh, City of	£89,321	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Falkirk	£60,181.31	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Fife	£81,495	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Glasgow City	£655,032	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Highland	£115,747.76	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Inverclyde	£74,041.99	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Midlothian	£50,030	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Moray	£38,295.85	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

North Ayrshire	£314,843	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
North Lanarkshire	£21,263	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Orkney Islands	£7,330.52	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Perth and Kinross	£29,310.43	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Renfrewshire	£106,077.68	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Scottish Borders	£3,908.12	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Shetland Islands	£15,950	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
South Ayrshire	£28,214.73	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
South Lanarkshire	£224,215	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
Stirling	£8,170.19	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]
SCOTLAND	£2,877,287.97	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]	[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

[redacted - section 30(b)(i)]

Document 55 – email to Argyll and Bute Council re: bid progress

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 November 2024 16:03
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@argyll-bute.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Hi [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

We are waiting approval to issue, I'm hoping we'll be good to go in the coming weeks.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@argyll-bute.gov.uk>
Sent: 08 November 2024 10:30
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)] <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: Fw: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Classification: OFFICIAL

Morning [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

We are looking at moving forward with chasing up debt arrears once again and wonder if there has been any decision by Scottish Government in relation to the write off of historic FSM debt following the returns that we made in August. It would be helpful for our planning if we had notification of any assistance that we will be receiving.

Thanks

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]

[redacted s.38(1)(b)]
School Services Support Manager

Email: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@argyll-bute.gov.uk
Tel: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]
Mob: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]

From: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 5:28 PM
To: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted

s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot <[redacted s.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: School Meal Debt Fund - Local Authority return requests

Good afternoon colleagues

On Monday 23 August, I issued an email asking if you could provide further information in relation to your recent bids for funding from the Scottish Government's School Meal Debt Fund by Friday 30 August.

Please treat this email as confirmation that we have received your returns, we will be in touch with you once we have considered all returns sent to me over the past 2 weeks.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to reply to this email.

Kind regards

[redacted s.38(1)(b)] | Scottish Government | Support and Wellbeing Unit | Learning Directorate | Area 2-B North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh. EH6 6QQ