

Opposition policy costing- Breakfast Clubs- Labour Party

Description of policy

Labour would introduce ‘fully-funded breakfast clubs’. ‘...we will introduce fully-funded free breakfast clubs in every primary school, including making clubs accessible for children with SEND... this could save parents up to £50 a week on before-school childcare and ensure that every child is getting the best start to the day’ (National Policy Forum, Final Policy Documents, 15 September 2023, p.79, [archived](#))

Bridget Phillipson (Shadow Education Sec) said Labour would provide ‘universal breakfast clubs for every primary school child in England’. Bridget Phillipson: ‘So whether it’s on freezing Council taxes like Labour has been calling for, making sure that we’re better insulating our home so that people are not so exposed to those energy price rises in future and support for families, where I’ve been saying that I believe we should be providing universal breakfast clubs for every primary school child in England to make sure that all of our children get a great start to the day’ (BBC Radio 5 Live, 19 April 2023, [archived](#)).

Additional policy assumptions

Assumptions from Special Advisers

- *This costing contains two distinct models:*
 - **Model 1 – Food only model**, based on an expansion of the current national breakfast programme but instead of paying for 75% of food costs and no staffing (as per current programme), this “fully funded” model covers all food costs and staff time to prepare the food
 - **Model 2 – Before school childcare with breakfast**, this model assumes all the above plus schools providing free childcare in the form of a before school breakfast club for 1 hour
- *These two models will have very different costing envelopes due to the different delivery model outlined*

Assumptions from Special Advisers underpinning Model 1 – Food only model

- As a starting point, the existing model provided by our existing supplier (Family Action) should be used to demonstrate the cost of expanding the offer, modelling a take-up rate of 30% of primary school pupils*. This is a ‘mixed model’ which accounts for the different models of breakfast provision given by schools.

Assumptions from Special Advisers underpinning Model 2 – Before school childcare with breakfast

- A ‘breakfast club’ for 1 hour every morning, in every state-funded primary school, before school starts should be factored in, modelling take-up levels of 30% and 50% of primary school pupils .
- The pupil/staff ratio for children with SEND should be 5:1
- The pupil/staff ratio for non-SEND pupils should be 10:1.

Assumptions from Special Advisers underpinning both models

- Universal breakfast clubs to be rolled out from April 2025.

- Every primary school in England should be eligible for the programme (c.17,000 primary schools)
- Both will provide free breakfast food to all children who want them, but we have used assumptions on take up rates

**Take-up rates within primary schools on the NSBP currently averages at around 30% of pupils taking up a form of breakfast provision (breakfast club, grab and go, or in class bagel).*

Additional technical modelling assumptions or judgements required

We have included two models below. Model 1 is based on the current National School Breakfast Programme original contract and is scaled up to cover all food cost to every primary school and applies a take up rate of 30% based on current take up of the programme.

Model 2 has two tables, table 2.1 shows a take up rate of 30% of pupils, table 2.2 shows a 50% take up rate of pupils. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 both show the cost of providing a before school breakfast club (including childcare) with adequate staff ratios before the school day starts.

Key technical assumptions in Model 1

Two staff in each school will work for 1 hour a day to prepare all food (i.e. toast over 100 bagels) and all other duties associated with providing breakfasts. We have assumed that different schools will want to run different types of delivery that mirror the current national Breakfast club model, including:

- In class bagel – Every child in the school has the option of bagel in the classroom at the start of the day.
- Grab and go / Bagel bar – Schools offer a breakfast (usually a bagel) at a central location for children that want one.
- Before school childcare with breakfast – School open early providing parents with childcare before the start of the school day (parents pay for the childcare aspect but breakfast is free)
- Mixed – A small (15 – 30 children) before school breakfast club (parents pay for the childcare aspect but breakfast is free), alongside a grab and go or in class bagel.

Key technical assumptions in Model 2

All Staff work for 1.5 hrs per day (1 hour of childcare plus 15 min at either side for set up and clear up).

Key technical assumptions in both models

- To reflect our best case roll-out rate, we have assumed a staggered start to the new breakfast club scheme, with 1/3 of schools offering breakfast clubs in year 1, 2/3s of schools in year 2, and all schools from year 3 onwards.
- The numbers of pupils and schools have been taken from the Autumn 2023 School Census. We have assumed these are static with no changes to the number of pupils or schools factored in given the take up assumptions will be a much larger factor.
- Inflation has been incorporated using CPI¹ to appropriately reflect growth in food prices.
- We have assumed that staff are paid at the National Living Wage and have included employer staff on-costs at 29% of pay (this includes NICs, pension contributions, apprenticeship levy etc).

¹ OBR, November 2023. [Economy supplementary tables November 2023-3.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

This is in-line with wider departmental assumptions around employer staff on-costs for non-teaching staff.

Limitations include a potential underestimate of staffing costs for models which include a childcare element. The staffing requirement has been calculated by dividing the number of pupils taking up a breakfast club by 10 for non-SEND pupils and 5 for SEND pupils. In reality, schools may need more staff in place to maintain these ratios (e.g. in a club with 8 non-SEND pupils, 1 member of staff will still be required).

Estimates below do not include capital costs as we have not undertaken an assessment of need for capital. There are no capital costs factored into the current programme.

Cost/Revenue to the Exchequer over five years

Please summarise spending impacts over the next five years

Please note, these are cash costs, uplifted for expected price and wage increases.

Model 1, Table 1 **food only model – 30% pupil take up**

	DEL				
	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Programme	£53m	£108m	£165m	£168m	£173m
Barnett consequential (18.75% uplift)	£10m	£20m	£31m	£32m	£32m
Total	£63m	£128m	£196m	£200m	£205m

Model 2, Table 2.1 **Before school childcare with breakfast provided – 30% pupil take up**

	DEL				
	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Programme	£240m	£493m	£762m	£784m	£808m
Barnett consequential (18.75% uplift)	£45m	£92m	£143m	£147m	£152m
Total	£285m	£586m	£905m	£931m	£960m

Model 2 table 2.2 **Before school childcare with breakfast provided – 50% pupil take up**

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	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Programme	£394m	£811m	£1254m	£1291m	£1331m
Barnett consequential (18.75% uplift)	£74m	£152m	£235m	£242m	£250m
Total	£468m	£963m	£1489m	£1533m	£1581m

Model 2 assumes staffing rates to provide childcare/staff ratios of 10:1 for non-SEND pupils and 5:1 for SEND pupils; plus all the provider set-up, provider ongoing fixed costs, food and delivery costs and assumptions in table 1.

DfE admin costs have not been factored into any referenced figures which would increase from current costs due to the significant increase in the scale of the programme.

NB – the large increases seen in all models from 2025-26 to 2026-27, and 2026-27 to 2027-28 are due to the staggered roll out of scheme as set out above.

Comparison with current system (if applicable):

The current National Schools Breakfast Programme (NSBP) has ~ 2,700 schools that provide ~350,000 breakfasts each day. With the current eligibility criteria ~10,000 schools are eligible for this programme with funding for 2,500 schools on a first come first served basis. In summer 2023 we extended this to 2,700 schools. There are other providers operating including Magic Breakfast, Greggs and Kellogg's amongst others who also provide funding for school breakfast clubs.

The current model covers 75% of food and delivery costs with schools providing 25%. We do not cover staffing costs (which is usually two members of staff at teaching assistant rate for 1 hour each) or set-up costs (e.g. purchase of equipment like toasters) and these costs are covered by the school.

Take-up rates within primary schools on the NSBP currently averages at around 30% of pupils taking up a form of breakfast provision (breakfast club, grab and go, or in class bagel).

Unlike the current national school breakfast club programme which provides 75% of funding for schools the models being costed are "fully-funded" and provide 100% funding for such clubs in each school.

Other comments (including other Departments consulted):

This costing was produced by DfE.

To be completed by Permanent Secretary's Office
Date costing signed off:

04/01/24

[If applicable]

Date revised costing signed off: