

SERVICE UPDATE

<u>Name of Function:</u>	Families and Communities Education and Lifelong Learning
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<u>Title of Update:</u>	Service Update – Bright Start Breakfasts Fund
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Introduction

The purpose of this Service Update is to provide Elected Members with an update, following our successful application to Scottish Government Bright Start Breakfasts Fund application, on behalf of Aberdeen City Council.

Background

We previously provided a Service Update in February 2025 on Breakfast Provision in the city. We indicated then that we were waiting for a new national policy commitment or directive which came with resource to deliver on that policy locally.

The provision of free breakfasts for school pupils in Scotland is not a universal entitlement. However, as anticipated, the Scottish Government announced in the 2025/26 Budget that it is investing £3million to expand access to breakfast clubs, in a targeted way, helping more primary school children get a healthy start to the day.

Bright Start Breakfasts Fund

The aim of the Bright Start Breakfasts Fund is to build on existing levels of breakfast provision and expand access to breakfast clubs across Scotland to primary school children. Funding will support existing breakfast clubs to expand their provision, as well as support the establishment of new breakfast clubs. Funding will be prioritised towards families who need it most based on income or risk of living in poverty. It will also be focused in areas where access to a breakfast club is most needed. The funding is not being allocated per Local Authority, but by application. Applications opened on 14 May and closed on 2 June 2025.

Breakfast Provision in Aberdeen – Current Position

The provision of free breakfasts has been on the radar for a while, as part of the tackling child poverty agenda, and providing a healthy start to the school day. We have been preparing for this announcement coming and have a good overview of where we have provision and where there are gaps

As has been reported to Committee recently, we have a mixed model of breakfast provision in Aberdeen. There is registered provision which is a paid for service designed to meet the needs of working families, or those attending education / training and requiring childcare before the start of the school day. Unregistered provision includes breakfast provided by our catering service, at low or no cost; and school run provision resourced via Pupil Equity Funding to provide a positive start to the school day. Approximately 70% of Primary Schools currently have or have access to breakfast provision, for example run within their school or at a local community centre close by. And around 50% of Secondary Schools have a breakfast offer for pupils.

A map has been created to give a visual overview of where School Age Childcare is located across the city. This is updated regularly and includes breakfast provision. Please click on link below:

https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=15uXp_FoaRzx4vUVxVLILLH0yV-JcKLnp&usp=sharing

The Scottish Government has also undertaken a mapping exercise to understand what breakfast provision exists nationally. Aberdeen City Council has contributed to this work and Officers have working closely with colleagues in the School Age Childcare Division to share our experience locally and to support the next stages of this work. Our input has been welcomed.

Aberdeen City Council Funding Application

Our registered childcare services are less about providing food and more about facilitating the working day, with parents and carers paying to access these services. The majority of registered childcare services in Aberdeen have little or no room to expand. And variations with Care Inspectorate take time to assess and process. Therefore, we felt that the most effective way to fill existing gaps in breakfast provision and to implement an expanded offer in a relatively short timescale, which supports national and local outcome objectives, is for the school catering service to provide food in-house, in our priority ASGs, and for the pupils arriving early to be supervised by Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs).

We had positive discussions with our Facilities and catering colleagues, who already provide breakfast in 6 schools, and with our Head Teachers. We specifically looked at primary schools in our priority ASGs – St Machar, Lochside and Northfield. Some schools already have established breakfast provision and some do not. We have also had some approaches by Parent

Councils and expressions of interest from schools in recent months. So our aim was to essentially double / expand provision at 8 x existing schools and establish 2 new settings, providing a total of 52,250 additional free breakfasts (and 76,000 free breakfasts in total) for our learners in school session 2025/26.

Following our successful application, Aberdeen City Council has been awarded a total of **£134,489.60** for academic year 2025/26. The funding will be used to establish and expand Breakfast Provision at the following Schools:

St Machar ASG

Riverbank (expand and remodel)
Seaton (expand and remodel)
Woodside (expand)

Lochside

Greyhope (expand)
Tullos (expand)

Northfield ASG

Heathryburn (expand)
Manor Park (expand)
Muirfield (new)
Quarryhill (new)
Westpark (expand)

We are planning to deliver 40 places / free breakfasts per school per day x 5 days week x 38 weeks. From 8.30am, starting on Monday 25 August 2025. We have built in some staffing costs into the application which will be over and above existing staffing which may already be in place, e.g. for PSAs and Catering Assistant.

We have worked with Facilities colleagues and Head Teachers to plan and prepare our application and actions are now underway to implement from Monday 25 August. Outcomes of applications were announced in mid-June, in time to get organised for new school session starting in August, but remains embargoed until official media release by Scottish Government.



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