

School Food Standards compliance pilot underway in 18 local authorities across England

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Department for Education (DfE) have launched a School Food Standards Compliance pilot across 18 participating local authorities in England.

The pilot was initially announced in the Levelling Up White Paper earlier this year, which set out the Government's mission to transform the UK into a more equal society. The joint initiative, supported by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), aims to design and test a new approach in supporting schools to comply with the existing School Food Standards.

Local authorities taking part this term have begun introducing some additional questions, as well as making observations related to the School Food Standards. This could include nutrition-focused questions and observations such as menu checks. These additional questions and observations would identify any potential non-compliance with the School Food Standards. Local Authorities will then work with schools to instigate supportive interventions to aid compliance with the standards. The pilot will run in line with the full academic year.

Professor Susan Jebb, FSA Chair, welcomed the 18 local authorities' participation, saying:

Schools play a crucial role in providing children with healthy food to help them concentrate and thrive in the classroom and beyond.

We all want to ensure that the food served in schools meets the standards that have been set. This project will give insight into what's happening in schools today and identify whether additional support is needed to help them to do the very best they can for children and drive positive change in the school food system.

Schools Minister Nick Gibb said:

A healthy school meal supports a child's development. This pilot will help schools meet the school food standards and will ensure more schools offer balanced and nutritious meals to support education throughout the day.

The authorities selected to participate in the pilot are:

Blackpool Council

Lincolnshire County Council*

City of Lincoln Council

Plymouth City Council

Nottingham City Council

Royal Borough of Greenwich

Derbyshire County Council*

Derbyshire Dales District Council

City of Wolverhampton Council

Oldham Council

Herefordshire Council

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

Telford and Wrekin Council

Newham Council

Chelmsford City Council

South Tyneside Council

Peterborough City Council

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

* Lincoln City and Derbyshire Dales are the only district councils within Lincolnshire and Derbyshire whose Food Safety Officers will be participating in the pilot.