

What happens when the full service Universal Credit is introduced?

The full service Universal Credit starts for new claimants living in Stoke-on-Trent and parts of Staffordshire Moorlands on 13th June 2018.

From that date people making a new claim for Universal Credit will only be eligible to receive free school meals for their children if they have an income of less than £7,400 a year.

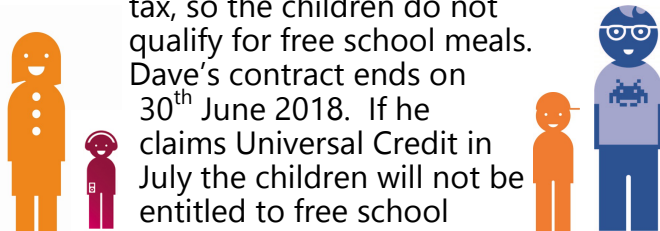
The annual income will be calculated by using either one, two or three assessment periods; they will use more than one if the income is variable. The earnings thresholds are: -

£616.67 for one assessment period
£1,233.34 for two assessment periods
£1,850 for three assessment periods.

Case Study 3

Dave and Emma who live in Burslem, have 2 children aged 6 and 8. Dave earns £1,300 after tax and Emma earns £8,500 a year after tax, so the children do not qualify for free school meals.

Dave's contract ends on 30th June 2018. If he claims Universal Credit in July the children will not be entitled to free school meals because Emma's earnings are higher than £7,400 a year.



How do I claim free school meals for my children?

If you don't currently claim free school meals for your child you should ask your school for a claim form.

You will need to provide evidence of the benefits you are receiving and if you are working you may need evidence of how much you earn.

If your child is eligible for free school meals you will not have to reapply, even if your circumstances change, until after 31st March 2022.

My child currently receives free school meals in Years 1 and 2, do I have to do anything now?

If your child is in reception class or years 1 or 2 you need to apply for free school meals now, if you are eligible, to make sure you receive the transitional protection when your child is in Year 3.

Free School Meals and Pupil Premiums

Schools receive a Pupil Premium for each child that is eligible for free school meals, which allows the school to provide extra support, such as breakfast clubs. So help your school to keep this funding by applying for free school meals now.

Potteries Gold

Free School Meals

Claim Now to Protect Your Rights



For more information go to www.citizensadvice.org.uk or contact our Citizens Advice Helpline: 03444 111 444

Potteries Gold is a **Citizens Advice Staffordshire North & Stoke-on-Trent** project to help people in Stoke-on-Trent cope with changes to the benefit system

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In association with **Ruth Smeeth MP** and **Gareth Snell MP**

Who qualifies for Free School Meals?

Universal Infant Free School Meals

Your child is entitled to free school meals if he or she is in one of the following school years:

- Reception Class
- Year 1
- Year 2

Older Children

From 1st April 2018 your child will be eligible for free school meals during their time at school, sixth form or college of further education, if you (or your child) are receiving one of the following benefits:-

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, if your income is less than £16,190 a year, and you do not receive any Working Tax Credit as well
- Universal Credit and your earned income is less than £7,400 a year after tax
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999



Changes from 1st April 2018

Before 1st April 2018 all families receiving Universal Credit could claim free school meals for their children.

Since 1st April 2018 families making a new claim for Universal Credit can only receive free school meals for their children if they earn less than £7,400 a year after tax.

Transitional Protection for families eligible for free school meals before 1st April 2018

If your child was eligible for free school meals before 1st April 2018, he or she will continue to be eligible for free school meals until 31st March 2022 or until they finish the stage of education they are in if that is later; e.g. if they leave primary school in July 2024 they will continue to receive free school meals until then.

Case Study 1

Julie is a single mum to Jack aged 5 years old. She receives income-related Employment and Support Allowance and Child Tax Credit. Jack is in Year 1 of primary school and was receiving free school meals on 31st March 2018. Because Julie was receiving income-related ESA on 31st March 2018, Jack can keep getting free school meals until he leaves primary school even if Julie's income goes up.

Transitional Protection for families eligible for free school meals after 1st April 2018

If you become eligible for free school meals for your child on or after 1st April 2018, your child will continue to be eligible for free school meals until 31st March 2022.

Case Study 2

Sarah and Peter have 2 children aged 7 and 8. Peter was made redundant on 31st March 2018 and claimed Jobseeker's Allowance, Child Tax Credit and Housing Benefit on 3rd April 2018. When the children returned to school on 16th April they started to receive free school meals.

Peter has a new job starting on 1st June 2018. He will be earning £18,000 a year and will be receiving Working Tax Credit as well as Child Tax Credit, which is above the threshold for free school meals, but the transitional protection rules mean that the school meals are safe until 31st March 2022.

