

# Free School Meals – a new media campaign

## Introduction

- We believe that there may be up to 2,900 children who qualify for Free School Meals but do not take them up.
- We therefore want to initiate a campaign to encourage more qualifying households to sign up their children for Free School Meals.
- This would be in the form of a promotional campaign, utilising both Facebook and radio platforms, to effectively promote the Free School Meals program in Birmingham.
- We hope this will increase the number of children who take up this entitlement and, at the same time, generate new Pupil Premium Funding for hard pressed schools.



# Rationale

- Children who eat FSM consume more fruit and vegetables.
- Free School Meals are healthier than packed lunches. Only 1.6% of packed lunches meet the Government's School Food Standards.
- Free School Meals can therefore help reduce obesity, as well as decreasing economic inequalities given the association between obesity and deprivation.
- Eating a school meal has been shown to be the best lunch option associated with good mental wellbeing. Food insecurity affects children's mental health and wellbeing, with children from families that are food insecure being more likely to suffer with mental health problems, including hyperactivity and inattention, suicidal thoughts, and mood and anxiety disorders.
- Financially hard-pressed parents will save money not having to buy food for packed lunches.
- Free School Meals can also improve academic attainment. As a recent study of a similar Swedish programme discovered, FSM led not only to an increase in academic attainment, but also a 3% increase in lifetime income.
- Each successful new FSM application triggers resource for the school in the form of a Pupil Premium. For the year 2024/25, Pupil Premium funding is £1,445 per primary school child and £1,050 per secondary school child.



# The Campaign – Facebook (paid)

## 1. Targeted Reach:

- Facebook allows for precise targeting based on demographics, interests, and geographic location.
- The platform's targeting capabilities enable a focus on specific areas with higher rates of child poverty.

## 2. Engagement and Interaction:

- Facebook is a highly interactive platform where users can engage with content through likes, shares, and comments. This interactivity allows for real-time feedback and conversations, helping to address questions and concerns that parents might have about the program.
- The platform supports a variety of content formats, including videos, images, and live streams, making it easier to communicate the benefits of FSM in a compelling and accessible way.

## 3. Cost-Effective Advertising:

- Facebook ads are relatively affordable, offering a high return on investment (ROI) due to their targeted nature.
- Facebook's analytics tools provide detailed insights into ad performance, enabling real-time adjustments.



# The Campaign - Radio

## 1. Broad Reach and Accessibility:

- Radio remains a powerful medium with broad reach, particularly among diverse and hard-to-reach communities.
- Radio campaigns can reach parents who may not be active on social media or who prefer traditional media channels.

## 2. Localised Messaging:

- Radio allows highly localized messaging, tailored to specific needs and concerns of Birmingham residents. Local accents, familiar voices, and references to well know landmarks can make the message more trustworthy.
- Local radio personalities add credibility as these figures are often seen as trusted voices within the community.

## 3. Emotional Appeal:

- Radio can effectively convey emotion through tone, music, and storytelling. By crafting a narrative around the positive impact of FSM on children’s lives, the campaign can resonate on a deep emotional level with listeners, encouraging them to take action.
- Testimonials from local parents, teachers, and students can be featured in radio spots, adding authenticity and a personal touch



# The Campaign – Integrated Strategy

- **Complementary Channels:** Both Facebook and Radio allows the campaign to leverage the strengths of each platform. While Facebook excels in targeted, interactive communication, Radio provides broad, local reach and emotional resonance. Together, these channels will ensure comprehensive coverage.
- **Cross-Promotion:** The campaign will cross-promote content between platforms. For example, Facebook ads can feature snippets from radio testimonials, and radio spots can direct listeners to the Facebook page for more information and updates.
- **Consistency in Messaging:** To maximize impact, the messaging across both platforms will be consistent, reinforcing the key benefits of the FSM program while using platform-specific techniques to engage the audience.



# Timing, Length and Evaluation

- The Campaign will begin in the first week in November
- The Campaign will continue for 24 weeks (6 months)
- The Campaign will be evaluated through, using analytical software and reporting from external providers on:
  - Listen rate (radio)
  - Paid for Engagement rates (social media)
  - Reach (Google display network – GDN) GDN also provides a breakdown of costs per language and reach.
  - Communications will also work with the service area to track increases in enrolment to co-inside with the campaign timeline.

