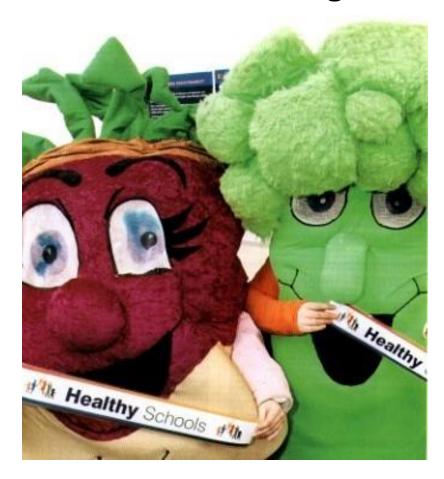
Corporate, Adult Services, and Social Inclusion Select Committee

Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation (EIT) Review of School Catering



February 2011



Corporate, Adult Services and Social Inclusion Select Committee Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Municipal Buildings Church Road Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LD



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Select Committee - Membership

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Group thank the following contributors to this review:

Jamie McCann, Head of Direct Services
Anita Brown, Service Manager
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Also staff and pupils at the following schools:

The Glebe Primary School
Hartburn Primary School
High Clarence Primary School
Priors Mill Primary School
Rosebrook Primary School
Conyers Secondary School
Egglescliffe Secondary School
Our Lady & St Bede RC Secondary School
St Patricks RC Secondary School

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Foreword

On behalf of the Corporate, Adult Services and Social Inclusion Select Committee, I am pleased to present the final report of the Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation (EIT) Review of School Catering.

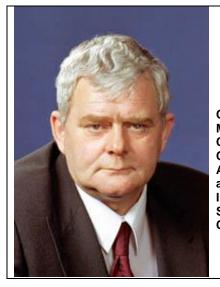
The review forms part of a three year programme of EIT reviews covering all services provided by the Council. The aim of the programme is to review all services in a systematic way to ensure that they are provided in the most efficient manner, provide value for money and identify opportunities for service improvements and transformation.

The review examined how the Council could reduce its overall subsidy to the service whilst maintaining the quality of meals provided. The Committee concluded that providing a service whereby every pupil in the schools the SBC caters for have the opportunity to take up a healthy balanced meal is essential to the health and well being to the children in the borough. The Committee felt that there were areas where the structures of the service could be improved without affecting the quality of the meals being provided. The recommendations therefore reflect the need for a change in these structures and the need to raise the income of service while still providing a competitively priced meal.

The recommendations are estimated to deliver significant savings of £373,562 over a two year period and tasks officers with finding further efficiencies through negotiations for SLA's for School Catering to start in 2012/13 and options for service development and increasing uptake.

I would particularly like to thank Jamie McCann, the Lead Officer for the review, and Anita Brown the Service Manager for Catering and Cleaning. I would also like to thank the staff and pupils that welcomed Members of the Committee on their visits to schools.

Cllr Mick Stoker - Chair



Councillor
Mick Stoker
Chair –
Corporate,
Adult Services
and Social
Inclusion
Select
Committee



Councillor
Mrs Lynne
Apedaile
Vice-Chair –
Corporate,
Adult Services
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Inclusion
Select
Committee

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The report presents the findings of the Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation (EIT) Review of School Catering undertaken by the Committee between June and December 2010.
- 1.2 The review forms part of a three year programme of EIT reviews covering all services provided by the Council. The programme aims to ensure that all services are reviewed in a systematic way to ensure that they are provided in the most efficient manner, provide value for money and identify opportunities for service improvements and transformation.
- 1.3 The topic was identified for review by the Scrutiny Liaison Forum on 10 February 2010 and was subsequently included in the Select Committee work programme by Executive Scrutiny Committee on 2 March 2010.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 A scope and project plan for the review were drafted and approved by the Committee on 15 June 2010.
- 2.2 The review examined the provision of school lunches by the Stockton Borough Council's (SBC) catering service for 59 primary schools, one secondary school, and three special needs schools within the Borough. Although the service receives an income from the schools and from the parents of children it provides lunches to, this income does not cover the cost of the service and the Authority currently provides a subsidy. Therefore the overall aims of the review were to identify options for future strategy, policy and service provision that will deliver efficiency savings to reduce the subsidy while sustaining / improving high quality outcomes for SBC residents.
- 2.3 As part of the review the Select Committee visited five primary schools to observe SBC's delivery and assess the quality of food being provided. The Committee also visited four secondary schools to observe how other methods of delivery worked in practice and the quality of food served.
- 2.4 In addition officers attended the Primary Heads meeting held in January and presented the details of the EIT review and proposed recommendations. The proposals were well received.

3.0 Evidence and Findings

3.1 The Catering Service prepares and serves meals to 59 primary schools, one secondary school (Northfield Marsh House Site), and three special needs schools. In 57of the primary schools the meals are cooked on site, while two schools, Oxbridge Primary School and St John's the Evangelist Primary School in Billingham, receive dispatch meals from kitchens based at Northfield School Marsh House Site and Mandale Mill Primary School. To meet the requirements of some schools, Mill Lane Primary School and Bowesfield Primary School provide a totally halal meal to meet the needs of the local community. Service Level Agreements to provide school meals to individual primary schools are in place until 2011. To get a better understanding of the service provided to schools the Committee chose to complete a number of site visit as part of their evidence gathering activities. A Summary is attached at **Appendix 1**.



National Standards and Statistics

- 3.2 The national nutritional standards of food provided to pupils is set out in Section 114A of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, amended by Section 86 of the Educations and Inspections Act 2006. The standards require:
 - High-quality meat, poultry or oily fish regularly available
 - At least two portions of fruit and vegetables with every meal
 - Bread, other cereals and potatoes regularly available
- 3.3 The standards for school meals also limit deep-fried food and restrict fizzy drinks. There are a total of 14 nutrient based standards, and in addition to this there are 11 food based standards which are set out in the recommendations as issued in the Governments Turning the Tables for School Meals Report, which was followed by the introduction of the Compulsory Nutritional Standards for School Lunches and the Nutrient Based Standards.
- 3.4 The responsibility for providing school meals that meet the standards is dependent on who holds the budget for school meals. If the Local Authority retains the budget for school meals it is their responsibility to meet the standards, however if the catering budget has been delegated to the school the school governors take on this responsibility. The catering budgets have been delegated to all schools in Stockton Borough, with the exception of Special Schools, therefore the school governing bodies are responsible for ensuring the provider of their school meals meets the standards.
- 3.5 An annual survey of local authorities is carried out by the School Food Trust, a non departmental public body established by the Department of Children, Schools and Families in 2005 to promote health education and improve the quality of food in school. The 2009/10 survey states that nationally 91.5% of local authorities providing primary school meals are fully meeting the nutrient-based standards, and 96.2% of North East local authorities are fully meeting the standards. In secondary schools 69.5% of local authority providers fully meet the standards nationally, and 51.5% fully meet the standards in the North East. SBC's school meals catering service fully meets both the nutrient-based and food based standards
- 3.6 The 2009/10 survey also states:
 - The national primary school uptake of meals is 41.4%, with a 55.9% uptake in the North East region.
 - The national secondary school meal uptake for 2009/10 is 35.8%, and 43.4% in the North East.
 - The national average uptake of Free School Meals in primary school is 79.3%, and in the North East uptake is 84.2%.
 - The national average uptake of Free School Meals in secondary schools is 68.4% and 66.8% uptake in the North East.
- 3.7 Stockton Borough Council's uptake rate in primary schools in 2009/10 is above the national level at 49.41%, although this is below the North East level. The uptake of a free school meals in Stockton Borough is below the North East level, and equal to National at 79.3%. Uptake of school meals in secondary schools SBC caters for is 24.46% which is below both the national and North East level.
- 3.8 The School Food Trust 2010 annual survey found that prices charged for a school meal in primary schools varied nationally between £1.20 and £2.30 and in the



North East, the price varied from £1.60 to £1.90. Meals in secondary schools were priced at £1.55 to £2.45 nationally, and £1.60 to £2.20 in the North East.

The price charged for a school meal in the North East is as follows

Authority	Primary	Secondary
Gateshead	£1.75	£1.70
Hartlepool	£1.80	£2.00
Middleborough	£1.90	£2.00
Newcastle	£1.60	£1.60
Northumberland	First: £1.95	Middle £2.10
	Primary: £2.05	
North Tyneside	£1.60	£1.60
Redcar & Cleveland	£1.85	£1.90
Sunderland	£1.70	£1.80
Stockton	£1.85	£1.85

SBC Funding and Costs

- 3.9 In 2009/10 the service served 1,287,573 lunches in primary schools, 467,779 (36.3%) of these were free school meals and 819,794 (63.7%) were paid for. In addition, 39,752 meals were served to adults in primary schools. Meals were charged £1.80 including VAT; however this price has been raised to £1.85 from September 2010.
- 3.10 The total cost of providing the service in primary schools for 2009/10 was £3,443,737, or £2.67 per meal. This cost included:

•	Employees	£2,301,220
•	Supplies and Services	£674,009
•	Central Departmental Technical	£245,810
•	Premises	£103,454
•	Departmental and Central charges	£119,244

- 3.11 It is recommended in the Turning the Table for school meals that the minimum spend on ingredients for a primary school meal is 50p. The service is exceeding this cost and paying 56p/57p on ingredients to ensure a high standard of fresh food is being served.
- 3.12 Income for the service in primary schools for 2009/10 was as follows:

•	SLA/Pupil	£2,547,283	(£1.98 per meal)
•	Standards Fund	£180,000	(14p per meal)
•	Primary Care Trust	£20,000	(1.5p per meal)
•	Management Advisory Service	£30,000	(2.3p per meal)
•	Job Evaluation Funding	£489,123	(38p per meal)
•	Resource Allocation	£164,635	(12p per meal)
•	Additional Services	£12,696	(1p per meal)

3.13 The service provided meals for two secondary schools until September 2010. In 2009/10 92,894 lunches were served in secondary schools, and 32,506 (35%) were free school meals while 60,388 (65%) were paid meals. In addition 2439 meals were served to adults in secondary schools. Those pupils who paid for their meal were charged £1.85.



3.14 The total Costs for 2009/10 in secondary schools was £192,988, or £2.08 per meal, and this included:

Employees £110,785
Supplies and Services £75,980
Premises £4,266
Departmental charges £1,957

- 3.15 The minimum the service is recommended to spend on ingredients for a secondary school meal is 60p. The service is exceeding this cost and paying 67p on ingredients.
- 3.16 Income for secondary school meals in 2009/10 was:

•	Pupil Paid/Free	£151,890	(£1.64 per meal)
•	JE Funding	£15,512	(17p per meal)
•	SBC Resource Allocation	£19,293	(21p per meal)
•	Other Income	£6,271	(7p per meal)

- 3.17 Therefore taking into account surpluses made in other non school catering operations the net resource allocation to support School Catering Service is £321,000 in 2009/10. The net resource for the current year 2010/11 is £313,000.
- 3.18 As noted above the service previously received £20,000 funding from the PCT and the purpose of this funding was to promote healthy eating. However, this funding stream ceased in 2010. In addition, removal of the ring-fence to the Standards Fund could lead to this funding stream, which is paid to individual schools and then reclaimed by the catering provider, being used for other priorities schools may have. This is evidenced in Michael Gove's letter of 27 October 2010 (attached **Appendix 2**).
- 3.19 The Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan allocates an annual rise of 5p per meal to cope with inflationary pressures. Historically, when there is an increase in the cost of the school meal the uptake of meals decreases, however this is a temporary decrease and uptake generally recovers after approximately a half school term.
- 3.20 The following figures show the income if the price of a meal is further increased, and do not take into account the annual income from the 5p already allocated in the Medium Term Financial Plan: School Meals are already planned to rise to £1.90 from September 2011. Increases beyond those prices planned would have the following effect on income in 2010/11, assuming school meal take up is not affected:
- £1.95 annual income would be £1,560,434 an increase of £41,064 £2.05 annual income would be £1,642,562 an increase of £123,192 £2.15 annual income would be £1,724,690 an increase of £205,320
- 3.21 The Committee believe that a further increase is necessary, however are mindful of the pressure on larger families and do not wish to increase the cost to the extent it discourages take up of a school meal, therefore it is recommended that:
- 1. That the price of a school meal be increased to £1.95 from September 2011



Staffing Guide Scales

- 3.22 The service employs 409 members of staff, which includes 290 Catering Assistants and a bank of casual employees. All kitchens use staffing Guide Scales to calculate the number of staffing hours required each week to deliver meals, based on the number of meals provided the previous week. Catering employees have to have a degree of flexibility within their hours to allow for fluctuations within the meal numbers.
- 3.23 Kitchens are also given additional hours as allowances depending on working factors e.g. extra hours to operate one extra service point or setting up extra tables and chairs, and this is given at the Catering Manager's discretion. Historically allowances have reduced as kitchens improved, however a full reassessment of these allowances across all kitchens is now timely.
- 3.24 Reducing the staffing guide scales and allowances will drive up productivity. Proposed amendments to the guide scale hours will affect the number of hours in all Primary School Kitchens, this may include contracted hours for some staff and tentative consultation has commenced with staff and unions and will continue throughout this process. This would provide an effective approach to increase efficiency and decrease costs within the service. **Appendix 3** outlines the current and proposed guide scales and allowances. The Committee therefore recommend:

2. The staffing guidescale and kitchen allowances hours be reduced as set out in Appendix 3

'Added Value' Work

- 3.25 In addition to delivering school lunches, the service carries out 'added value' work, aimed at improving the number of pupils choosing to have a school meal and not bring a packed lunch. The work also aims to encourage healthy eating which benefits long term health and well being. Added value work includes:
 - Curriculum / Fun based Theme Days
 - In Class Cooking Days
 - Parent Consultation Evenings
 - Lunch time drop-ins
 - Tackling Obesity Strategy
 - School Nutrition Action Group ("SNAG")
 - Food for Life Partnership and Awards (two schools trialling the scheme)
- 3.26 The added value work is carried out by the school cooks and the Management Team. The service works closely with each school and the curriculum, and it is included within the Service Level Agreement with each school. The service uses marketing and promotional activities to carry out the added value projects, such as fruit and vegetable games and worksheets. In addition, the service works nationally to deliver National School Meals Week and assist schools in achieving Healthy Schools status.
- 3.27 Although the Committee appreciates the 'added value' work, and notes that this work supports both the Obesity Strategy and the Authority's objective to promote healthy lifestyles, it is felt that the number of projects carried out in each school could be reduced, without having a significant impact on the service provided to each school. A revised and reduced Management Structure (**Appendix 4**) reflects the reduced service delivery and direct support offered to as Schools as part of this



review. The reduced Management Structure has been proposed to bring forward significant efficiencies. The Committee therefore recommend that:

3. A revised management structure as set out in Appendix 4 be implemented

ASPE Consultation

- 3.28 To ensure that there was a wide and independent challenge to the EIT process to complement the work of the committee an APSE review of recommendations was commissioned to evaluate the options and proposals against national standards and performance measures. The resulting report gives a detailed insight into how the current school meals services compare nationally. It also provides comment on options considered during this process and provides comparison and evidence of whether these options are consistent with best practice and successful examples already in operation.
- 3.29 The report is concise and does provide some interesting information based on significant data collected via APSE Performance Networks. The recommendations below are broadly consistent with the finding of this report.

Conclusion

- 3.30 By reviewing the staffing guide scales and allowances to increase efficiency and reducing the amount of added value work within each school, savings could be achieved to reduce the subsidy the service receives while still providing a quality service to the schools, and a healthy, nutritious meal to pupils.
- 3.31 It is estimated that the potential savings that can be achieved for 2011/12 and 2012/13 are:

Recommendation	Potential Savings 2011/12	Potential Savings 2012/13
Increase school meal to £1.95	£22,230	£41,064
Reduction in Guide Scale hours	£81,691	£163,382
Revised Management Structure	£24,065	£48,130
-		
Total saving	£120,986	£252,576

- 3.32 The above savings would still leave a net resource allocation of £60,424 by 2012/13 to be met by the Council. The Committee is aware that as part of the negotiations for SLA's for School Catering to start in 2012/13 officers will be discussing with schools options such as service development and increasing uptake to reduce the resource allocation subsidy. It is therefore recommended:
- 4. That as part of negotiations for SLA's for School Catering to start in 2012/13 officers discuss with schools options such as service development and increasing uptake to reduce the resource allocations subsidy.



Appendix 1 School Site Visits

The Committee visited five primary school and four secondary schools, to observe the delivery of service and the standard of food being served to pupils in Stockton.

Members visited The Glebe Primary, Hartburn Primary, Rosebrook Primary, Priors Mill Church of England Primary, and High Clarence Primary and found that:

- All meals at the primary schools visited are cooked on site
- Prepared vegetables are used e.g. peeled potatoes.
- The kitchens are fully equipped and fully utilised.
- Hartburn and The Glebe primary schools operate a 'family service', with one main choice of meal on offer but a vegetarian option, salad, and sandwiches are also available.
- Incentives (stickers) for taking and eating vegetables are given
- The Glebe operates a 'top table' system for pupils that are well behaved each week.
- All food sampled on site visits was of a high quality standard

Theme Days are popular and Rosebrook in particular noted that the number of pupils taking a school meal on Themed Days increased by approximately 40 pupils. At the time of the visit to Priors Mill the school were holding an American theme day as part of School Meals Week and it was noted that the number of pupils staying for lunch had increased by 100 for that week.

The four secondary schools that Members visited all provided their school lunch service in-house and all catering staff are employed direct by the schools. The visits found that:

- Meals at all schools are cooked on site
- There is a variety of food on offer in each school, with items individually priced.
- All schools visited have a 'meal deal' of two courses for a reduced price.
 Egglescliffe, Our Lady and St Bede, and St Patricks all charge £2 for the meal deal while Conyers charge £2.10.
- Our Lady & St Bede use mixes for cakes and St Patricks buy cakes in
- Convers and Egglescliffe make their cakes from basic ingredients.
- All four schools use prepared vegetables and bread
- The schools catering services do not provide any healthy eating/nutritional education, as this was taught in Design and Technology/Food Technology lessons, however staff informally encourage pupils to eat healthy and try a range of food, and Convers catering service hold theme days.
- The food tasted on the site visits was of a good to high standard.
- All four school have noted a high school lunch take up, approximately 60% (St Patricks) to 80% (Egglescliffe/Our Lady and St Bede)

The aim of the secondary schools visited is to provide the service cost neutral; however they have not realised this and each subsidises their service. The schools noted that the amount of subsidy decreases each year, and this varied from £3,000 (Our Lady and St Bede) to £10,000 (Conyers). Conyers, Egglescliffe, and Our Lady and St Bede have cashless systems installed that use fingerprint technology. The



systems can store information on the food each pupil chooses, which is available to parents/guardians, and any dietary requirements. Convers and Egglescliffe systems are available online so that parents/guardians can monitor and manage their child's account at home



Appendix 2

Dear Colleagues,

27 October 2010

I wanted to write to you today to set out the outcome of the comprehensive spending review and what it means for education and children's services spending over the next four years.

In relation to schools, the budget will rise by £3.6 billion in cash terms by 2014-15. This equates to 0.1% real terms growth in each year of the spending review. We have protected the existing baseline. This means that money allocated for:

- One-to-one tuition
- Every Child programmes
- Extended schools
- School Lunch Grant
- · School Standards Grant
- School Development Grant
- · Specialist schools grant
- Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant
- National Strategies' budgets that were allocated to schools
- Dedicated Schools Grant
- Academies running costs

will still go to schools but the ringfences will be removed so that head teachers have complete freedom over how this money is spent, consistent with our determination that teachers and head teachers should be free from centrally dictated bureaucracy. We will be able to protect average per pupil funding in cash terms, fund the growth in pupil numbers and provide a pupil premium in each year of the settlement, rising to £2.5 billion by 2014-15. The premium will enable you to provide additional targeted support to the most disadvantaged children and young people.

Whilst we recognise that this will be less than schools have been used to, with the greater freedoms and flexibilities which we are providing to schools it will ensure that we can meet the demographic pressures we face and continue to raise standards. It does however mean that schools will need to make savings of around £1 billion in



back office and procurement to reinvest into teaching and learning. Overall though in the context of the challenging situation which we are in, I believe this is a good settlement for schools.

In relation to early years, we have shown that we recognise the crucial importance that a good early years education plays in children's development. We are maintaining the 15 hours a week of free childcare for all 3 and 4 year olds and extending this entitlement to disadvantaged 2 year olds. We will also be protecting overall cash funding for Sure Start, including our investment in Sure Start health visitors.

Local Authority colleagues will have also seen Eric Pickles' letter dated 20th October 2010 which sets out what the Spending Review means for local government more generally. That letter confirms the introduction of a new, unringfenced Early Intervention Grant to local authorities. This signals our clear commitment to support local authorities and their partners to "horizon shift" by protecting investment in early intervention now which prevents significant cost - to communities and to government - in the future. The grant will amount to around £2bn by the end of the spending period and will include funding for Sure Start and other preventative services for children, young people and families. Further details about the Early Intervention Grant will follow in due course.

Our decision to protect frontline services and to provide help for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society means that we have had to make some difficult choices.

I know that many of you have been disappointed that we have already had to make reductions in our capital spending. In these difficult times there is less money available for capital spending and this means that the Department's overall capital budget will be reduced by 60% over the spending review period amounting to some £15.8 billion in total. We will ensure that all future capital spending is focussed on ensuring that there are enough school places to meet demographic pressures and to address urgent maintenance needs. We have also secured enough funding for all those BSF schools which we confirmed would go ahead in July. The independent review of capital expenditure, which we have commissioned, will ensure our capital expenditure targets those areas of greatest need and provides best value for money.

We are also taking action to streamline our grants to ensure they provide good value for money and target support to those who need it most. We will be:

- Ending the Educational Maintenance Allowance and replacing it with targeted support to those young people who face genuine financial barriers to participation;
- Securing unit-cost reductions in 16-19 learning as we move towards full participation in education by 2015



To help prioritise front line spending I have committed to making a 33% real terms reduction in my Department's administration spending. We will achieve this through closing NDPBs, reducing staff headcount, cutting all non-essential expenditure and reducing the costs of the DfE estate.

I know that you will be anxious to know what these changes mean for your local areas and school. We are working with colleagues in the Department for Communities and Local Government to ensure that we provide the detailed allocations for schools, early years and local government for 2011-12 in December.

Also in the next few months I will be setting out in more detail our vision for the reform of the schools system and services to children. This will include more detail about how we will be investing the money we have secured through this settlement, and working with you to ensure cost-effectiveness of that spend, with a focus on intervening early and targeting disadvantage. To this end we will be publishing a Schools White Paper and a Special Educational Needs and Disability Green Paper.

I know that we will continue to face challenges over the coming years but I am committed to working with you to ensure we continue to improve outcomes for all children and support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society to achieve their potential.

DfE press notice

http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/pressnotices/a0065470/2010/012

MICHAEL GOVE



PRIMARY KITCHEN ALLOWANCES SHOWING EIT OPTION 2 PROPOSALS

Allowance	Current Weekly Kitchen Allowance (at Manager's Discretion)	EIT OPTION 2 – Proposed Kitchen Allowance (at Manager's Discretion)
One extra service point or three extra mobile trolleys	10 hours	5 hours
For any mobile trolleys more than the above, an extra preparation and cleaning allowance will be given	2½ hours maximum	1¼ hours
Tables and chairs set up and remove, 5 tables and 30 chairs (over and above 25 tables and 150 chairs, which are included in guidescale hours)	1½ hours	1¼ hours
Additional dining hall. No furniture removal	1½ hours	Not applicable
Packed Lunches – water jugs and beakers	½ hour	Not applicable
Under capacity (meal provision, same kitchen area to maintain and dining room to set up)	1½ hours	Not applicable

Where room is used exclusively for packed lunches, use hours allowed for tables and chairs.

Dispatch meals deduct 5 hours per 100 meals from basic hours of dispatch kitchen where containers are returned clean. If containers are returned dirty normal guidescales apply.

Cleaning days – normal guidescale hours of kitchen only wherever possible.

All allowances are distributed at Manager's discretion



APPENDIX 3

PRIMARY KITCHEN GUIDESCALES

Daily Meal Numbers	Current Weekly	EIT OPTION 2 – Proposed
	<u>Kitchen Hours</u>	<u>Guidescale Hours</u>
up to 50	38	38
51-60	44	42
61-70	47¼	45
71-80	50½	48
81-90	53½	51
91-100	56¼	53
101-110	59%	56
111-120	62	59
121-130	65	62
131-140	68	65
141-150	71	68
151-160	74	70
161-170	76¾	73
171-180	79%	76
181-190	821/2	78
191-200	85%	81
201-210	88%	84
211-220	91%	87
221-230	94	90
231-240	96¾	92
241-250	99%	95
251-260	102½	97
261-270	105½	100
271-280	108½	103
281-290	111¼	106
291-300	114¼	109
301-320	117%	111
321-340	120	114
341-360	123	117

*NOTE: A deduction applies for container meals.