



Left Out at Lunch The facts

What's the problem?

Some of the poorest children in England can't get free school meals because of their or their parents' immigration status. ('Immigration status' means the visa or documents that prove your legal right to be in the UK.)

Who does the problem affect?

The problem affects children whose parents do not have documents showing they are allowed to live in the UK. It also affects children whose parents have a visa that does not let them claim any welfare benefits.

Why can't these children get free school meals?

The law says all children in reception, Year 1 and Year 2 can have free school meals. But children in Year 3 and above can only get free school meals if their parents claim certain benefits. Many migrants in the UK are not allowed to access these benefits, so their children find it hard to get free school meals.

Why is this bad?

Free school meals are important because they make sure children in poorer families get a decent meal every day. Without free school meals, children from poorer families can go hungry at school—or parents can end up in debt.

What do we want to happen?

We think all children and families should be treated equally. We want all children who need them to get free school meals, no matter where they or their parents come from.

What can I do?

You can support our campaign to ask the government to give free school meals to all children who need them and for local councils to be given enough money to pay for this. You can do this by:

- Writing to your local school, councillor or MP to ask them to support our campaign.
- Joining our postcard campaign to ask the Department of Education to change the rules so that children in families with no recourse to public funds can get free school meals if they need them.
- Coming to our Picnic for Free School Meals event at St. Mary's, Stoke Newington, on Saturday 29th September, 12 – 4pm.



Left Out at Lunch Further reading

On free school meals

Children's Society:

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/free-school-meals-universal-credit-briefing-15-jan-2018-final.pdf>

Department of Education:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/700139/Free_school_meals_guidance_Apr18.pdf

NRPF Network:

<http://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/information/Pages/public-funds.aspx>

Southwark Council:

<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/schools-and-education/information-for-parents/financial-support/free-healthy-school-meals>

Schools Week:

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/labour-loses-bid-to-give-free-school-meals-to-all-universal-credit-claimants/>

On migrant children living in the UK

Compass, Oxford University:

<https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/project/undocumented-migrant-children-in-the-uk/>

Children's Society:

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/making-life-impossible.pdf>

Project 17:

<https://www.project17.org.uk/media/67646/hotel-fund-report-pdf-final-copy.pdf>

Hackney Community Law Centre:

<https://www.hclc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/A-Place-To-Call-Home-Electronic-Report1.pdf>