

# Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills submission of 18 April 2023

## PE1926/I: Expand universal free school meals for all nursery, primary and secondary school pupils

Thank you for your letter of 22 March seeking an update on the timescales associated with the pilot of universal free school meal provision in secondary schools.

We remain focused on working with delivery partners to progress our free school meal expansion programme. This includes planning for providing universal free school meals for all primary school pupils and delivering a pilot of universal free school meal provision in secondary schools, to inform our consideration of further expansion.

In December we announced that the next phase of our free school meal expansion programme will be to expand provision to primary 6 and 7 pupils who are in receipt of the Scottish Child Payment, as the next step towards universal provision in primary schools.

Previous engagement with local authorities indicated that a number of areas faced challenges in planning for the substantial expansion of free school meals in primary schools. We are working in partnership with COSLA and other key delivery partners to undertake planning work for the next phase of expansion, including considering appropriate timescales for rollout.

I will update the committee on anticipated timescales for the pilot in secondary schools once our planning work has further progressed.

I hope this information is helpful.

**JENNY GILRUTH MSP**