

Notice of Motion – Councillor David Coggins Cogan

The ongoing Cost of Living crisis forces more and more families throughout Flintshire into food poverty. In June, Welsh Government announced it was ending the holiday provision of Free School Meals, removing a safety net from those who needed it the most: vulnerable children trapped in poverty through no fault of their own.

Several councils across Wales urgently approved funding to continue the Free School Meals during the summer break. Those cabinets decided alleviating food poverty for children was a priority. Flintshire's Cabinet decided differently and refused funding altogether. This was a political choice.

Torfaen Council, unable to afford the full cost, provided one-off payments to families eligible for Free School Meals. The Leader of Flintshire Council dismissed this option out of hand. The full burden of the halted Free School Meals policy fell on those least able to bear it: children living in poverty.

This policy decision not to fund holiday Free School Meals was not communicated to Members. This hampered Members' efforts in proactively informing their residents of this new pressure on family finances. Deliberately choosing not to inform Members about the discontinuation of holiday Free School Meals is unforgivable.

Therefore, this Council:

1. Notes with disappointment the Cabinet's decision:
 - a. not to fund Free School Meals during the holidays; and
 - b. not to provide any part-funding to eligible children.
2. Notes and objects to the Cabinet's total lack of communication in telling Members that Informal Cabinet decided against funding holiday provision of Free School Meals.
3. Calls upon the Cabinet to reconsider its decision and to reinstate holiday provision of Free School Meals for as long as the Cost of Living crisis continues.

Notes

- Informal Cabinet discussed holiday provision of Free School Meals on 27th July 2023.
- Despite the critical nature of food poverty for many families across Flintshire, the Cabinet did not inform Members of its decision.
- This lack of communication seriously undermined Members' abilities to proactively warn families and provide them with information about the (very limited) alternative options.