

QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS

Thursday 20 February 2025

1. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT
Re: Children receiving free school meals

For the current and past two financial years, how many children in the Devon County Council area currently receive Free School Meals?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER

Devon County Council do not hold data by financial years. We are however able to provide the following information based on the numbers eligible as of the autumn census day (first Thursday in October).

Academic Year	Number Eligible	All Pupils	As a %
2024-25 (Based on Autumn 2024 census)	20091	98906	20.3
2023-24 (Based on Autumn 2023 census)	19690	100216	19.6
2022-23 (Based on Autumn 2022 census)	18451	100701	18.3

2. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR WHITTON
Re: Withdrawal of homelessness grant

The Cabinet Members comments in his budget speech at Cabinet regarding homelessness support is noted. However, what has been the outcome of council's discussion with District Council's concerning the withdrawal of the homelessness grant proposed last year?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR BULLIVANT

DCC Officers have been working together with Housing Officers from the District Councils to agree how to target support to the areas of greatest need. This has been informed by a needs assessment supported by the Council's Public Health Intelligence team.

Current contracts with providers have been extended to allow time to work through commissioning and contracting processes for the new arrangements with our District Council colleagues.

3. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT
Re: Free school meals entitlement

How many children in the council's area, does the county council understand could be entitled to free school meals but not claim them?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER

Devon County Council do not hold an exact figure.

Nationally, 11% of children entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) do not receive them as reported by the Department for Education in 2013 - [DFE-RR319.pdf](#). Although, as this figure is based on data from 2013, it is likely the number of children missing out on FSM is much higher.

Devon schools census data shows that in the year 2024, 20,522 children were eligible for FSM – 20.2% of all children in Devon. This is the number of pupils on roll on census day. If we take the national average of 11% of children are entitled to FSM but do not receive them. Based on 2024 census data, this would mean that for Devon, there are 101,590 children in total, in which 20,522 are eligible so there are 80,987 children not receiving FMS. 11% of 80,987 is 8908.57.

Therefore, potentially there are 8909 children in Devon who could be entitled to FSM and are not receiving it.

Something to note is that the team are currently looking into auto enrolments for free school meals.

4. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT
Re: Pothole repairs

For the current and past two financial years, how many pothole repairs have failed and had to be repaired a second time?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

We do not hold readily accessible information on numbers and locations of potholes that have been subject to more than one repair over a set time period. This is due to limitations in the GPS technology we use in the identification of pothole defects, which can only be accurate to a certain distance and would not be sufficient to enable us to overlay new defects on previously repaired ones to the required degree of accuracy to be sure they are the same. However we do carry out audits, and over the course of the last 3 years (to date), there have been 88 remedials required, from the 2520 pothole related audits. When a remedial works instruction order is raised, Milestone are required to attend and redo the work fully at their own expense and to agreed contractual specifications.