

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

School Healthy Living Survey statistics 2022

6th September 2022

This annual statistical publication provides information from a survey carried out in February each year of all publicly funded schools in Scotland on registration for free school meals (FSM), uptake of school meals (both free and paid for) and Physical Education (PE) provision. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Healthy Living Survey was not conducted in full in 2021, with only data on PE provision being collected and published as tables without an accompanying bulletin.

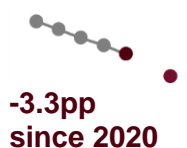
Headline results



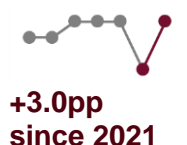
51.9 per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals, following the extension of universal entitlement to FSM to all P1-P5 pupils (38.1 per cent in 2020).



Of those registered for free school meals and present on the survey day **67.2 per cent** took a free meal (76.2 per cent in 2020).



Of all pupils present on the survey day **49.9 per cent** took a meal (free or paid for) supplied by the school (53.3 per cent in 2020).



99 per cent of schools (99 per cent of primary and 97 per cent of secondary schools) met the target level of PE provision (96 per cent in 2021 and 99 per cent in 2020).

pp = percentage points

No school meals data was collected for 2021

The statistics in this bulletin supersede all previously published statistics.

[Supplementary data tables](#) (including school level data) are available on the Scottish Government website.

Contents

Chapter 1: School meals	3
Chapter 2: Physical Education	8
Chapter 3: Background notes	11
3.1 National Statistics publication.....	11
3.2 Sources and timing.....	11
3.3 Definitions and data quality	11
3.4 Supplementary tables.....	15
3.5 Further information	15

Chapter 1: School meals

Background

In 2012, a new Healthy Living Survey (HLS) was introduced which incorporated the old school meals survey and new questions on Physical Education. This is an annual survey, normally collected in February each year, from all publicly funded schools in Scotland. The school meal part of this survey collects information on the uptake of meals, both free and paid for, and registration for free school meals. Only meals taken at lunchtime are included; breakfast clubs are not included. The survey was conducted in the week beginning 21 February 2022.

Information on levels of free school meal registration and school meal uptake is used to monitor the impact of Scottish Government policies on reducing deprivation and promoting healthy eating, and has been used to distribute funding to local authorities. In January 2015, the Government extended free school meal eligibility to include all children in primary 1-3. This was extended again to include primary 4 in August 2021 and further extended to include primary 5 from January 2022.¹

Other sources of data on school meals

Registrations for free school meals are collected as part of the school pupil census undertaken in September of each year. This data has been quality assured and published since the 2018 pupil census and should now be considered the primary source of data on free school meal registrations. National and local authority level data is available in the [pupil census supplementary tables](#). School level data is available in the [school level summary statistics](#). Details on comparability between the healthy living survey and pupil census free school meals data is included in the background notes.

Data on the number of free and paid for school meals taken over a financial year is collected by the Scottish Government as part of a collection of finance data from local authorities. The data is released as background data for the local government finance statistics in the education data workbook [LFR01](#).

Free school meals as a measure of deprivation

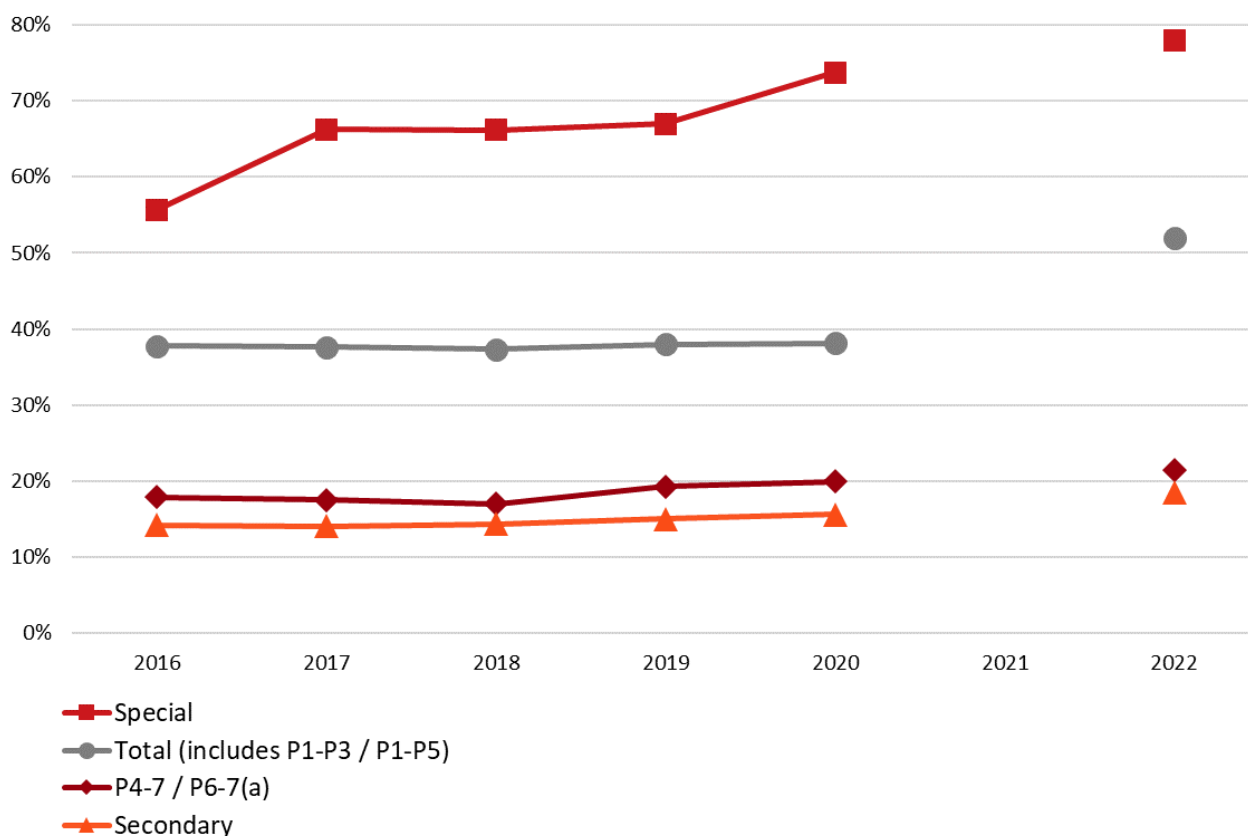
As the national criteria for free school meal eligibility is largely based on the receipt of benefits, statistics on free school meal registrations from the Healthy Living Survey have been used as a measure of deprivation. However, several factors need to be taken into account when using the statistics in this way, particularly for primary and special schools where a substantial proportion of those registered qualify through non-benefits based criteria. See background notes for more information on the use of these statistics as a measure of deprivation.

An alternative to using the percentage of pupils registered for free school meals as a measure of deprivation are statistics on the number of pupils in each school who live in the 20 per cent most deprived data zones in Scotland, available in the [school level summary statistics](#). SIMD is the Scottish Government's primary measure of deprivation in relation to educational attainment and performance.

¹ For the purposes of this collection it is assumed that all P1-P3 pupils were registered for free school meals until 2020 and all P1-P5 pupils from 2022.

Key Findings

Chart 1: Percentage of pupils registered for free school meals by sector, 2016 to 2022

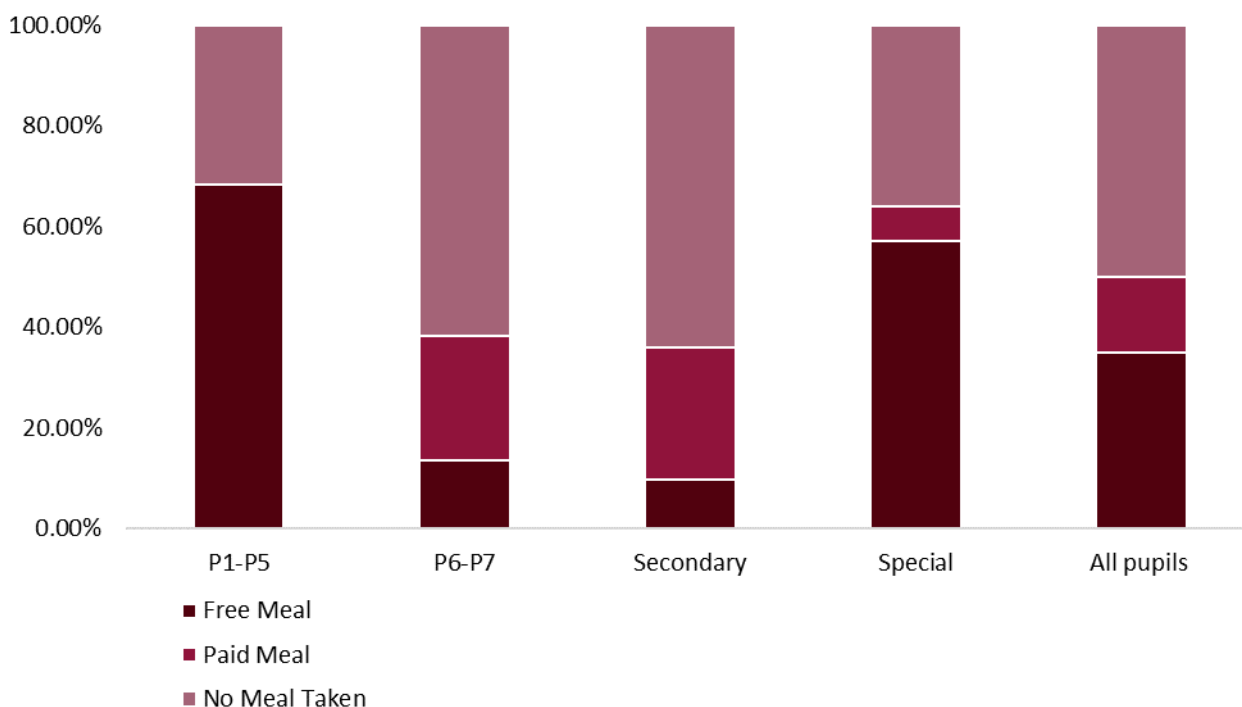


(a) In August 2018, Glasgow City Council introduced a local initiative extending free school meals to all P4 pupils. All pupils in P1-P5 are eligible for free school meals from January 2022.
 Note: no school meals data was collected in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2022, 51.9 per cent of the total school roll was registered for free school meals. This is substantially higher than the 38.1 per cent registered in 2020. Free school meal registration rates are affected by the economic circumstances of pupils and their parents, and also changes to the eligibility criteria. The most influential changes to eligibility criteria since 2015 have been the extension of national universal provision of FSM up to include P4 and P5 pupils in 2022², the increased proportion of special schools reporting 100% registration due to their universal provision of FSM and the introduction of universal eligibility to all P4 pupils in Glasgow City in August 2018.

² Free school meals were extended to all P4 pupils in August 2021 but this is not visible in these statistics.

Chart 2: Percentage of pupils present taking school meals, 2022



The percentage of pupils present on the survey day who took a meal (free or paid for) supplied by the school decreased from 53.3 per cent in 2020 to 49.9 per cent in 2022. This decrease was driven by a reduction in the percentage of secondary and special school pupils present and taking a meal. Although the overall percentage of pupils in primary school that were present and took a meal increased slightly, the proportion present and taking a meal decreased in universally entitled stages (P1-P3 in 2020, P1-P5 in 2022) and also in the non-universally entitled stages (P4-P7 in 2020 and P6 and P7 in 2022).

Additional data

School meals data by local authority, Urban Rural classification and size of school are available in the [supplementary tables](#). School level information on school meals is also available.

Table 1a: Number and percentage of pupils taking school meals (free or paid for) and registered for and taking free school meals by sector, 2016 to 2022

	2016	2017	2018 ^{a,b}	2019 ^{c,d}	2020 ^{b,c}	Number 2022 ^{c,d}
Pupils registered for free meals						
Primary	212,175	212,235	210,906	214,353	213,863	300,765
Secondary	39,280	38,841	39,511	41,881	44,502	55,454
Special	3,681	4,155	4,506	4,608	5,281	5,902
Total	255,136	255,231	254,923	260,842	263,646	362,121
Pupils registered and present taking free meals						
Primary	166,454	165,027	160,323	160,539	155,258	186,965
Secondary	24,811	23,911	23,937	24,287	25,217	24,464
Special	2,899	3,418	3,466	3,448	4,131	3,624
Total	194,164	192,356	187,726	188,274	184,606	215,053
Pupils present and taking meals (free or paid for)						
Primary	246,821	246,162	237,315	230,271	222,005	212,838
Secondary	114,586	110,288	110,364	112,722	112,816	90,225
Special	4,511	4,375	4,663	4,371	5,005	4,047
Total	365,918	360,825	352,342	347,364	339,826	307,110
	2016	2017	2018 ^{a,b}	2019 ^{c,d}	2020 ^{b,c}	Percentage 2022 ^{c,d}
Pupils registered for free meals						
Primary	54.1	53.4	52.7	53.5	53.6	76.8
Secondary	14.2	14.1	14.4	15.0	15.6	18.6
Special	55.7	66.2	66.1	66.9	73.7	77.9
Total	37.8	37.6	37.4	38.0	38.1	51.9
Pupils registered and present taking free meals						
Primary	82.7	82.1	80.5	79.2	76.9	68.3
Secondary	73.9	73.4	72.8	70.9	70.9	59.5
Special	89.8	91.3	87.1	85.1	86.8	73.7
Total	81.5	81.0	79.6	78.1	76.2	67.2
Pupils present and taking meals (free or paid for)						
Primary	66.0	65.0	62.4	60.4	58.6	59.5
Secondary	45.8	44.3	44.6	45.2	44.6	35.9
Special	77.7	78.0	77.8	72.4	77.4	63.9
Total	58.1	56.9	55.6	54.5	53.3	49.9

a. In August 2019, the 2018 figures for Edinburgh and North Lanarkshire were corrected. PE data was not affected. See section 3.3 background notes for this publication for further details.

b. In August 2018, Glasgow City Council introduced a local initiative extending free school meals to all P4 pupils.

c. Figures for 2018-2022 exclude Jordanhill. See section 3.3 background notes for this publication for further details.

d. The Scottish Government extended free school meals eligibility to all P4 pupils in August 2021 and to all P5 pupils in January 2022.

Table 1b: Primary pupils taking school meals (free or paid for) and registered for and taking free school meals by sector, 2016 to 2022

	2016	2017	2018 ^{a,b}	2019 ^{c,d}	2020 ^{b,c}	Number 2022 ^{c,d}
Pupils registered for free meals						
P1-P3 (2015-2020) / P1-P5 (2022)	172,912	173,020	172,163	169,931	167,838	275,954
P4-P7 (2015-2020) / P6-P7 (2022)	39,263	39,215	38,743	44,422	46,025	24,811
Total Primary (P1-P7)	212,175	212,235	210,906	214,353	213,863	300,765
Pupils registered and present taking free meals						
P1-P3 (2015-2020) / P1-P5 (2022)	134,667	134,042	130,201	127,888	120,977	172,869
P4-P7 (2015-2020) / P6-P7 (2022)	31,787	30,985	30,122	32,651	34,381	14,096
Total Primary (P1-P7)	166,454	165,027	160,323	160,539	155,358	186,965
Pupils present and taking meals (free or paid for)						
P1-P3 (2015-2020) / P1-P5 (2022)	134,667	134,042	130,201	127,888	120,977	172,869
P4-P7 (2015-2020) / P6-P7 (2022)	112,154	112,120	107,114	102,383	101,128	39,969
Total Primary (P1-P7)	246,821	246,162	237,315	230,271	222,105	212,838
	2016	2017	2018 ^{a,b}	2019 ^{c,d}	2020 ^{b,c}	Percentage 2022 ^{c,d}
Pupils registered for free meals						
P1-P3 (2015-2020) / P1-P5 (2022)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
P4-P7 (2015-2020) / P6-P7 (2022)	17.9	17.5	17.0	19.3	19.9	21.5
Total Primary (P1-P7)	54.1	53.4	52.7	53.5	53.6	76.8
Pupils registered and present taking free meals						
P1-P3 (2015-2020) / P1-P5 (2022)	81.7	81.2	79.6	79.0	75.7	68.4
P4-P7 (2015-2020) / P6-P7 (2022)	87.3	86.2	84.9	79.9	81.4	66.2
Total Primary (P1-P7)	82.7	82.1	80.5	79.2	76.9	68.3
Pupils present and taking meals (free or paid for)						
P1-P3 (2015-2020) / P1-P5 (2022)	81.7	81.2	79.6	79.0	75.7	68.4
P4-P7 (2015-2020) / P6-P7 (2022)	53.7	52.4	49.5	46.7	46.2	38.1
Total Primary (P1-P7)	66.0	65.0	62.4	60.4	58.6	59.5

a. In August 2019, the 2018 figures for Edinburgh and North Lanarkshire were corrected. PE data was not affected. See section 3.3 background notes for this publication for further details.

b. In August 2018, Glasgow City Council introduced a local initiative extending free school meals to all P4 pupils.

c. Figures for 2018-2022 exclude Jordanhill. See section 3.3 background notes for this publication for further details.

d. The Scottish Government extended free school meals eligibility to all P4 pupils in August 2021 and to all P5 pupils in January 2022.

Chapter 2: Physical Education

Background

Increased physical activity can have a positive impact on a pupil's health, educational attainment and life chances. In 2011, the Scottish Government made a commitment to ensure that by 2014, every pupil will benefit from at least two hours of Physical Education in primary school and two periods (100 minutes) in S1 to S4 per week.

To monitor progress in meeting this commitment, questions on Physical Education provision in schools have been included in the Healthy Living Survey since 2012. The survey reported on here was conducted in the week beginning 21 February 2022.

Last year, the impact of COVID-19 and resulting disruption to schools resulted in data on PE provision being collected from primary and secondary schools in May 2021. The PE commitment information returned was reflective of typical provision in the summer term in 2021, rather than reflecting a single day in February as in all other years. However, COVID guidance at the time of the survey advised that all physical activity should only be taken outdoors. This may have affected some schools' ability to meet the PE commitment.

Key Findings

In 2022,

- 99 per cent of all primary and secondary schools combined (2,326 of 2,354) were meeting the target level of PE provision, an increase from 96 per cent in 2021 but the same as in 2020.
- 99 per cent of primary schools (1,983 of 1,999) were providing at least 120 minutes of PE to all pupils, an increase from 97 per cent in 2021 and similar to the almost 100 per cent in 2020.
- 97 per cent of secondary schools (344 of 356) were providing at least 100 minutes of PE to all pupils in S1 to S4, an increase from 92 per cent in 2021 and 94 per cent in 2020.
- The data shows that provision is lowest for S4 at 97 per cent, up from 92 per cent in 2021. Focusing on S1 to S3, 99 per cent of secondary schools (354 of 356) were meeting the target, the same as in 2021.

For schools which are not meeting the required amount of PE, the main reasons given are lack of facilities, problems with timetabling, and COVID-related absences and mitigations.

School level PE data is available in the [supplementary tables](#).

Table 2a: Percentage of primary schools meeting PE target¹ by local authority, 2017 to 2022

Local Authority	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Aberdeen City	100.0	97.9	100.0	100.0	95.8	97.9
Aberdeenshire	98.7	98.7	99.3	100.0	98.7	100.0
Angus	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	88.2	96.1
Argyll and Bute	97.5	97.5	100.0	98.8	92.4	100.0
City of Edinburgh	96.6	100.0	100.0	97.7	100.0	100.0
Clackmannanshire	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Dumfries and Galloway	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Dundee City	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
East Ayrshire	97.7	100.0	100.0	100.0	97.5	100.0
East Dunbartonshire	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
East Lothian	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	94.1	94.3
East Renfrewshire	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Falkirk	100.0	100.0	98.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Fife	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.2	100.0	100.0
Glasgow City	97.8	100.0	100.0	100.0	95.7	100.0
Highland	100.0	98.8	100.0	98.8	97.1	95.3
Inverclyde	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Midlothian	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	93.8	100.0
Moray	91.3	100.0	100.0	97.8	100.0	100.0
Na h-Eileanan Siar	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
North Ayrshire	96.0	95.9	98.0	98.0	100.0	100.0
North Lanarkshire	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Orkney Islands	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	90.5
Perth and Kinross	100.0	97.2	100.0	100.0	95.7	100.0
Renfrewshire	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	91.8	98.0
Scottish Borders	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Shetland Islands	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
South Ayrshire	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	97.6	100.0
South Lanarkshire	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	92.8	100.0
Stirling	100.0	100.0	97.4	100.0	94.7	100.0
West Dunbartonshire	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
West Lothian	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	97.0	100.0
Scotland²	99.1	99.5	99.8	99.6	97.4	99.2

1. Target provision of Physical Education refers to at least 120 minutes per week in primary.

2. The Scotland total excludes Jordanhill. For more information see background note 3.3.

Table 2b: Percentage of secondary schools (S1 to S4) meeting PE target¹ by local authority, 2020 to 2022

	2020	2021	S1	S2	S3	S4	Percentage 2022
Aberdeen City	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Aberdeenshire	94.1	94.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	94.1	94.1
Angus	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Argyll and Bute	70.0	80.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
City of Edinburgh	95.7	95.7	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Clackmannanshire	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Dumfries and Galloway	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Dundee City	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
East Ayrshire	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
East Dunbartonshire	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
East Lothian	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
East Renfrewshire	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Falkirk	75.0	62.5	100.0	100.0	100.0	87.5	87.5
Fife	88.9	72.2	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Glasgow City	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Highland	89.7	79.3	100.0	100.0	93.1	79.3	79.3
Inverclyde	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Midlothian	100.0	83.3	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Moray	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Na h-Eileanan Siar	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
North Ayrshire	77.8	88.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
North Lanarkshire	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Orkney Islands	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Perth and Kinross	72.7	81.8	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Renfrewshire	100.0	90.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	90.9	90.9
Scottish Borders	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Shetland Islands	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
South Ayrshire	87.5	62.5	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
South Lanarkshire	94.1	94.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	94.1	94.1
Stirling	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
West Dunbartonshire	60.0	40.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	80.0	80.0
West Lothian	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	90.9	90.9
Scotland²	94.1	91.6	100.0	100.0	99.4	96.6	96.6

1. Target provision of Physical Education refers to at least 100 minutes per week in secondary timetabled periods.

2. The Scotland total excludes Jordanhill. For more information see background note 3.3.

Chapter 3: Background notes

3.1 National Statistics publication

This is a National Statistics Publication. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

These statistics undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. This publication has been assessed by the UK Statistics Authority.

3.2 Sources and timing

The information comes from the latest Healthy Living Survey, conducted in February 2022, of all publicly funded schools in Scotland. This survey was conducted in the week commencing 21 February 2022.

In 2013, the collection was rescheduled to the first week of March due to the publicity around the possible presence of horse meat in school meals. This was to ensure that the data produced were as representative of a usual school day as possible.

For more information on this survey and for a detailed breakdown at local authority and school level, please refer to our [supplementary data](#) tables.

3.3 Definitions and data quality

3.3.1 National Eligibility Criteria

The national criteria for eligibility to free school meals includes the following:

- Pupils within families who receive Income Support, Income-based Job Seekers Allowance or any income related element of Employment and Support Allowance.
- Pupils within families who receive support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Pupils whose parents or carers receive Child Tax Credit, do not receive Working Tax Credit and had an annual income (as assessed by the Inland Revenue) of below £16,105 (from April 2013).
- Pupils whose parents or carers are in receipt of both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit and their income is up to £6,900 were also entitled (from August 2009).
- Pupils whose parents or carers are in receipt of Universal Credit and their monthly earned income does not exceed £610 were also entitled (from August 2017).
- Pupils in school education who receive any of these benefits in their own right are also entitled to receive free school meals.

Additionally, eligibility for free school meals was extended to all pupils in P1-P3 in January 2015, to all pupils in P4 in August 2021 and then to all pupils in P5 in January 2022. All pupils in those stages are therefore assumed to be registered for free school meals for the purposes of this collection.

3.3.2 Local Initiatives to provide free school meals

Not all pupils who receive free school meals are eligible to do so under the national criteria as many local authorities have additional initiatives in place that extend the provision of free school meals beyond these criteria.

A pupil is considered to be registered for free school meals for the purposes of the Healthy Living Survey regardless of whether their eligibility is under national eligibility criteria or local initiatives. However, local authorities may not record all pupils registered for FSM under a local initiative in their management information systems. As these records form the basis of the Healthy Living Survey data, local authorities are asked to provide details of any pupils who receive FSM under local initiatives but who they have not recorded as FSM registered. This information is then used to amend the local authority management information system data returned to the Scottish Government during the initial survey. Therefore, the FSM registration information published from the Healthy Living Survey data is based on a combination of the information routinely held by schools and local authorities and the additional information provided to the Scottish Government at the time of the collection.

In some instances local authorities have returned data which does not include pupils registered for free school meals under a local initiative within either their pupils registered for free school meals or free meals taken data.

3.3.3 Overview of local initiatives

In 2017 and 2018 work was undertaken with local authorities to explore their use of local initiatives to expand the provision of free school meals. Approximately half of all local authorities reported that they had an initiative in place to provide free meals to all pupils in at least some of their special schools. This means particular caution should be applied when using free school meal registrations as a measure of deprivation in special schools.

Details of local initiatives in place during the 2022 Healthy Living Survey are provided below:

Local initiatives in primary and secondary schools

- Argyll & Bute – pupils staying in the school hostels for Dunoon Grammar School and Oban High School are entitled to free school meals.
- Clackmannanshire – all pupils at the Extended Additional Support unit at Alloa Academy are entitled to free school meals.
- Dumfries & Galloway – all pupils with a Co-ordinated Support Plan are eligible to apply for free school meals. Figures suggest uptake is not universal.
- Inverclyde;
 - Threshold for pupils whose parents or carers are in receipt of both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit was £12,417.
 - Threshold for pupils whose parents or carers are in receipt of Universal Credit was £1,007 per month.
- Perth & Kinross – all pupils in families qualifying for the clothing grant are automatically registered for free school meals.
- West Dunbartonshire:
 - Threshold for pupils whose parents or carers receive Child Tax Credit only is £18,400.
 - Threshold for pupils whose parents or carers are in receipt of both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit was £10,420.
 - Threshold for pupils whose parents or carers are in receipt of Universal Credit was an annual income of £8,920.

Local initiatives in special schools

Local Authorities where all pupils at all special schools are entitled to free school meals include Clackmannanshire, Falkirk (including the ASL wings at Kinnaird Primary School and Maddiston Primary School), Fife, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, Stirling and West Lothian.

Local Authorities where all pupils at one special school are entitled to free school meals - Dundee City, East Renfrewshire, North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire.

Local Authorities where all pupils at two or more special schools are entitled to free school meals - East Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire.

Other local initiatives in special schools

- Dumfries & Galloway – all pupils with a Co-ordinated Support Plan are eligible to apply for free school meals. Figures suggest uptake is not universal.

3.3.4 Measure of deprivation

As the national criteria for free school meal eligibility are largely based on the receipt of benefits, statistics on free school meal registrations from the Healthy Living Survey have been used as a measure of deprivation. However, several factors need to be taken into account when using the statistics in this way. Firstly, the introduction of universal free school meal eligibility to all P1-P3 and then to P5 pupils means that it is not appropriate to use free school meal statistics for whole primary schools as a measure of deprivation from 2015 onwards. Statistics for P4-P7 are available from 2015 and for P6-P7 from 2022 and their use as a measure of deprivation is not affected by this policy change. However, this data is now affected by local initiatives extending universal provision.

The use of statistics on free school meal registrations as a measure of deprivation is also affected by initiatives used by local authorities to extend the provision of free school meals beyond the national criteria and cause eligibility criteria to vary across Scotland. These initiatives have changed over the years, as summarised above, therefore affecting the suitability of year on year comparisons of the data and comparisons between local authorities.

There are a number of differences in the eligibility criteria for free school meals across the UK, so any comparisons made using free school registration statistics between parts of the UK will not be on a like for like basis.

3.3.5 Data quality

Local authorities are asked to provide data for an alternative day if they conducted the Healthy Living Survey on a day where there was a class trip or an unusually large group of pupils were out of school. Details of the schools where alternative data was used can be found in the school level dataset.

Take up of meals varies from day to day for a number of reasons. For example, some daily menus are more popular than others. This survey takes a snapshot of meals taken on a particular day so it is susceptible to the daily fluctuations in meals taken.

The methodology for recording meals taken varies between local authorities. For example, some report the count of meals taken, while others estimate meals taken based on the total food spend/receipts for the day.

A number of schools share dining facilities and were not able to separate out their meals information. Local authorities therefore returned their combined meal information against one school only. There are a number of schools which share dining facilities across sectors, therefore the meal information will only be included against one of the schools for all sector split figures. See the school level [supplementary dataset](#) for more information on the schools involved.

3.3.6 Comparison to Pupil Census

Statistics on the school pupils registered for free school meals as collected in the annual pupil census has been published since the 2018 census. This was most recently published in 2022 and now covers pupil censuses conducted in Septembers of 2018 to 2021.

The information on free school meal registrations in the Pupil Census comes from individual pupil records. Therefore, the census provides the opportunity for more detailed analysis of the demographics of pupils registered for free school meals than the Healthy Living Survey.

The Healthy Living Survey collects additional information on school meals from the Pupil Census, such as uptake of meals and the number of paid for meals.

The published Pupil Census statistics include the number and percentage of primary, secondary and special pupils registered for free school meals, split by stage at national and local authority level. This is available in Tables 2.22, 3.11, 4.10, 6.17, 7.14 and 8.13 of the [Pupil Census Supplementary Tables](#). Pupil census data on FSM registered pupils is also available at school level in the [school level summary statistics](#).

There are differences between the free school meal statistics in the two collections. This is to be expected for a number of reasons, primarily related to the different timings of the collections:

- Individual circumstance changes:
 - The circumstances of pupils and their families may change between the collection dates. Some pupils may become eligible, while others may lose their eligibility. These changes will be reflected in different registration numbers in the collections.
 - This is also influenced by how frequently authorities review registrations and/or require pupils to re-register. In some areas, registrations may be valid for multiple years or more while in others they may be for shorter periods including years or terms.
- Late registrations
 - The pupil census is taken close to the start of the school year. Therefore, if pupils are required to register every year, some pupils may not be registered in time for the data collection. The HLS takes place later in the year, allowing more time for pupils to register.
- Cohort changes:
 - The HLS and pupil census for the same calendar year will take place in different school years. Stage figures will therefore refer to different cohorts of pupils, between which some variation in free school meal registrations will occur.
- Changes to eligibility criteria between collection dates:
 - If national or local eligibility criteria for free school meals changes between the collections, the number of pupils eligible to register for them will also change and this will be reflected in the statistics.

- Changes in recording systems:
 - Several local authorities reported that between the 2018 HLS and 2018 pupil census they had moved to a system that automatically registers pupils' entitlement to free school meals based upon information held in their benefits systems. This may have led to different numbers of pupils being recorded as registered.

Due to these variations, we advise caution when comparing the statistics from these two collections.

3.3.7 Changes to data

Some of the figures originally published on percentage uptake of school meals in 2015 were amended in June 2016 after a processing error relating to the number of P1-P3 pupils present was discovered in nine schools in North Lanarkshire. This impacted on the percentage uptake figures for P1-P3, all primary and all sectors combined.

Changes were made to 2018 data published for City of Edinburgh and North Lanarkshire at school and local authority level. This data was amended, and the 2018 Healthy Living Survey was republished in August 2019. These changes did not have substantial impact on figures at a Scotland level.

Jordanhill

To protect against the release of identifiable personal information, Jordanhill primary and secondary are not shown in School Healthy Living Survey Statistics from 2018 onwards. Free school meal registration and meal uptake information for Jordanhill can be found in Table 30, while PE provision data can be found in Table 29 of the [supplementary tables](#).

3.3.8 Physical education

For the purposes of this survey, physical education must take place during curriculum time and be led by a GTCS registered physical education, or class, teacher. Certified and non-certified PE are both included, providing it supports the experiences and outcomes defined by Curriculum for Excellence. For example, dance is included but walking to school and drama are not. In 2014, the survey guidance was improved to make clear what was required for a school to have met the physical education target.

3.4 Supplementary tables

A large number of additional tables are produced in Excel on or after the publication date and are published on the Scottish Government website.

The following supplementary tables on school meals and Physical Education are available at: [School education statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

3.5 Further information

Information on Physical Education provision in schools was also collected in 2005 and was published on the Scottish Government website in 'Progress towards the recommendations of the Physical Education Review Group' in January 2006, at the following address:

[Progress towards the recommendations of the Physical Education Review Group \(webarchive.org.uk\)](http://webarchive.org.uk)

Information on the Urban Rural classification used for some statistics in the supplementary tables can be found on the Scottish Government website: [Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Information/Urban-Rural-Classification-2020)

For the purpose of the Healthy Living Survey, a lunch is defined in the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended by the Schools (Health promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 as any food or drink provided in the middle of the day which the education authority consider is appropriate for consumption as a meal at that time of the day.

For more guidance of schools meals please refer to [Healthy eating in schools: guidance 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Information/Healthy-eating-in-schools-guidance-2020) and [Schools \(Health Promotion and Nutrition\) Scotland Act: Health promotion guidance for local authorities and schools - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Information/Schools-Health-Promotion-and-Nutrition-Scotland-Act)

3.5.1 Symbols

All percentages are rounded separately so breakdowns may not sum to the total shown.

The following symbols are used:

0 = nil or rounds to nil

* = suppressed

= not applicable

A National Statistics Publication for Scotland

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are explained well.

Correspondence and enquiries

For enquiries about this publication please contact:
David Nicholson, Education Analytical Services
e-mail: school.stats@gov.scot

For general enquiries about Scottish Government statistics please contact:
Office of the Chief Statistician, Telephone: 0131 244 0442
e-mail: statistics.enquiries@gov.scot

How to access background or source data

The data collected for this statistical bulletin:

- are available in more detail through statistics.gov.scot.
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact school.stats@gov.scot for further information.
- cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

Complaints and suggestions

If you are not satisfied with our service or have any comments or suggestions, please write to the Chief Statistician, GR, St Andrews House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, Telephone: (0131) 244 0302, e-mail statistics.enquiries@gov.scot.

If you would like to be consulted about statistical collections or receive notification of publications, please register your interest at [ScotStat Register: guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)
Details of forthcoming publications can be found at [Statistics and research - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

ISBN 978-1-80435-893-1

Crown Copyright

You may use or re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government License. See: [Open Government Licence \(nationalarchives.gov.uk\)](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk)

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS1148662 (08/22)