



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

**Changes to the rules for free school meals**

**Act Now - don't lose out**

Dear Friend,

Universal Credit is being introduced in Stoke-on-Trent for people making new claims after 13th June 2018. Universal Credit makes it harder to claim free school meals. In future, no family is entitled to free school meals if they earn above £7,400 a year.

If you are on benefits, or receive tax credits, and do not currently claim free school meals for your child or children, it is best to apply now.

***You are entitled to free school meals if you (or your child / children) are on one of the following benefits:***

- ***Income Support***
- ***Income based Jobseekers Allowance***
- ***Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)***
- ***The guaranteed element of Pension Credit***
- ***Child Tax Credit, if your income is less than £16,190 a year, and you do not receive Working Tax Credit as well***
- ***Working Tax Credit run on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit***
- ***Universal Credit if your claim began before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 (if claimed after the 1<sup>st</sup> April then if your income is less than £7,400)***
- ***Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999***

Please fill in the form attached to this letter to make sure your child / children continues to be able to receive Free School Meals. Return it to the main reception of your school

**More than just Free School Meals**

There is another good reason why it is important to fill in the form now. The Government gives extra money per child in receipt of Free School Meals. This is called the Pupil Premium. It pays for more teachers, breakfast clubs and sports clubs at the school your child / children attends.

**Free benefits check!**

Families in Stoke-on-Trent are also missing out on about £50 million a year in unclaimed benefits because not everyone understands all that they are entitled to. We are working with the Citizens Advice Bureaux ahead of the Universal Credit roll out and will be holding local surgeries in different areas.

**If you think you are not receiving all of the benefits you are entitled to, then please register for a free benefits check from an adviser from the Citizens Advice Bureaux you can email for an appointment on; [freebenefitscheckstoke@gmail.com](mailto:freebenefitscheckstoke@gmail.com) or call; 01782 454370.**

If there is anything else my office can support you with please do not hesitate to contact me at [ruth.smeeth.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:ruth.smeeth.mp@parliament.uk).

Yours sincerely



**Ruth Smeeth MP**

**Member of Parliament for Stoke-on-Trent North and Kidsgrove**