

Up to 2.6m kids to lose out on free school meals by 2022



GMB Union members working in schools already see 'hungry kids' on a daily basis as parents struggle to make ends meet

Shadow Education Secretary Angela Rayner will round on the Government today after the GMB Union revealed up to 2.6 million children could lose out on free school meals by 2022.

Addressing GMB's Public Services Conference in Brighton today [Sunday 03 June], the MP for Ashton-under-Lyne will say Government's claims on school funding have 'collapsed'.

The statistics – which are contained in the Department for Education's own previously unpublished analysis – were revealed following a Freedom of Information Act request submitted by GMB.



“ Ministers said time and time again that no one would lose a meal, only for the IFS to reveal that one in eight children who were eligible will be stripped of their entitlement under the Universal Credit.

Angela Rayner, Labour’s Shadow Secretary of State for Education

The Children’s Society had previously estimated the Government’s £7,400 household earnings cap, could lead to a million children growing up in poverty being denied a free school meal.

The new figures reveal that the DfE expects 1.1 million children to lose out by 2020, and 2.4 million children to lose out in 2022 – and that the Government’s model projects that the figure could be as high as 2.6 million in that year.

Angela Rayner, Labour’s Shadow Secretary of State for Education, will say:

“This is the latest sign that the Tories simply haven’t been open with the people who will miss out under their plans.

“Ministers said time and time again that no one would lose a meal, only for the IFS to reveal that one in eight children who were eligible will be stripped of their entitlement under the Universal Credit.

“ Fantastic speech by @AngelaRayner at #GMB18 just now. She's right – it's an absolute scandal that 2.6 Million kids are set to lose out on free school meals. Time to #SaveOurSchoolDinners pic.twitter.com/9OEtO0w8dl

– GMB UNION (@GMB_union) June 3, 2018

“Now it appears that there would be millions more who could have had a meal but will be denied.

“Even now, the Government refuses to release their own calculations in full. Their claims on school funding have collapsed and now their story on school meals is falling apart.

“It is time they thought again about plans that would affect so many children and listened to Labour’s call for universal free school meals for all primary pupils.”



Tim Roache, GMB General Secretary, said:

“This policy is cruel, heartless and needless. I can't believe there's even a debate about whether kids should go hungry or not.

“In blunt and stark terms, this policy is taking food from the mouths of millions of children from poorer backgrounds.

“Our members working in schools already encounter children with no food at home, they see packed lunches of no more than crisps or chocolate and buy snacks for their pupils out of their own pockets because too many parents are struggling to make ends meet.

“ This policy is cruel, heartless and needless. I can't believe there's even a debate about whether kids should go hungry or not.

Tim Roache, GMB General Secretary

“At GMB Congress this week we are honouring our former President Mary Turner who worked in school catering and spent her life campaigning to make sure our kids don't go hungry.

“In her memory – and for the thousands of GMB members who work in schools, and children across the country – we will continue to campaign for free school meals for all.”

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