

**Press Release
For Immediate Release
15 January 2008**

Campaigners respond to 'Hungry for Success' report with call to remove cost barriers to healthy food in schools.

School meals campaigners responded to the publication today of an official report on Scotland's school meals strategy by calling for removal of the cost barriers to healthy food in schools. Inspectors from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) found that whilst progress had been made in improving the nutritional quality of school meals greater urgency was needed, particularly in secondary schools, in implementing and increasing take up of healthy school meals.

John Dickie, head of the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) in Scotland, and a leading member of the Scottish Free School Meals Campaign, said;

"We very much welcome the progress that has been made. But, with less than half of children getting a school dinner, this report makes clear that much more is needed to ensure all our children get a healthy meal in the middle of the day. Removing the cost barrier through introduction of universal free school meals must be a key part of the solution."

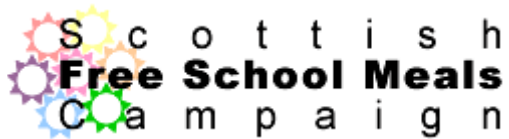
Rachel Jury, Communications Officer, at the Poverty Alliance added;

"Previous Scottish Government research found that cost was a key factor for nearly a third of secondary school pupils who chose not to take a school meal, so removing the cost disincentive is clearly crucial. The Scottish Government's free school meals pilot in primary schools is a massive step forward and needs to be rolled out as soon as possible."

According to Marion Davis of One Parent Families Scotland, another leading member of the Scottish Free School Meals Campaign;

"Universal free school meals for could make a huge impact in tackling family poverty and improving children's health and ability to learn. Universal provision has a dramatic effect on the take-up of healthy school meals and on pupils' concentration and behaviour. Public opinion, parents and children's organizations across Scotland are fully behind the idea of universal free high quality school meals so the sooner the new Scottish government rolls out free school meals to all children the better."

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For further information please contact: John Dickie, Head of CPAG in Scotland on mobile 07795 340 618

Note:

1. for the HMIE Report *Hungry for Success - Further Food for Thought* published today see <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/hfsfft.html>
2. Previous Scottish Government research finding that cost was a key factor for nearly a third of secondary school pupils who chose not to take a school meal can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/01/13110440/3>