

EXTERNAL



## **PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY**

**Free Breakfast Club Programme: Academic year 2025/26**

# Contents

Section 1: Specification.....	3
1.1    The Free Breakfast Club Programme .....	3
1.2    Business Partnership .....	3
1.3    Scope.....	4
1.4    Criteria .....	4
1.5    Rights Package .....	5
1.6    Testing and Learning .....	5
1.7    Sponsorship Agreement .....	6
Section 2: Process .....	7
2.1    Open Call .....	7
2.2    Information Webinar .....	8
2.3    Clarification Questions.....	8
2.4    1-2-1 Discussions .....	8
2.5    Review of Offers .....	9
2.6    Mobilisation.....	9
Annex 1- Conditions of Participation .....	10
1.    Offer Validity .....	10
2.    Freedom of Information .....	10
3.    Information Sharing Across Government .....	10
4.    Conflicts of Interest .....	10
Annex 2- Filtering Process.....	11
1.    Additional Filtering.....	11
2.    Evaluation .....	11
3.    Scoring Matrix .....	11
4.    Tie-Breaking .....	12
5.    Feedback .....	12

## Section 1: Specification

### 1.1 The Free Breakfast Club Programme

- 1.1.1 The Free Breakfast Club programme is one of the Department for Education's flagship policies, central to the Government's mission to break down barriers to opportunity for every child<sup>1</sup>. Once fully implemented, it will deliver a Free Breakfast Club in every primary school in England, giving millions of children the chance to start the day supported and ready to learn.
- 1.1.2 Evidence shows that where schools run breakfast clubs, they report improvements to pupils' behaviour, attendance and attainment. The Free Breakfast Club programme will mean every school, every child, and every family have the chance to receive those benefits.
- 1.1.3 From April 2025, the Department has funded Free Breakfast Clubs in ca. 750 early adopter schools<sup>2</sup> across England. This is part of a test and learn phase in advance of further roll out to schools with primary-aged pupils across England. These early adopter schools are offering places to nearly 180,000 pupils of whom ca. 79,000 pupils are disadvantaged.

### 1.2 Business Partnership

- 1.2.1 Our clubs are fully funded to deliver 30 minutes of free childcare to working parents and a free and nutritious breakfast to all pupils, however there is room to increase the impact. We believe that additional benefits can be delivered from working closely with partner organisations to support schools in successfully delivering Free Breakfast Clubs, creating a greater impact. There are many successful corporate and industry partnerships already occurring at local levels and the Department for Education seeks to build on this existing good practice to ensure equitable access at a national level. To this end we want to start building relationships with organisations as part of the Free Breakfast Club programme to test the impact of this approach.

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/missions/opportunity](https://www.gov.uk/missions/opportunity)

<sup>2</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/breakfast-clubs-early-adopters-schools-in-the-scheme](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/breakfast-clubs-early-adopters-schools-in-the-scheme)

## 1.3 Scope

- 1.3.1 We are seeking offers from food providers that enable schools participating in the Free Breakfast Club programme in the 2025/26 academic year (**“Participating Schools”**) to maximise the value of their food spending and enhance their offer, beyond the core offer, to pupils through deals for the Participating Schools. In return, the Department proposes to offer partners a package of rights, as detailed below. Any deals offered by the sponsor will not be mandated for Participating Schools to make use of and Participating Schools will retain flexibility and choice in how they procure their food.
- 1.3.2 We know that Participating Schools are using a wide range of food providers for the provision of food for their Free Breakfast Clubs. This partnership is intended to leverage the profile of the programme at a national level to ensure all Participating Schools have access to the best value-for-money deals. We are also seeking to address challenges that Participating Schools face in ordering food, including ease of access and use of ordering systems, reliability of delivery, minimum order values and volume restrictions.

## 1.4 Criteria

- 1.4.1 To ensure that offers of sponsorship meet the needs of Participating Schools, we have identified a set of core essential criteria that all sponsorship offers must satisfy. The criteria sets out that offers must:
- be available for all Participating Schools (currently ca.750<sup>3</sup>) to access and use throughout the term of the sponsorship arrangement;
  - comply with the School Food Standards<sup>4</sup>, giving Participating Schools sufficient breadth of choice to meet the recommendations for a balanced breakfast detailed in the ‘Delivering a high quality food offer’ section of the [Breakfast clubs early adopter guidance for schools and trusts in England - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/breakfast-clubs-early-adopter-guidance-for-schools-and-trusts-in-england)<sup>5</sup>; and
  - deliver value for money for Participating Schools, offering deals that help them maximise the value of their food spend and thus enhance their offer to pupils.

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/breakfast-clubs-early-adopters-schools-in-the-scheme>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/school-meals-food-standards>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/breakfast-clubs-early-adopter-guidance-for-schools-and-trusts-in-england/breakfast-clubs-early-adopter-guidance-for-schools-and-trusts-in-england#delivering-a-high-quality-food-offer>

1.4.2 Potential partners are also encouraged to consider how they can support Participating Schools through the following quality criteria:

- Ease of access and use – any ordering systems are straightforward and non-burdensome for Participating Schools to use;
- Reliable delivery - ensure that delivery is reliable, providing Participating Schools with timely access to the food they need for their breakfast club; and
- School choice and flexibility - Participating Schools must have choice and flexibility on what they buy and how they buy, allowing them to meet their pupils' needs.

## 1.5 Rights Package

1.5.1 In exchange for providing an offer to Participating Schools, successful partners will have the option to receive a package of promotional rights. These constitute:

- Being named in comms and media releases made by the Department for Education as part of the announcement of successful partners; and
- Being named in direct comms from the Department for Education to all Participating Schools in which successful partners' offers will be presented.

## 1.6 Testing and Learning

1.6.1 This is the first business sponsorship/partnership process launched for the Free Breakfast Club programme. We are committed to testing and learning from this process and our work with sponsors as we move towards national rollout. We will work collaboratively with sponsors, through monthly sessions which will explore sponsor MI to understand engagement and behaviour across the Participating Schools. Monthly data provided by sponsors to the Department must capture:

- a) Name of Participating School/postcode
- b) Date of Purchase
- c) Itemised Summary of items purchased & cost of purchase – retail and post discount
- d) Indicator if Delivery was used (any cost incurred and standard delivery charge)

1.6.2 Data should be provided in .xlsx format for each month, no later than the 7th day of the following month via DfE.

## 1.7 Sponsorship Agreement

- 1.7.1 Attached to this notice is the applicable form of sponsorship agreement which will underpin the relationship between the Department and commercial partners in relation to the sponsorship arrangements.
- 1.7.2 The sponsorship agreement covers an initial sponsorship term from the official go-live date up to 31 July 2026.
- 1.7.3 The Department does not intend to negotiate the terms of the sponsorship agreement with potential sponsors. Please raise any queries on the form of sponsorship agreement through the clarification question process set out in Para 2.3.1 below.

## Section 2: Process

Indicative Timeline	
Open Call for Sponsorship Offers Launched	08 July 2025
Deadline to register for Information Webinar	12:00 on 17 July 2025
Information Webinar	11:00-12:00 on 18 July 2025
Registration for 1-2-1 discussions	Up to 12:00 on 18 of July 2025
1-2-1 discussions with potential sponsors	Various slots available during W/C 21 July 2025
Clarification Submission Deadline	10:00 on 28 July 2025
Open Call for Sponsorship Offers closes	10:00 on 4 August 2025
Review of offers by the Department	4 August-12 September 2025
Notification of outcome and signing of Sponsorship Agreements	W/C 15 September 2025
Target Go Live Date	13 October 2025

### 2.1 Open Call

- 2.1.1 The open call is now live and will run until the closing date of 10:00 4 August 2025. Food providers interested in becoming sponsors are invited to submit their offer via the Offer Submission Form attached to the Open Call notice linked. In the unlikely event of experiencing technical difficulties completing the Form please contact [breakfastclubs.partnering@education.gov.uk](mailto:breakfastclubs.partnering@education.gov.uk).
- 2.1.2 Responses are limited to one per organisation (including the organisation's group of companies where applicable). In the event that multiple responses are received from a single organisation (or their group), the Department will seek clarification on the correct response to carry forward.
- 2.1.3 Responses should be submitted in Microsoft Word or equivalent format via email to [breakfastclubs.partnering@education.gov.uk](mailto:breakfastclubs.partnering@education.gov.uk) no later than the closing date for the Open Call at 10:00 on 4 August 2025. Any relevant information should be included in the submission form without links or embedding of other documents.

## 2.2 Information Webinar

- 2.2.1 On 18 July 2025 11:00-12:00, the Department will conduct an online session held on Microsoft Teams to provide further information on the partnership opportunity and to give interested organisations the opportunity to ask any immediate clarification questions. Food providers interested in attending should email [breakfastclubs.partnering@education.gov.uk](mailto:breakfastclubs.partnering@education.gov.uk) to express their interest no later than **12:00 on the 17 of July 2025**. Organisations that do not attend the online session are still able to participate and submit an offer and may receive a copy of the slides shared at the webinar by registering their interest via the above mailbox.

## 2.3 Clarification Questions

- 2.3.1 Any questions or queries relating to this Partnership Opportunity can be submitted for clarification to [breakfastclubs.partnering@education.gov.uk](mailto:breakfastclubs.partnering@education.gov.uk) up to the clarification deadline in the indicative timeline above.
- 2.3.2 All questions and answers will be made anonymous and made available to all potential sponsors who have registered their interest via email at [breakfastclubs.partnering@education.gov.uk](mailto:breakfastclubs.partnering@education.gov.uk). An anonymised Clarification Log will be regularly updated and issued via email to organisations that have registered their interest in the opportunity.

## 2.4 1-2-1 Discussions

- 2.4.1 Potential Sponsors who believe they are capable of carrying out this activity can register their interest in attending a virtual 1-2-1 discussion with Department officials in the week commencing 21 July 2025. These discussions will offer an opportunity to ask further clarifications. Potential Sponsors may register their interest in a 1-2-1 session via email to [breakfastclubs.partnering@education.gov.uk](mailto:breakfastclubs.partnering@education.gov.uk). Interested organisations must register their interest no later than **12:00 on 18 July 2025**. Any additional information the Department shares in these sessions will also be included as part of the Clarification Log process above.
- 2.4.2 Organisations that do not attend 1-2-1 discussions are still able to participate and submit an offer.



## 2.5 Review of Offers

- 2.5.1 Following the closure of the open call at **10:00 on the 4 August 2025** the Department will review all offers received. The Department will carry out due diligence checks. The Department will then review the declarative responses, and the summary of the offer made via the Offer Submission Form attached to the Open Call notice to ensure the offer meets the core criteria set out in Para 1.4.1 of the specification.
- 2.5.2 In the event that the Department receives more than 10 offers that successfully pass the review of declarative responses, we reserve the right to apply an additional filter. This will consist of a panel of evaluators reviewing each offer and agreeing a single moderated score for each question on the basis of the quality criteria detailed in Para 1.4.2 of the specification. The Department will then select the highest scoring offers to proceed. The scoring methodology is detailed in Annex 2.
- 2.5.3 Following internal approvals, we will notify the participating organisations of the outcome and begin the process for arranging sponsorship agreement signature with a target signature date in the week commencing 15 September 2025.

## 2.6 Mobilisation

- 2.6.1 Following sponsorship agreement signature, we will work closely with partner organisations to prepare for the target go-live date on 13 October 2025.

## Annex 1- Conditions of Participation

In participating in this process through submission of the Offer Submission Form, potential sponsors accept the conditions of participation set out below.

### 1. Offer Validity

1.1 The Department requires sponsorship offers to remain valid for acceptance for 90 days from the closing date of the open call on 4 August 2025.

### 2. Freedom of Information

2.1 The Department is committed to meeting its responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA). Accordingly, information that is not identified by the sponsor as commercially sensitive submitted to the Department may need to be disclosed in response to a request under the FoIA.

### 3. Information Sharing Across Government

3.1 All Central Government Departments and their Executive Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government. They report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure. For these purposes, the Department may disclose within Government the potential Sponsor's documentation/information submitted during the process. Subject to paragraph 2 above and the terms of the sponsorship agreement once entered into, the information will not be disclosed outside Government without prior notification and consent.

### 4. Conflicts of interest

4.1 Where a Potential Sponsor is aware of any circumstances giving rise to any actual or perceived conflict of interest in respect of this Partnership Opportunity or has any indication that such a conflict of interest exists or may arise, they must inform the Department via the email address ([breakfastclubs.partnering@education.gov.uk](mailto:breakfastclubs.partnering@education.gov.uk)) of this as soon as possible.

### 5 Costs

5.1 The Department shall in no circumstances have any liability for any costs incurred by organisations in participating in this process or in preparing and submitting their offers.

### 6 Right to vary or terminate process

6.1 The Department has no obligation to enter into any sponsorship agreements as a result of this process and reserves the right to vary or terminate this process at any time, including the indicative timetable above.

6.2 This commercial partner selection process is not subject to the Procurement Act 2023.

## Annex 2- Filtering Process

### 1. Additional Filtering

- 1.1. As detailed in Section 2 Para 2.5.2, the Department reserves the right to apply additional filtering if it receives more than 10 applications that meet the core criteria detailed in Section 1 Para 1.4.1.
- 1.2. Capping the number of applications accepted will ensure that adequate Departmental resource can be dedicated to supporting successful sponsors and identifying learning to embed into future activity.

### 2. Evaluation

- 2.1 In the event that we receive more than 10 applications that meet the core criteria detailed in Section 1 Para 1.4.1, and exercise the right to apply additional filtering, a panel of evaluators will review each offer that passes the core criteria review and assign a score based on the extent to which they demonstrate the quality criteria set out in Para 1.4.2 of the specification as detailed in the scoring matrix below.
- 2.2 Each evaluator will score each offer independently with three equally weighted scores, one for each of the three criteria. Scores will then be collated and a moderation session will be conducted to agree a single assigned score for each of the three criteria for each offer. These three criteria scores will be added together to calculate the offer's total filtering score.
- 2.3 Offers will then be ranked in order by total filtering score and the top ten offers will be selected to proceed forward.

### 3. Scoring Matrix

The provider's offer will be allocated the applicable score in each category.

#### Ease of Access and Use

Score	Criteria- Evaluators will look for evidence of:
<b>1</b>	<b>Ease of Access and Use-</b> Participating Schools can only access the offer through the provider's standard ordering portal or process or through attending physical provider locations.
<b>2</b>	<b>Ease of Access and Use-</b> As for a score of 1, but the provider is offering additional support to Participating Schools which will facilitate access to and/or use of their offer.
<b>3</b>	<b>Ease of Access and Use-</b> The provider is offering to establish a dedicated ordering process for Participating Schools that provides a straightforward and user-friendly process for ordering suited to School needs with guidance where necessary.

**Reliable Delivery**

Score	Criteria- Evaluators will look for evidence of:
<b>1</b>	<b>Reliable Delivery-</b> Participating Schools do not have choice or control over delivery timing or are only able to access the offer via collection from physical provider locations.
<b>2</b>	<b>Reliable Delivery-</b> Delivery to Participating Schools is available and Schools have some choice or control over delivery timing.
<b>3</b>	<b>Reliable Delivery-</b> Participating Schools can schedule delivery times and rely upon delivery at set times to enable them to meet the needs of their students.

**School Choice and Flexibility**

Score	Criteria- Evaluators will look for evidence of:
<b>1</b>	<b>School Choice and Flexibility-</b> The offer made places material limitations on the Participating Schools' choice and/or flexibility.
<b>2</b>	<b>School Choice and Flexibility-</b> Schools have substantial choice and flexibility across the provider's entire range of products with only minor restrictions. The offer places only minor limitations on Participating Schools' choice and/or flexibility.
<b>3</b>	<b>School Choice and Flexibility-</b> Schools have full choice to order any products they choose across the provider's entire range of products. The offer places no limitations on Participating Schools' choice and/or flexibility.

**4. Tie-Breaking**

- 4.1 In the unlikely event that a tie-break occurs, the Department will rank the tied offers by the highest scoring offer for the criteria in this order: Ease of access and use, reliable delivery and school choice and flexibility.
- 4.2 Where the above ranking does not resolve a tie-break, the Department reserves the right to either accept all tie-brokeed offers, or to reject all tie-brokeed offers.

**5. Feedback**

- 5.1 The Department will share a brief summary of feedback with any potential sponsors who submit offers and are unsuccessful in this process.