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Challenges and Fairer Funding for School Catering

Anita Brown





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Challenges

- Food & Sundries Costs
- Pay Award (NJC)
- Funding ...FSM & UIFSM
- Recruitment & Retention
- School Food Standards



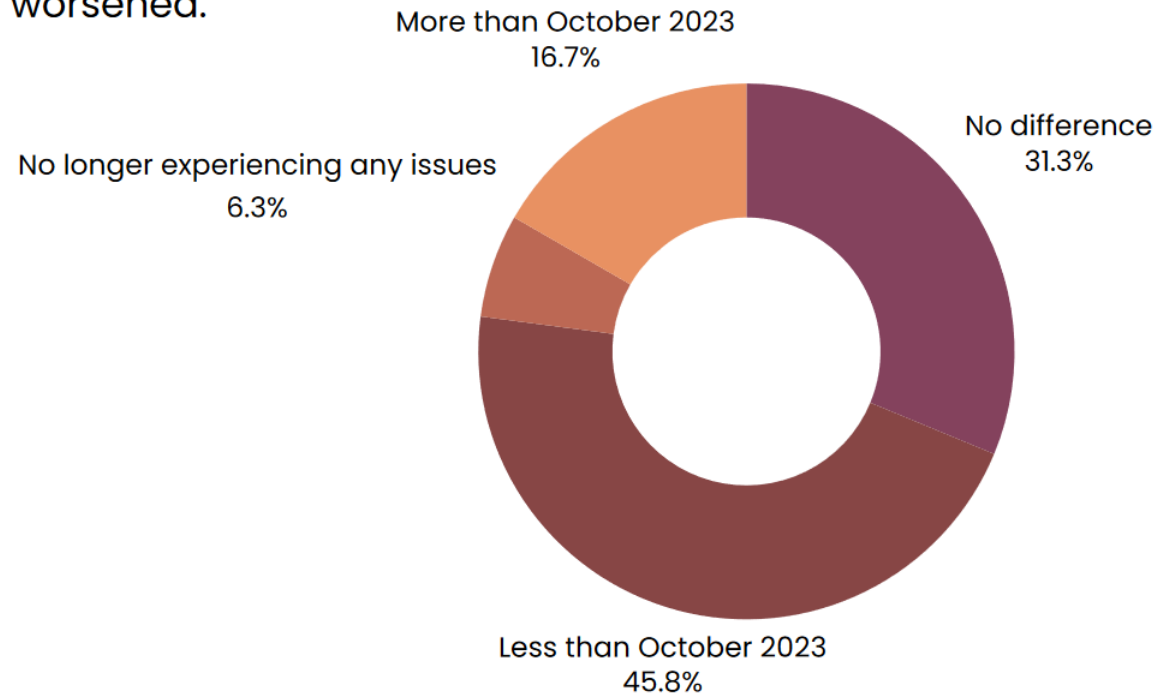
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94% of survey respondents are still experiencing food shortages and substitutions from their supply chain.



What did you say?

We asked how this compared to **October 2023** with just nearly half of respondents saying the situation had not changed or had worsened.

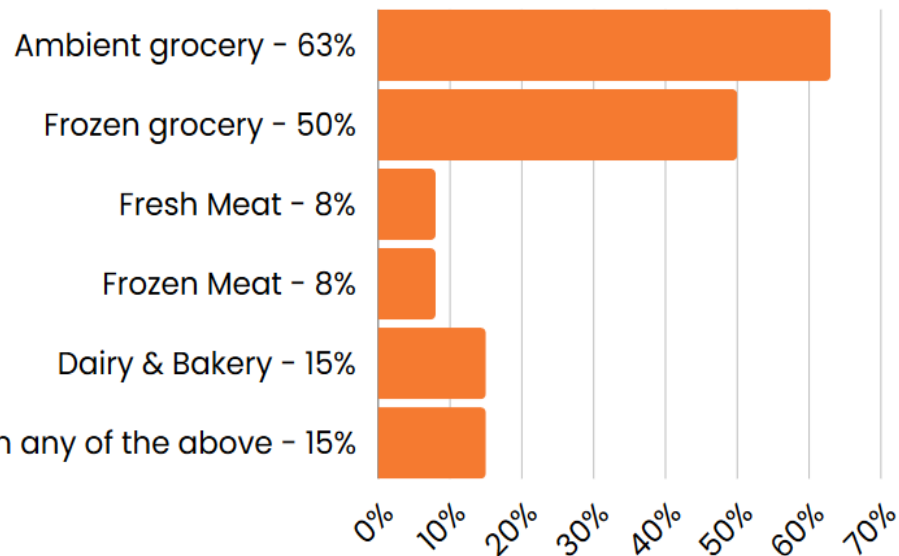




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What's affected?

We asked which food categories have been most affected since **October 2023**:



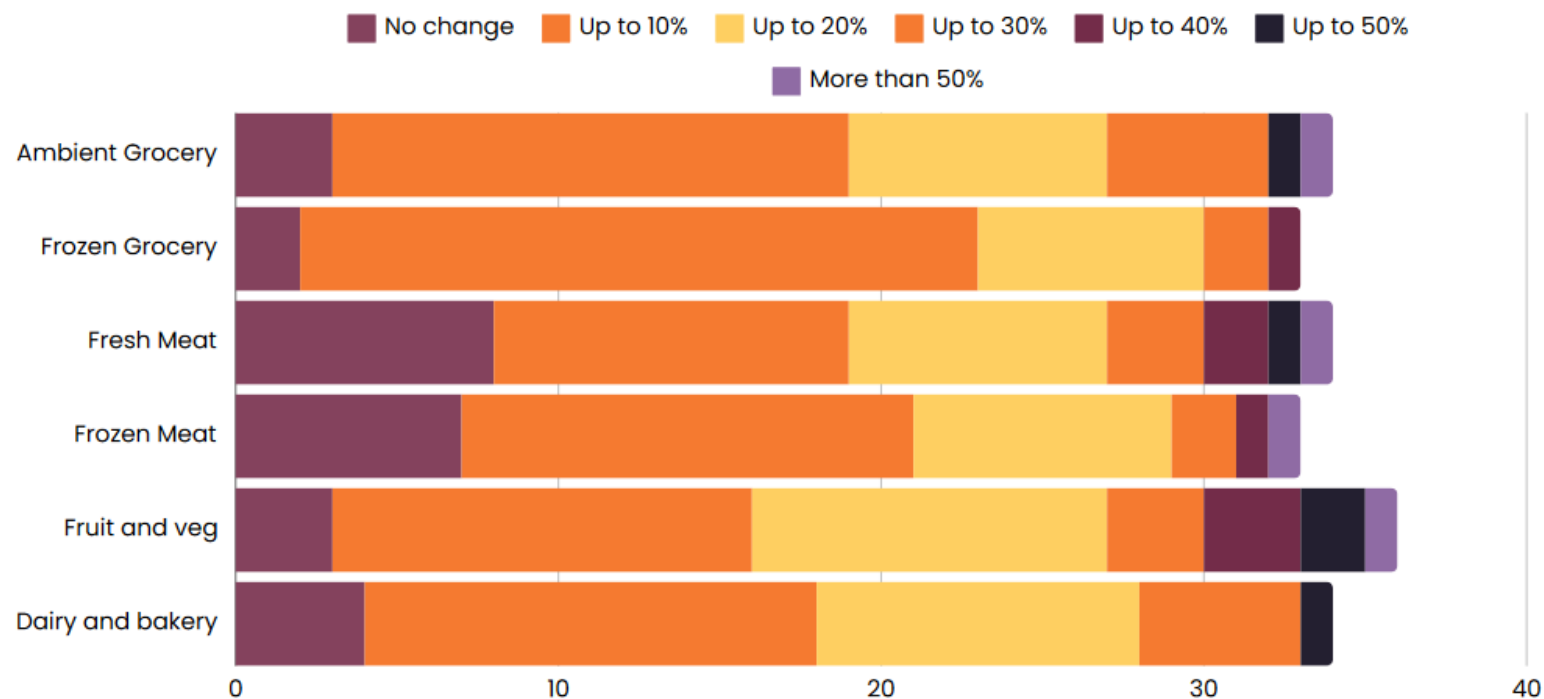
Pasta, potato products and vegetables were mentioned most frequently.



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By how much?

We asked our members, compared to **October 2023**, can you identify a percentage increase in food and ingredient costs for each category?



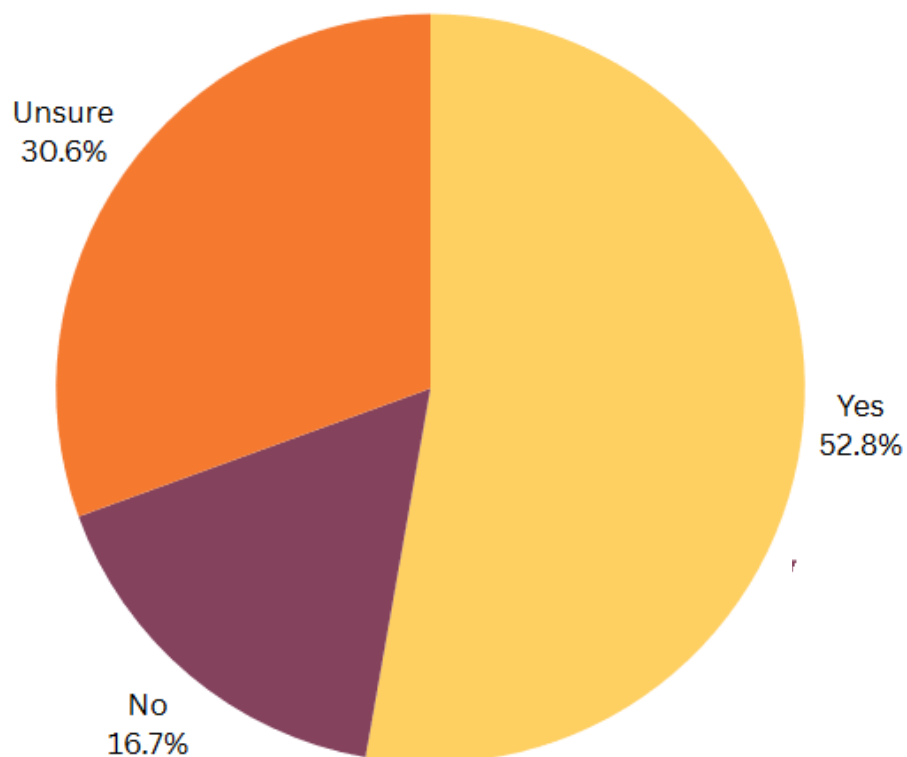
Since **October 2023** the majority of respondents have experienced price rises of around **10% - 20%** across all categories, with some still reporting increases in **excess of 50%** for some areas



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Further meal price rises...

We asked respondents if they were aware of any further planned increases in the selling price of the paid for meal.



We asked those respondents who were aware of further increases, how much they expected this to be with an average meal price from **September 2024** of **£2.79**.

A meal price of £2.79 from September 2023 will represent a **22% increase** since March 2020.



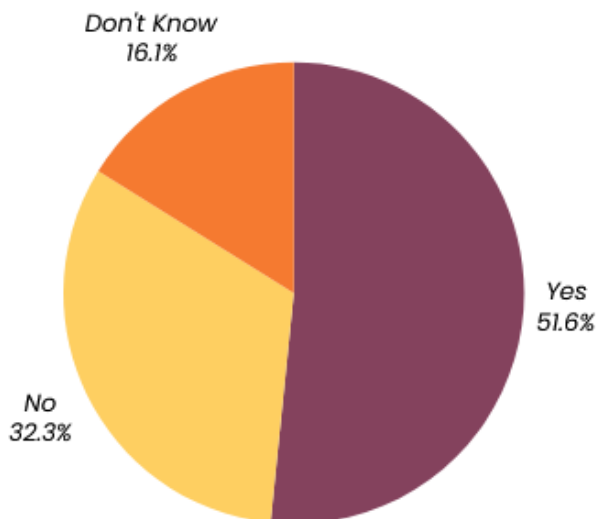
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Funding

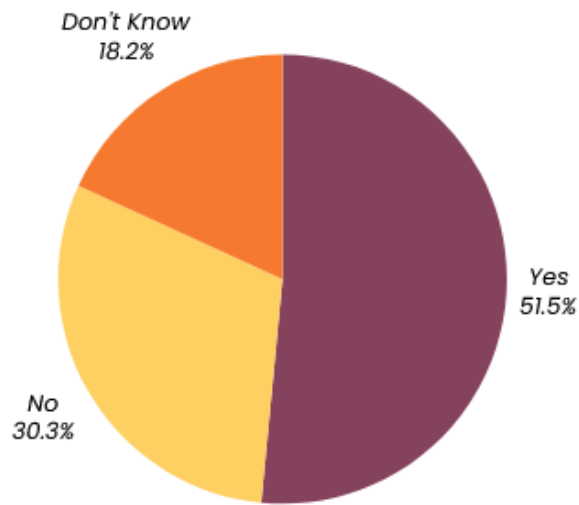
In England, the funded rate of the Universal Infant Free School Meal (UIFSM) and benefit-based Free School Meal (FSM) is £2.53. In Wales, the funded rate for UPFSM is £3.20 with the benefit-based Free School Meal rate being set by each local authority and can vary.

We asked respondents if they receive the full funding for either category of meal:

UIFSM (England) / UPFSM (Wales)



Benefit-based Free School Meals (FSM)



Some school meal funding is not ring fenced, and therefore some education catering providers do not receive the full meal value funding for the meals they provide.

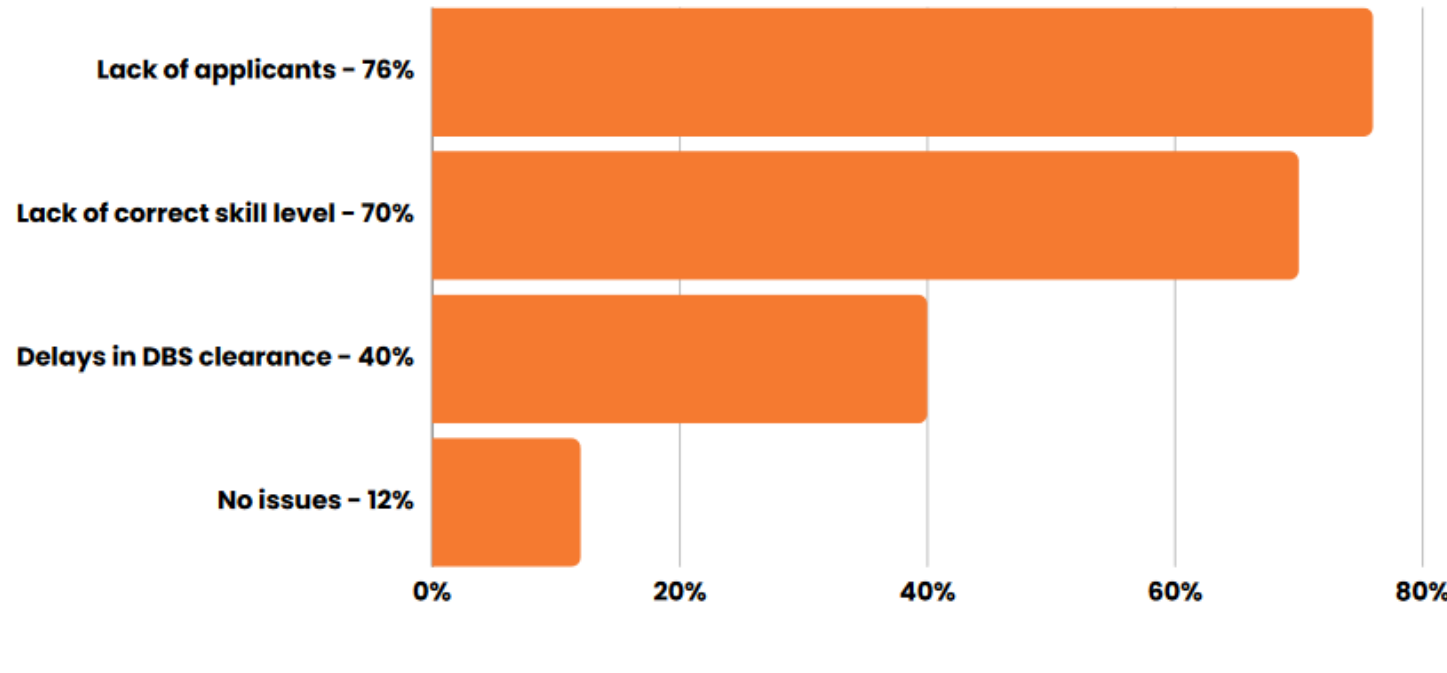
We asked respondents how much less or more funding they receive with **35%** of respondents indicating that they were underfunded by **up to 20%** for each meal they provide.



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Recruitment

Are you experiencing recruitment challenges?



Almost **80%** of respondents said that, compared to **October 2023** the situation had not changed or had actually got worse.

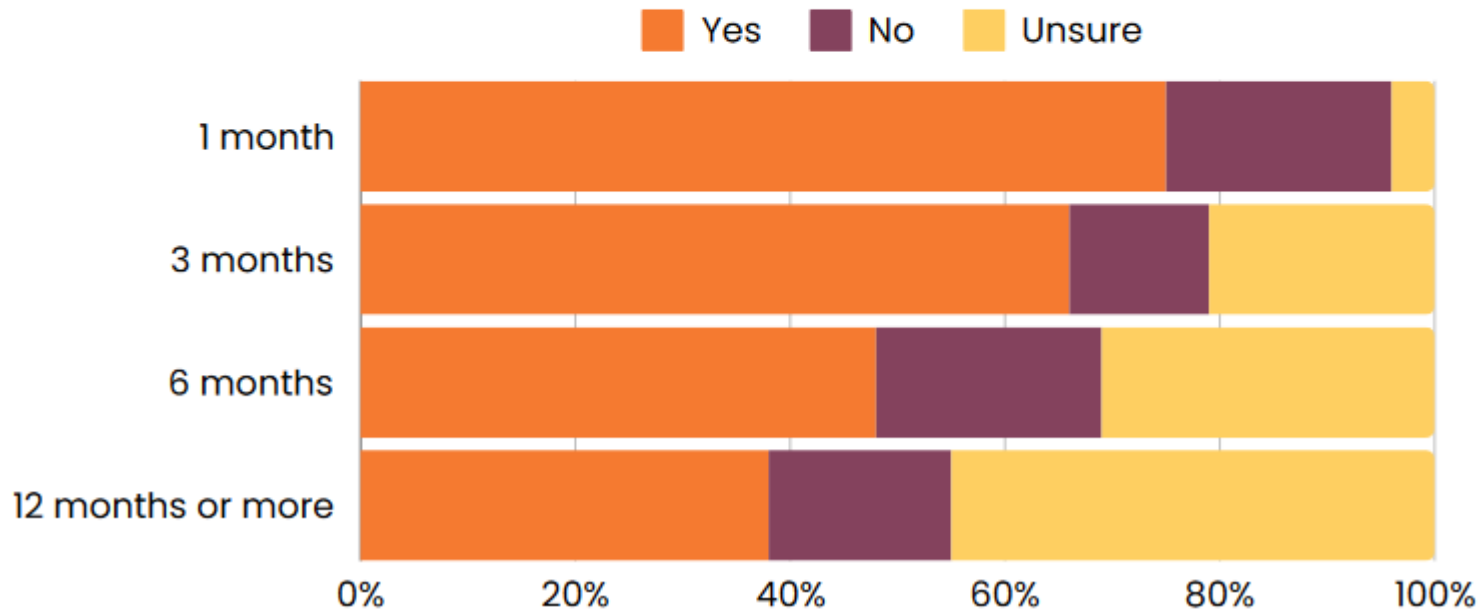


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School Food Standards

Do you worry that you'll be able to maintain your current high quality and standards of the school meal if prices continue to increase at the current rate?

Will you be able to maintain your current standards of school meal within the next:



The majority of respondents have told us that they are concerned that they may not be able to maintain their standards and high quality over the next three to six months (i.e. next two school terms).

Respondents are calling for action to avoid a decline in school food quality.



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Funding

- Increase Funding to meet the actual Costs
- An Extension of FSM Eligibility to all on Universal Credit
- Consistency across the 4 nations
- Consistency within our own nation...
- Ringfencing FSM /UIFSM Funding to Caterer



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Four Nations SHORT CHANGED



SCOTLAND
£3.30



WALES
£3.20



N. IRELAND
£2.60

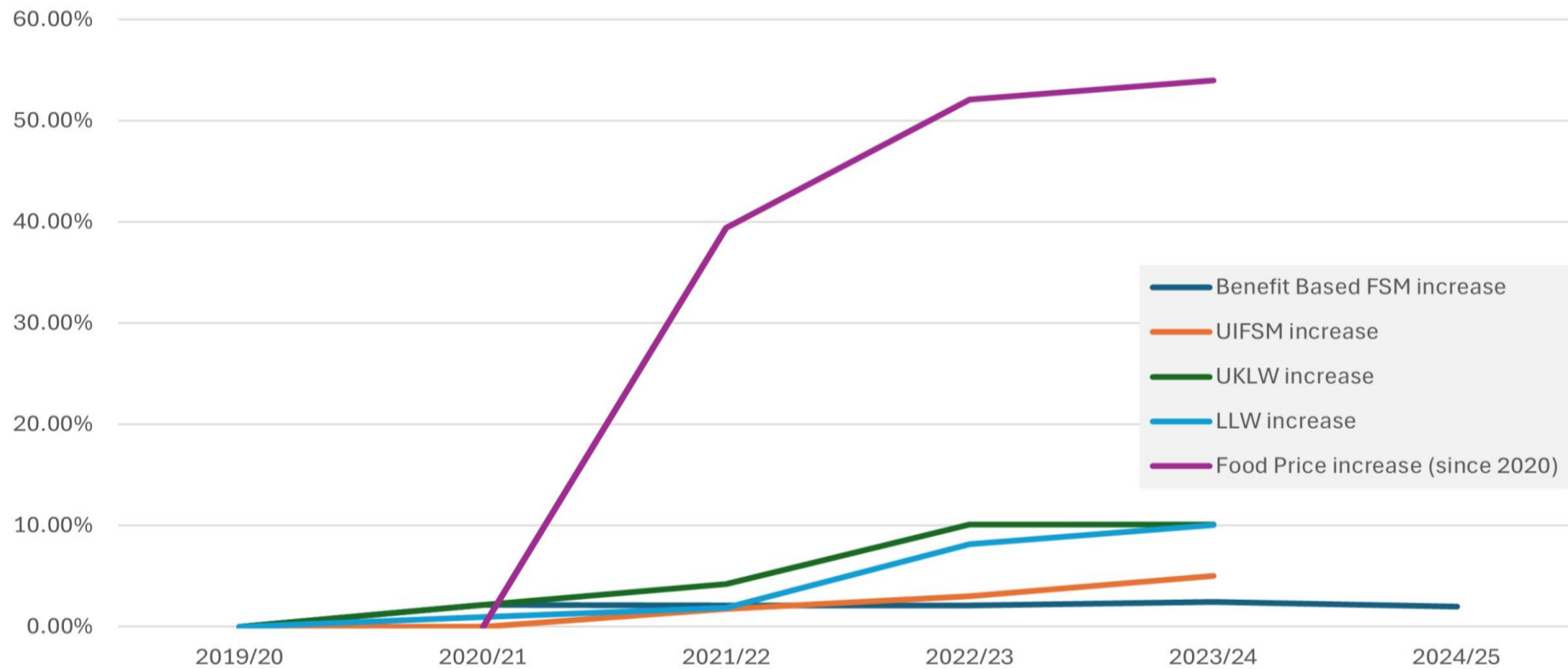


ENGLAND
£2.53



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Funding Comparisons and Food Prices 2019 - 2024

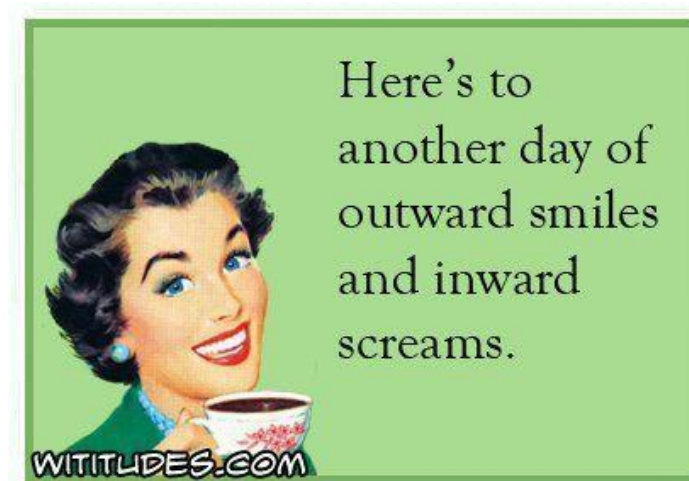




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Price Increases

- Food Costs
- Cleaning Materials
- Pay Award
- Menu Adjustments – how far do we go?
 - Is it still meeting school standards?
- Supply Shortages/Substitutions





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Client Concerns

- SLA's / Contracts arrangements
 - Price of meals..... Paid, FSM, UIFSM
 - Menu Offer
- Meeting children and family needs
 - No funds on accounts ... who pays?
- Sustainability
 - Green agenda – No disposables/plastics?
 - Managing food waste

Client Expectations



Client Budget





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Moving Forward

- Increase our Funding to meet the actual costs.
- School Food Standards (April 2024)???
- An extension of FSM eligibility
- Consistency across the 4 Nations
- Ring Fenced Funding
- Environmental Sustainability





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Sustainability...

- Skilled Workforce –Ageing Workforce/Recruitment Issues
- Menu ...Increase Plant Based & meat free days ,Fairtrade,MSC,Red Tractor, local provision
- School “Grow your own” projects
- Food Waste Recycling
- Reducing Single Use plastic



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Thank You

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