

# School meals workers

**APSE 2024**

## The positives

Enjoy the  
work

- “worth it to see children happy”
- get involved with special events

Support  
each other

- “my team are amazing”
- share recipes and ideas

## The issues

- **Cost of living difficulties**
- **Recruitment issues**
- **Tiny differentials in pay**
- **Don't feel valued**
- **Lack of access to face-to-face training**
- **More complex needs to be met (food allergies)**

# Cost of living difficulties – reports from members

**96% are concerned with the increased cost of living**

**46% have had to borrow money in the past year**

**17% have had to use a food bank**

**35% say they work more than their contracted hours – unpaid**

**62% say workload has increased in the past year**

**31% have at least one extra job**

## Pay and recruitment difficulties

- **Supervisors/managers and cooks paid little more than kitchen assistants**
- **41% are actively looking for a better-paid job**
- **57% don't feel valued as a member of staff**
- **Staff shortages in a lot of kitchens**
- **Hours being cut to the minimum for staff**

# Allergies– reports from reps

**Pupils have eaten school meals containing allergens leading to disciplinary investigations**

- **staff reported reduced hours/staff due to budgetary constraints**
- **increasing number of special dietary requirements**
- **lack of formal medical information**
- **less central support (from LA)**
- **formula used to calculate hours too blunt**

## How to make working lives better

- **Better pay**
- **More hours/certainty of hours**
- **Being appreciated/acknowledged/noticed**
- **More resources for managing allergens**
- **Free school meals?**

# School meals workers taking pride in work



Our school Christmas Lunch Today 2023

