Parent View
Mother in LB Hillingdon
SFM received a call from parent in Hillingdon who had not updated her email address with her children’s school, so all the relevant info and codes had been going to an email account she no longer had access to. She was very stressed with several children at home during lockdown, two of whom were eligible for FSM. Parent was hesitant about contacting school and seemed very unclear about how the voucher scheme worked. SFM directed her back to the school to request that codes be sent to the new email address. The link to the Edenred fact sheet for parents and carers was also given to her, as well as the Edenred email address for parents.

Schools
Primary School in LB Camden
School is aware that many FSM parents have still not received vouchers. The school is therefore continuing to plug the gap by distributing weekly parcels containing the following:

- Baked Beans
- Chickpeas
- Orange Lentils
- Tuna
- Mango Fruit Pot
- Long Life Yoghurt
- Fresh Milk
- Long Life Cheese
- Bread 50/50
- Pasta
- White Potatoes
- Fresh Onions
- Fresh Carrots
- Fresh Apple
- Fresh Orange
- Cucumber

Primary School in LB Tower Hamlets
School is situated in one of the most deprived areas of the country. Head decided against opting into the voucher scheme as was not confident that all vulnerable families had access to supermarkets, that supermarkets would have adequate food on the shelves, or that families would spend the vouchers wisely. Head has therefore launched a fundraising appeal to enable school to provide more than 400 parcels each week. In addition to food, the parcels contain nappies, toothpaste, soap and pens, paper etc. for children to use at home.
**Infant School in Leicester**
School business manager of infant school in Leicester reports that the last week has seen the voucher scheme running more smoothly. Vouchers that she requested on Monday 11 May were approved overnight. She is requesting two batches of vouchers: one batch is eGift cards and the second batch is codes to be sent to parents. She is finding that the eGift cards are coming through the system much more quickly. SBM has now ordered vouchers for all parents up until end of May, however her main concern is what happens during the period of phased return. If FSM children are coming into school will they still be entitled to vouchers? She is worried that if the decision to award vouchers is made too late in the day there will be a rush of last-minute ordering and the system will be overloaded once more. Many of the families at her school are on very low incomes and she is concerned that they will be going without. As many of the families at her school do not speak fluent English the SBM is keeping a close eye on which vouchers have been redeemed. Where they have not been redeemed she is contacting the families and seeing whether they need help and where necessary, she is printing off the vouchers at school and distributing them to families.

**Primary School in Leicester**
Network manager reports that voucher scheme was very difficult to navigate in the beginning with lots of problems uploading data and bypassing formatting errors. Since then however the system has been easier to navigate with waiting times to access the site reduced to 30 minutes to an hour. Edenred support has also improved with a quicker response time to queries. In terms of receiving vouchers, parents are only now receiving vouchers ordered over a month ago and some of these have not worked. One parent was going to use one to pay for shopping in Tesco, but the voucher wouldn’t register on the system. The shop manager covered the cost of the shopping. In general, however, manager feels that the system is improving and becoming more user-friendly.

**Primary School in LB Richmond**
Headteacher reports that voucher scheme has improved with quicker response rate to queries. Process for ordering, receiving and converting codes to gift cards is much more effective but orders that got stuck in the system when it failed are still lost so the school has paid for and issued its own Sainsbury’s vouchers and will be claiming back from DfE under ‘additional costs’. Head is also following up on ‘unredeemed’ vouchers – ie e-Codes have been sent but vouchers have not been redeemed. This involves the headteacher phoning 37 individual families to find out if they need help, or an alternative FSM offering (food from charity, paper vouchers for supermarket purchased by school).

Head noted that during the tricky time when the Edenred system failed, she had to contact her MP to get resolutions to problems. She was surprised that MPs had been given a hotline to Edenred and not schools.

**Local Authorities**
**LB Lambeth**
Strong food supply network is now in place across the borough, meaning that all schools can now refer families to receive healthy food parcels of prepared meals and/or fresh ingredients. The network consists of a range of organisations including GSTC, Magic Breakfast, Brixton People's Kitchen, SFM, Chefs in Schools, food banks and mutual aid groups etc. All schools, food hubs and local partners are interconnected and communicating in order to avoid duplication and to fill gaps.
School staff across the borough are continuing to keep in close touch with the most vulnerable families and act as a community hub to respond to immediate needs. This includes regular phone calls, online meetings and personal deliveries of healthy food, art materials, toys or computers. Families are signposted to other agencies where necessary.

Schools are reporting heightened levels of anxiety amongst families since the recent announcement about a gradual return from 1 June. Lambeth population has high risk factors for Covid (BAME, poverty, obesity/other conditions, high air pollution). Many children are reportedly feeling worried about going outside, other families are still shielding or have family members who are shielding. Many families are not planning to send their children to school for some time yet. The borough is planning a programme of mental health training for teachers to cope with the impact of lockdown when students return and secondary schools are beginning to meet with small groups of Y6s (in small socially distanced groups). This is important for those 11-year-olds who are about to transition to secondary school. Some are beginning to get bored and frustrated at home and are at risk of falling into bad habits and dangerous behaviours.

**LB Lambeth and Southwark**

SFM’s Breakfast Box scheme with Guy’s and St Thomas’ Charity is growing week on week. Week 1 approx 500; week 2 1,500; next week looks like an additional 2,500 so need is evident and reach improving. Boxes have been reviewed by a nutritionist and the contents meet the school food standards: milk, wholemeal bread, Weetbix, baked beans and fresh fruit. The programme will continue across school holidays to the end of August. Next week we start work with Chefs in Schools to deliver lunches to schools for families in Lambeth and Southwark identified as vulnerable. Lunches will be available to schools that cannot access a catered solution via school caterers (ie schools have closed, caterers are not able to offer school meals) and the lunch offer is fully-funded so no cost to the school budget.