

<p>Name & email supervisor(s): Veronica Toffolutti</p>
<p>Length of internship and when it could take place: 4 weeks.</p>
<p>Host department: Choose an item. Wolfson Institute of Population Health</p>
<p>How will the internship be conducted:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> In person at the university <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual/ from home <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both are possible, depending on preference of student</p>
<p>Title internship project: Investing in Children’s Future: A systematic Review Investigating on the Effectiveness of Universal Free School Meals Schemes</p>
<p>Summary of the internship project: <i>(max 250 words, can include hyperlinks to further information)</i></p> <p>Free school meal (FSM) provision has historically been introduced in times of stark inequalities and food insecurity for philanthropical reasons and to foster learning. More recently, FSM has re-emerged as a policy handle to influence diet quality, food skills, dietary inequalities, obesity and obesity-related healthcare needs in children, and in the life course.</p> <p>Currently, of the 8.4 million children in English state schools, 3.4 million are eligible to get a free meal at school each day. Just under 2 million of these children are eligible through the means-tested system, which includes children whose families are receiving certain means-tested benefits and on very low incomes. Paradoxically, however, not all parents who are eligible for means-tested FSM apply to take advantage of this benefit.</p> <p>A Universal Infant Free School Meal (UIFSM) scheme offering free lunch to the younger age groups (Reception and Year 1-2) was introduced across England in the school year 2014/15 (September 2014 to July 2015). In addition, discretionary Universal Free School Meal (UFSM) schemes were introduced for 7-11-year-olds (Year 3-6) between 2009/10 and 2014/15 in four local authorities in Greater London, initially as 2-year pilots, and subsequently rolled out as a sustained policy. UIFSM has the advantage to reduce stigma and increase their uptake. However, little and mixed is the scientific evidence for introducing UIFSM as a cost-effective policy to reduce health inequalities. This proposed thesis will systematically review the literature to better understand if and how UIFSM can reduce inequalities and whether they are a cost-effective policy.</p>
<p>Learning objectives:</p> <p>➤ To systematically review the evidence on the effectiveness of (universal) free school meals on reducing inequality</p>

- To appreciate the use of health economics evaluation in the context of (universal) free school meals

Any further information: