

**Enhancing Policy** **In SChool Food (EPIC)** **study**

**We want school children to have nutritious and balanced diets that keep them healthy and enable them to develop and grow. In this study, we are planning to use evidence from a study on school food in secondary schools to identify ways in which national school food policy could be adapted to promote healthier food and diets in secondary schools.**

**Who are we?** We are a team of researchers at the University of Birmingham interested in improving young people’s diets, reducing food insecurity and preventing obesity. Our research is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research.

**What are we aiming to do?** We recently conducted the Food provision, cUlture and Environment in secondary schooLs study (FUEL) study. In this we explored the implementation of two national school food policies in secondary schools: the School Food Standards and the School Food Plan. We also explored nutritional intake of pupils in secondary schools and how this might be related to implementation of these policies. In the EPIC study, we aim to use these findings to inform how national school food policy could be enhanced to have a more positive impact on school food and the food environment in secondary schools. We particularly want to consider how national policy may better support those at most risk of poor nutrition, food insecurity and obesity.

**How will we achieve this?** We will engage with a range of stakeholders to gain their perspectives on the FUEL study findings. These include secondary school pupils, parent/carers, school senior leaders, school catering representatives, Local Authority and Multi-Academy Trust representatives, and representatives from third sector organisations with an interest in school food. We will explore their views on our research findings and how these fit with their own experiences and perspectives on school food provision and the eating environment. We will present these views and perspectives to you as someone with an interest in school food policy and facilitate you to consider how national school food policy could be enhanced.

**What will we ask you to do?** You have been invited to take part in this study as you have interest in school food policy. If you agree to take part, you will be asked to attend 1-2meetings. We will present the perspectives of the stakeholders and ask you to identify and develop consensus on potential modifications that could enhance school food policy so that it more positively influences secondary school food and eating environments. We will video- or audio-record the meetings. We will also collect some information from you about your job role and your personal characteristics.

**What are the benefits and risks of taking part in the study?** The outcomes of this study will inform the development of a list of policy recommendations relating to school food. In turn, this may help to shape the health and wellbeing of future secondary school pupils. There are no anticipated risks in taking part in this study

**What will we do with your information?** Any information you provide and the recordings of the meetings will be kept confidentially on a secure database at the University of Birmingham. Your personal details will be stored in a separate database from the other information you provide. Only members of the research team or representatives from relevant regulatory authorities will have access to your individual information. The information from the study will be used in several reports. You will not be identified individually in these reports. The legal justification we have under data protection law for processing your personal data is that it is necessary for our research, which is a task we carry out in the public interest. For information about your rights and what we do with personal data see our privacy notice [www.birmingham.ac.uk/epic-study](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/epic-study).

**Who else is taking part in the study?** Representatives from other organisation related to school food policy will also be involved in the meetings. A range of stakeholders will take part in the planned workshops.

**What happens at the end of the study?** We will prepare a report at end of the study which communicates our findings and the identified recommendations for enhancing school food policy . We will share the findings more widely with relevant government departments, our stakeholder groups, the public and the scientific community through a variety of communication methods.

**What if I have more questions or do not understand something?** You can contact the research team at the University of Birmingham (contact details at the foot of the page) to discuss any questions or concerns you may have.

**What happens now if I decide to take part?** Please complete the consent form online at <https://redcap.link/epicpolicy>.

**What happens if I change my mind during the study?** If at any time during the study, you no longer want to take part let us know by email or telephone (contact details at the foot of the page). Any information that you have already contributed to the study through participation in meetings will be retained and used in the study analysis, as it will not be possible to separate this information from the information provided by other study participants. You will not be identified in any reports arising from the research.

**What to do next:** If you have further questions, please contact us (contact details at the foot of the page). If you are happy to do so, please complete the consent form and email this to [epicfoodstudy@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:epicfoodstudy@contacts.bham.ac.uk). We will contact you to provide you with details of the meetings and arrange suitable dates and times.

**Thank you for considering taking part in our study**