**Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) – Ofgem Draft Determinations**

***GDQ11. Do you agree with our proposed design of the VCMA UIOLI mechanism?*)**

**The impact the VCMA has had on the communities you serve and the work you deliver?**

Through this unique and transformational partnership, Cadent has been supporting children, young people and families living with disadvantage, by providing nutritious breakfasts alongside fuel education and resources to Magic Breakfast partner schools, with community at the heart of it all.

The VCMA has made a difference to the lives of the children and families we support in so many varied and genuinely life-changing ways. Here are just a few testimonials we have received that demonstrate this:

*“I can not praise enough the support our school has received from Magic Breakfast and Cadent Energy. We are supporting so many more children at Breakfast.*

*Parents were so grateful for the slow cookers they received and it has made a difference to our families. Any queries or issues are answered promptly and I would encourage every school to become involved.”*

- Staff member at a Magic Breakfast partner school supported by Cadent

Case study: Smithdown Primary School

Through our partnership, Cadent has been able to support 80 Magic Breakfast partner schools across the North West of England. Smithdown Primary School in Liverpool has already benefitted, with school pupils taking part in energy workshops and almost 400 carbon monoxide alarms being donated to families in the school community.

One child who has inspired his parents to be more efficient at home is Adam, who is in year four. Adam’s Mum, Naziha said: *“After his classes, [Adam] came home and switched everything off. He always turns off the light, the television, and is more interested about reducing our energy consumption. Sometimes, when I forget to turn things off, my son gets really passionate and tells me off!”*

Naziha and her family have also benefited from a slow cooker and CO alarm as part of the programme, helping her to make further energy savings. She said: *“I use the slow cookers two to three times a week and it’s been amazing. It has helped me save time and money, while it is a lot more efficient than using the oven. I now own a CO alarm, too, which helps me feel much safer at home.**I had never owned one before, but now I know more about the dangers associated with CO and what to do if my alarm goes off. The support from this project has been amazing.”*

**Is the proposed funding level appropriate? Do you request it is higher/ lower?**

We are so grateful for the funding we have already received from Cadent. So far, it has enabled us to support 80 schools with:

* Assemblies and workshops delivered to over 22,000 children by Bonanza creative, to enable them and their families to become more energy efficient.
* More than 20,000 leaflets and 13,000+ CO Alarms provided, with the aim of raising awareness of the dangers of CO, the PSR, and energy efficiency+ to keep families safe in their homes.
* 7 bespoke virtual training sessions for pastoral staff.
* Debt and benefits advice delivered via YES Energy, allowing families to maximise income and access funding streams.
* The provision of 1,579 slow cookers and 1,113 slow cooker cookbooks.

Of course, with further funding we would be able to reach and change the lives of even more children and families impacted by poverty in the UK. For example:

* If we were able to expand this project to all of our partner schools in the areas of the UK in which Cadent operates, we would be keen to offer the same level of support to our remaining 118 Magic Breakfast partner schools, and would anticipate that 40-60 of these would take up this offer of support (based on uptake from this current first phase of the partnership).
* If we had the opportunity to offer these same services to *all* of our Magic Breakfast partner schools across the UK via a combination of GDNs, we would be thrilled to engage the remaining 335 mainstream primary schools we currently support across England and Scotland, and we would anticipate that 40-45% of these would take up this offer of support.

**More people than ever are in fuel poverty (**[**National Energy Action**](https://www.nea.org.uk/fuel-poverty-map/)**). In 2024, 36.3% of households (8.99 million) were required to spend more than 10% of their income on domestic energy (**[**Annual fuel poverty statistics report 2025**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67e51e2cbb6002588a90d5d5/annual-fuel-poverty-statistics-report-2025.pdf)**). It is projected that in 2025, fuel poverty will increase to 11.2% (**[**Annual fuel poverty statistics report 2025**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67e51e2cbb6002588a90d5d5/annual-fuel-poverty-statistics-report-2025.pdf)**).**

Sadly, we are seeing similar trends in food insecurity. We recently released the results of our Annual Breakfast Survey, in which 9 out of 10 schools told us that a higher cost of living (98%), poverty (96%), and not having enough food (93%) are making it harder for children and young people to learn and do well at school. They also told us that hunger and access to food was the third biggest barrier to learning and success for their pupils. This is because families are struggling to provide the things that their children need, like food and clothing. This can be difficult even for parents who are working.

If children and their families in the UK today are experiencing this level of food insecurity, then it is extremely likely that they will be the same people experiencing a high level of fuel poverty too, as there is a clear direct correlation between the two.

At Magic Breakfast, we provide free, nutritious breakfasts to schools in England where at least 35% of pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium. This initiative aims to ensure that we are reaching those children and young people most at risk of hunger, and most likely fuel poverty too.