



Free School Meals (FSM)
Cross-Borough Data Sharing Pilot

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Overview



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The Challenge

- We know that, for a variety of reasons, children do not always live and go to school in the same local authority area.
- However, **eligibility for free school meals is assessed by each London borough separately.**
- So, the school borough has the relevant child data (School Census), but the home borough has the parent data (Revs and Bens) - the information required to assess their eligibility is not automatically transferred.
- Borough auto-enrolment approaches are proving successful but **currently the only households they can identify as eligible are children who live AND go to school in their local authority area.**



Desired Outcome: To ensure as many children as possible who are eligible for free school meals are identified and enrolled.

Piloting an Approach to Data Sharing

Lambeth
Lewisham
Southwark
Wandsworth



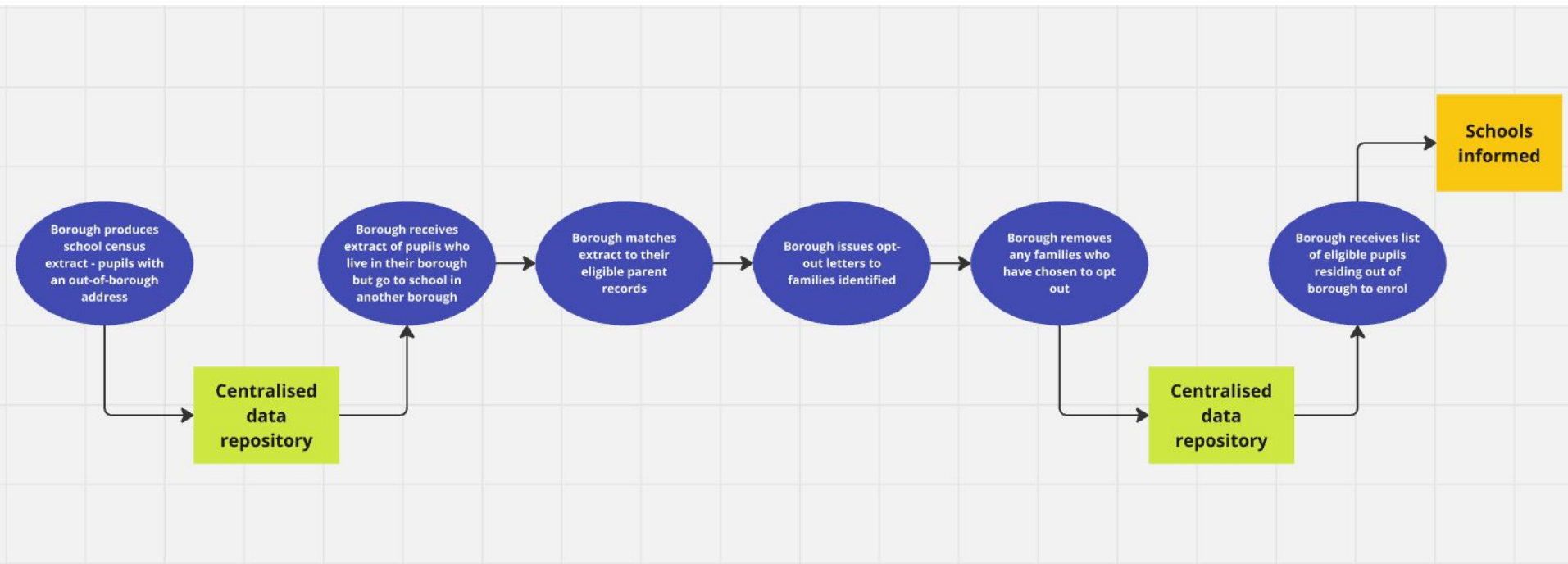
- In such cases, the overarching principle is that both the local authority area in which the pupil attends school (the 'School LA') and the local authority area in which the pupil lives (the 'Home LA') work together to support the pupil and family.
- LOTI has therefore facilitated a **pilot project** working with **four neighbouring boroughs** to pilot data sharing of school census data.
- We wanted to test the approach to see how it worked in practice and whether it achieved the intended benefits.



Methodology



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Information Governance



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Getting the Information Governance Right

- Project group developed a Data Sharing Agreement, using the Pan-London template, specifically for the FSM pilot in consultation with borough Information Governance Leads
- We also developed a Process Document to clearly illustrate what data would be moving where, and the governance processes around it e.g.
 - 1-2 named borough officers could access the data
 - 1 month to complete the match
 - Any data not matched to be removed from local system



Results & Lessons Learned



Key Outputs

- Through this pilot sharing, the boroughs identified in the region of ***300 potentially eligible residents**
- We developed a **letter template** for boroughs to send out to eligible residents notifying them about this data sharing project (adapted from boroughs internal auto-enrolment letter templates)
- We have a **tried and tested approach** to data sharing that has shown **good results**
- Successfully **identified a cohort that can't be picked up by internal eligibility checks**



Lessons Learned

- The **format of address data differs across boroughs** - this made it difficult to create a standard template for data submission and could make it more challenging when scaling
- **UPRN field** was an option in the pilot - discovered this was really important to include so now made this part of the standard data request
- Since **FSM eligibility is a gateway to other local benefits**, group requested to add school name as an additional field
- General **approaches to data matching for FSM eligibility differ across boroughs** - there could be value in bringing together the analysts to discuss the different approaches and seek best practice
- The 'low-tech' approach to sharing used well for the pilot but we need to seek **a more robust process** for the next phase, including exploring opportunities to **utilise existing infrastructure**





What's Next?



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Opportunities



Scale and Sustainability

- Create a repeatable process
- Deliver robust and secure technology infrastructure to support sharing
- Scale to all London Boroughs
- Ensure consistency and efficiency across London - rather than each borough starting their own process from scratch
- Resource for ongoing data extraction and matching work
- Work with partners to support boroughs and achieve efficiencies



Alignment

- A Pan-London DSA is being developed to share school census data for attendance monitoring of cross-border pupils and other education-related initiatives
- There is existing technology infrastructure for secure sharing of children's data
- We are including the FSM use case into this DSA