

Clothing Grants and Free School Meals

End to end process redesign

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Customer Technology team

Clothing grants and free school meals

Application process for combined or individual rewards for up to 5 children per application.

Free school meal gives your child one free meal on every day that they are at school. Also provides payment for meals during school holidays

A clothing grant is a payment to help buy school uniforms. Qualifying families will get one grant for each child during any school year. Also provides payment during the winter to buy winter clothing.

Evidence is required to prove eligibility and can be uploaded as part of the application.

Payment is provided to applicant's bank account by BACS



Understand Current Process

- Clearly define how do we do things now
- As Is Process Mapping
- Process visualisation
- Observe customer/user journey
- Understand the requirement for change

Renew/Change of Circumstances Form

What is a clothing grant?
A clothing grant is a payment made by Renfrewshire Council to qualifying parents or guardians to assist with the purchase of school uniforms. A maximum of one grant will be paid for each child during any school year.

Who is eligible for free school meals and/or clothing grants?
Parents or guardians of children attending Renfrewshire primary, secondary or special schools during the school session who satisfy the financial conditions detailed below are eligible to apply for free school meals and/or clothing grants.
Parents or guardians of children resident in Renfrewshire who have been placed by Education and Leisure Services in a special school or special unit outside Renfrewshire Council's control and who satisfy the financial conditions detailed below are also eligible.

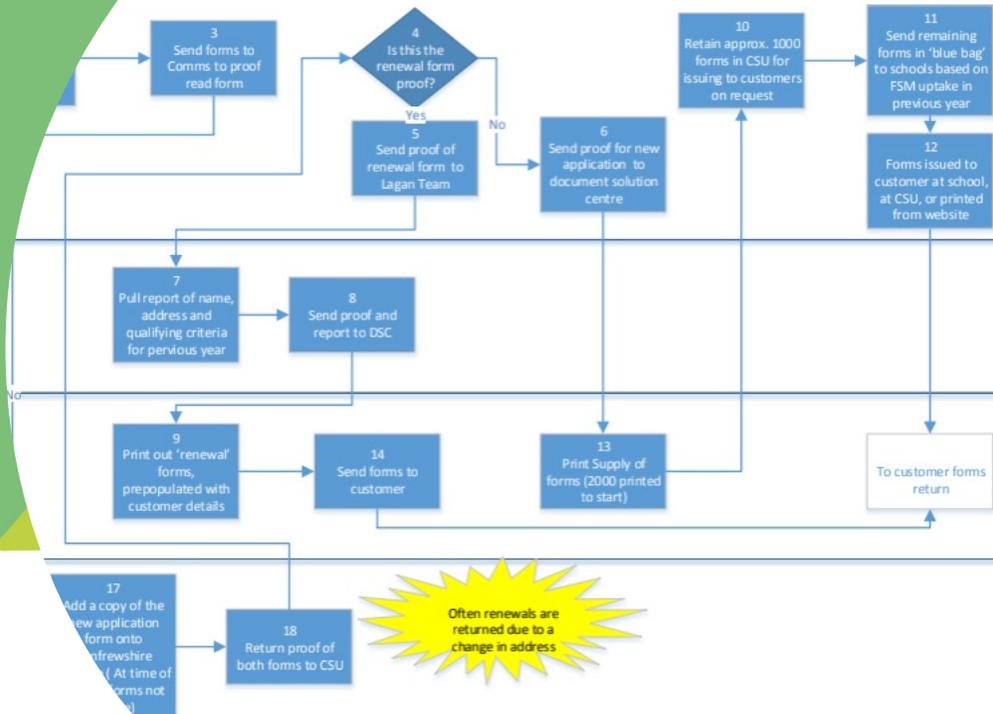
What is a free school meal?
This entitles each pupil to one free meal every day they attend school.

| Benefits Received | Free School Meals | Clothing Grant | Proof Required Dated with the past 6 months |
|--|-------------------|----------------|--|
| Income Support | ✓ | ✓ | DWP award letter or Current Tax Credit Award Notice (TC602) which shows entitlement to this benefit. ALL PAGES REQUIRED. |
| Jobseekers Allowance (Income Based) | ✓ | ✓ | DWP award letter or Current Tax Credit Award Notice (TC602) which shows entitlement to this benefit. ALL PAGES REQUIRED. |
| Employment & Support Allowance (Income Related) | ✓ | ✓ | DWP award letter or Current Tax Credit Award Notice (TC602) which shows entitlement to this benefit. ALL PAGES REQUIRED. |
| Tax Credit with a gross income below £16,105 with Working Tax Credit | ✓ | ✓ | Current Tax Credit Award Notice (TC602) which shows entitlement to this benefit. ALL PAGES REQUIRED. |
| Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit with gross income below £16,105 | ✓ | ✓ | Current Tax Credit Award Notice (TC602) which shows entitlement to this benefit. ALL PAGES REQUIRED. |

Renew and Renewal Applications

Schools are not aware of the benefits / entitlements for applying. It would be good to have this knowledge for discussion with parents

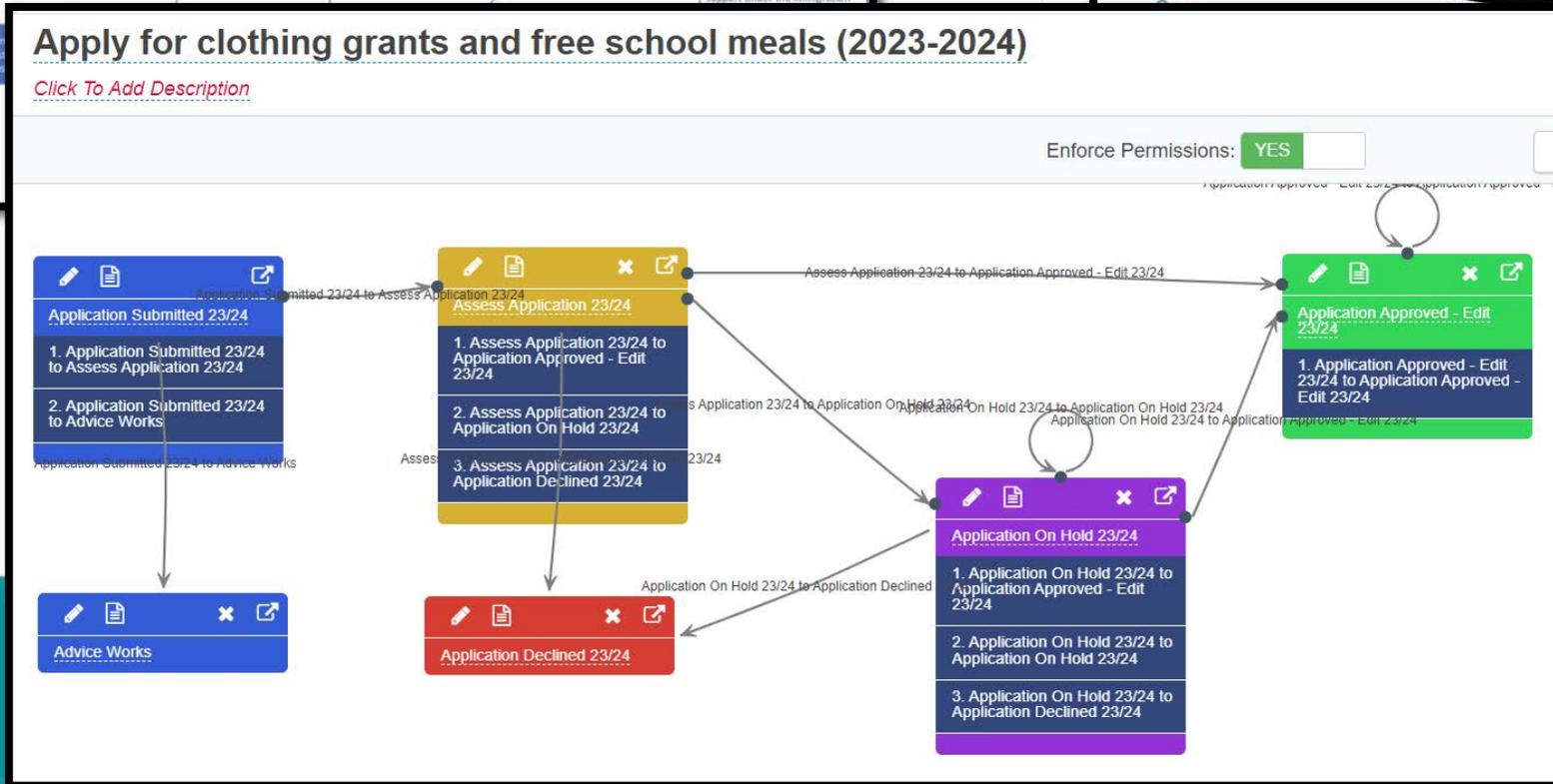
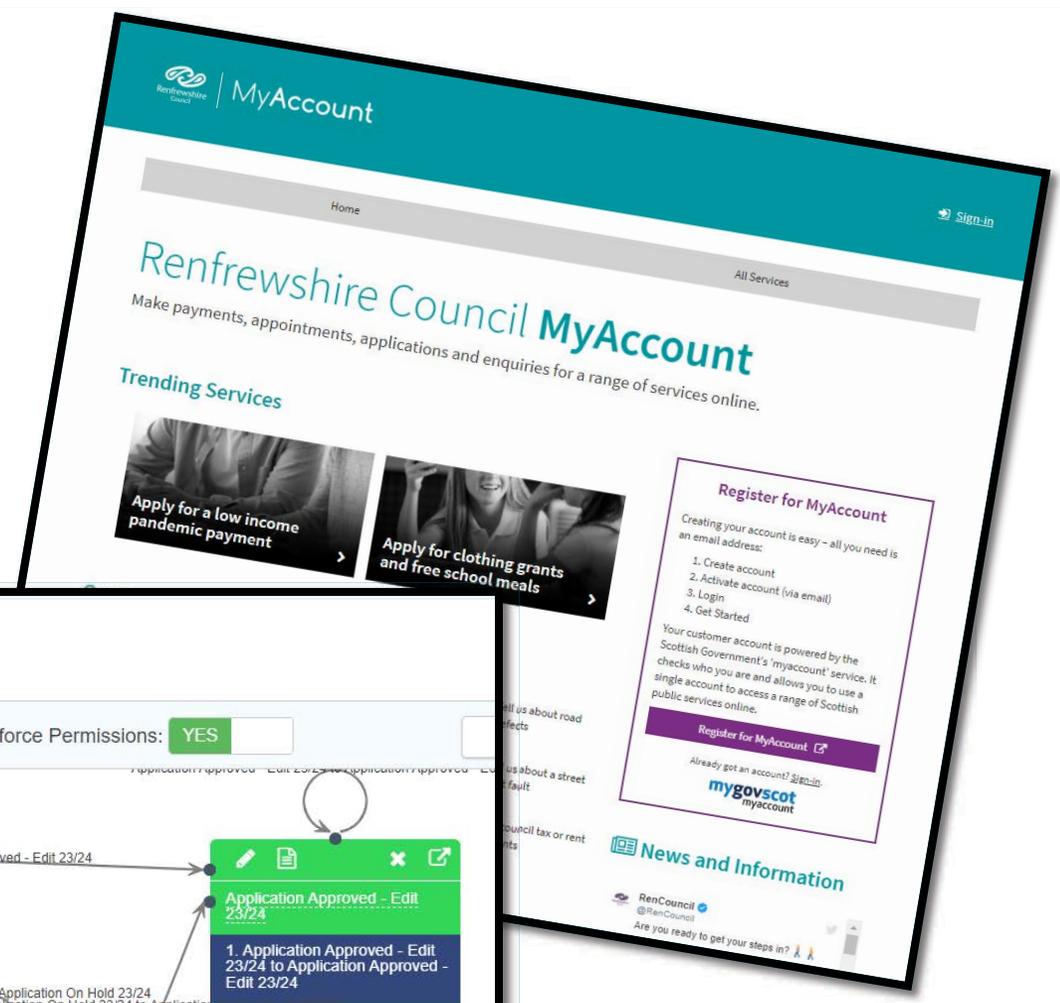
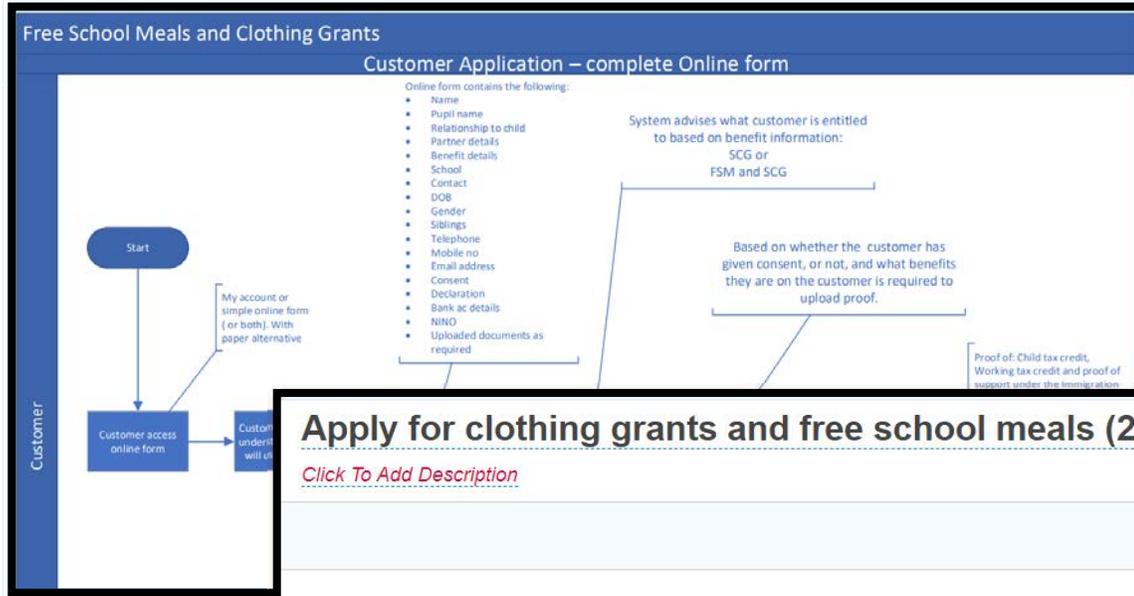
Include sign posting to other support, advice at CSU, Families First, Healthier and Wealthier, home link etc.



Existing process challenges

- Face to face applications – more time/travel
- Paper application to complete – Waste/duplicate
- Several pieces of paper evidence to submit – Insecure/easily lost
- Outdated ways of working – Manual checks/errors
- High processing times – Bottlenecks/Average 3 weeks
- High cost per transaction – £0.18
- Slow process for treasury re BACS payments & holiday payments
- High level customer complaints

Redesign – Create New Process



Technology

1. Granicus GovService suite:

- MyAccount – Customer portal
- Forms – Forms designer, integrations manager (database, emails)
- Dash - Caseviewer
- Service (CRM) – CSU customer management

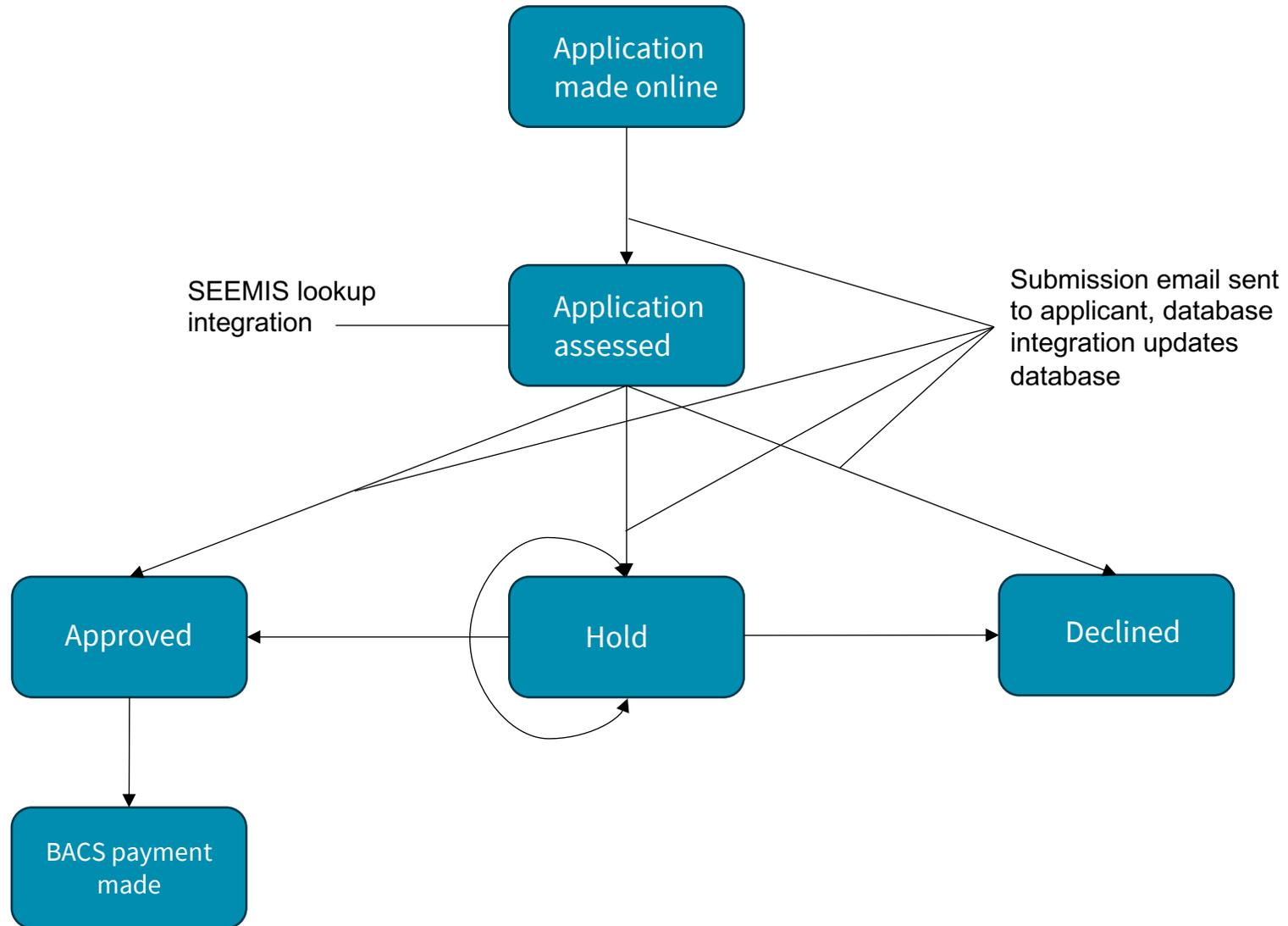
2. SQL Server

3. Excel

4. PowerBi

5. SEEMIS warehouse



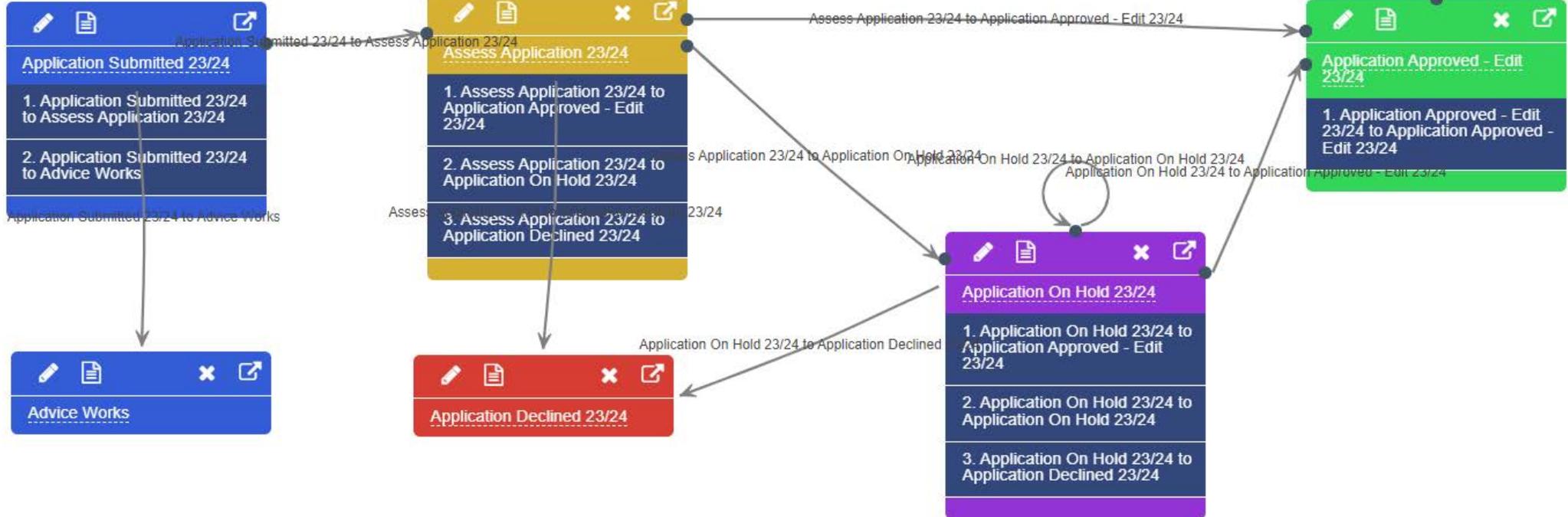


Process design

Apply for clothing grants and free school meals (2023-2024)

[Click To Add Description](#)

Enforce Permissions: YES



Integrations

General Database

Category: Education ✓

Integration Name: * CGFSM - Update application ✓

LIM: * Renfrewshire ✓

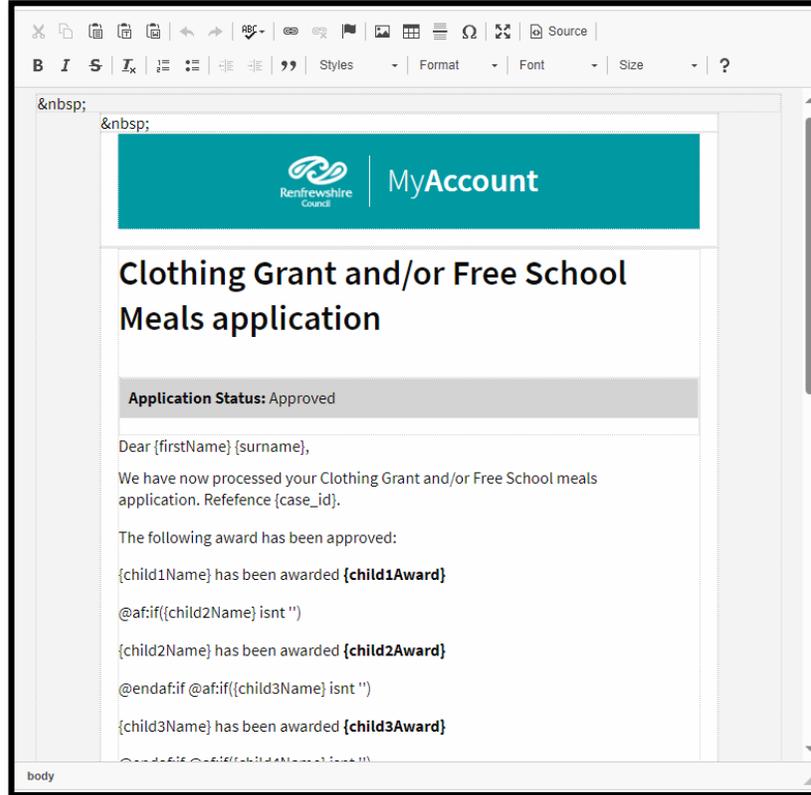
Type: * Database ✓

Payment Escalation Profile Permission Case S3

SharePoint

Data Type: * Integration/Lookup ✓

Allow Offline: * Yes No ✓



SEEMIS Numbers and Award

Please make sure the number of children and the award details are correct. Provide a SEEMIS number for each child.

[Data Name]: child1Award
[Display Condition]: {outcome} icontains 'Approved' and {child1Name} isnt ''
[Default Value Text]: {child1AppType}

You are awarding child 1, {child1Name}: *

a Clothing Grant and Free School Meals

a Clothing Grant

Free School Meals

[Auto-Lookup] child1SeemisLookup: CGFSM - Child 1 SEEMIS lookup
[Data Name]: child1SeemisLookup
[Display Condition]: {child1Name} isnt '' and {outcome} icontains 'Approved'

[Summary Field]
[Data Name]: child1SeemisNumber
[Display Condition]: {outcome} icontains 'Approved' and {child1Name} isnt ''

Please enter {child1Name}'s Seemis Number *

[Auto-Lookup] child1SeemisAlreadyUsed: CGFSM - Child1Seemis already used
[Data Name]: child1SeemisAlreadyUsed
[Display Condition]: {child1SeemisNumber} isnt '' and {outcome} icontains 'Approved'

[Hidden]
[Data Name]: child1DuplicateReference
[Hidden Label]: child1DuplicateReference

| Name | Condition | Type | Repeat Against |
|--|--------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| CGFSM - Update application <small>Database - Renfrewshire</small> | Enter Condition... | Submission | Select... |
| CGFSM - More evidence 23/24 <small>Email - Renfrewshire</small> | {holdEmail} icontains 'yes' | Submission | Select... |
| CGFSM - Decline 23/24 <small>Email - Renfrewshire</small> | {outcome} icontains 'Declined' | Submission | Select... |
| CGFSM - Approved 23/24 <small>Email - Renfrewshire</small> | {outcome} icontains 'Approved' | Submission | Select... |

Making the payments

- Details from each application had to be transformed into a 100 character BACS code to allow for more efficient payments
- Calculations and default fields on forms used to generate majority of the BACS code
- SQL server script use to complete the BACS code and generate the payment file and accompanying ledger file based on eligibility of applicants
- Payment files transferred to treasury ePay system and payments reach applicants bank account within 48hrs
- Multiple scripts can be used to generate payment files for holiday periods and adhoc as needed
- Immediate response to failed payments

```
[Hidden]
[Data Name]: awardForBACS
[Hidden Label]: awardForBACS
[Default Value]: {totalAward1}

[Hidden]
[Data Name]: awardAmountForBACS
[Hidden Label]: awardAmountForBACS
[Default Value]: concat('0000000000',{awardForBACS},'00')

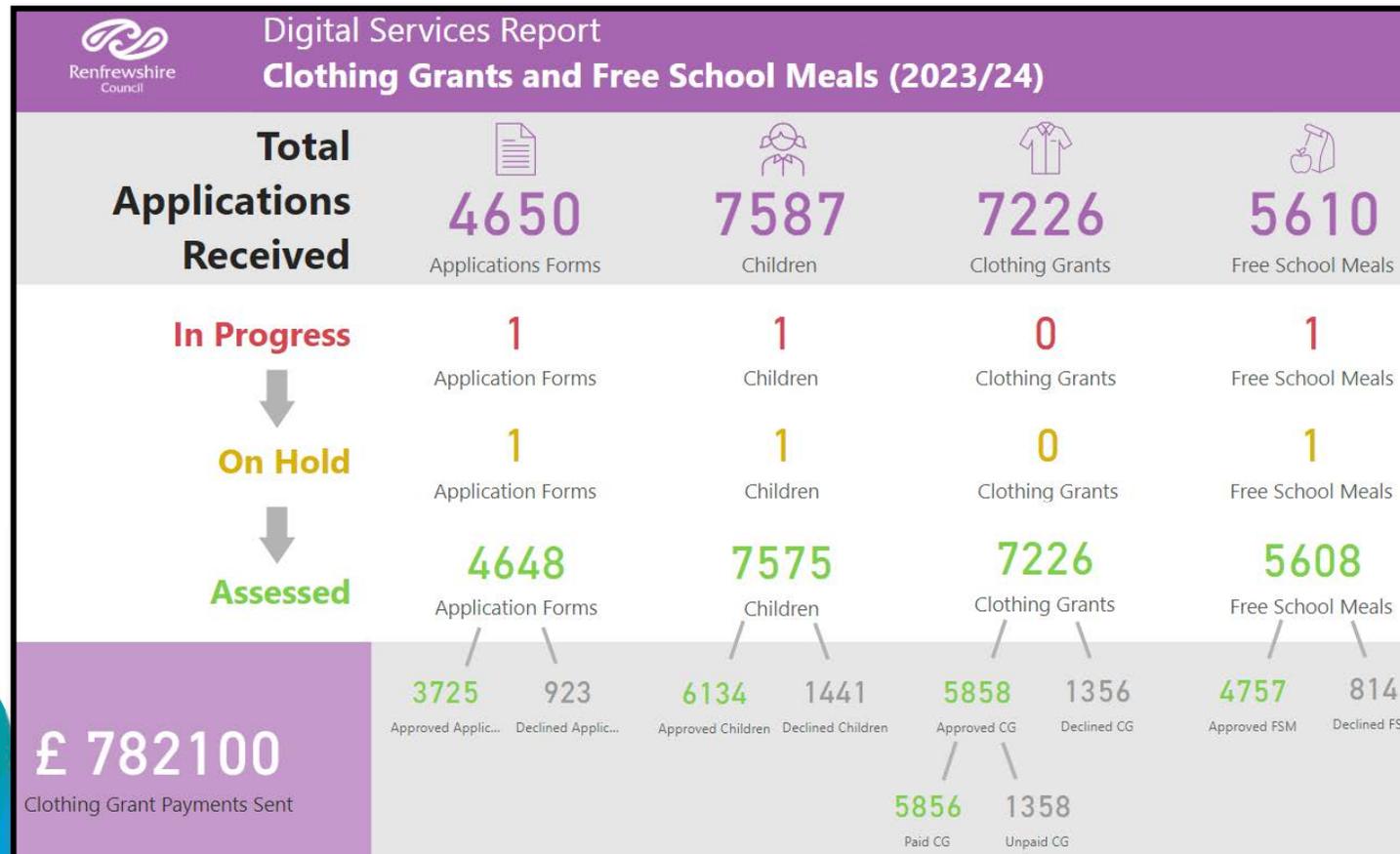
[Hidden]
[Data Name]: renBACSReference
[Hidden Label]: renBACSReference
[Default Value]: REN COUNCIL CG PAYMENT

[Hidden]
[Data Name]: accountNameForBACS
[Hidden Label]: accountNameForBACS
[Default Value]: {accountName}

[Hidden]
[Data Name]: bacsCode
[Hidden Label]: bacsCode
[Default Value]: concat({sortCode},{accNumber},'0','99',{renCouncilSortCode},{renCouncilAccountNumber},{awardAmountFo
```

Data output

- Provide Excel reports containing views from the database for quick access to real time information
- PowerBi reports for management information which can be integrated with Microsoft Teams
- Database tables containing submission data is used for lookups to prevent duplicate applications for the same child
- Rate of application approvals dictates when payment batches are created



Implement Change



Robust Go Live Plan



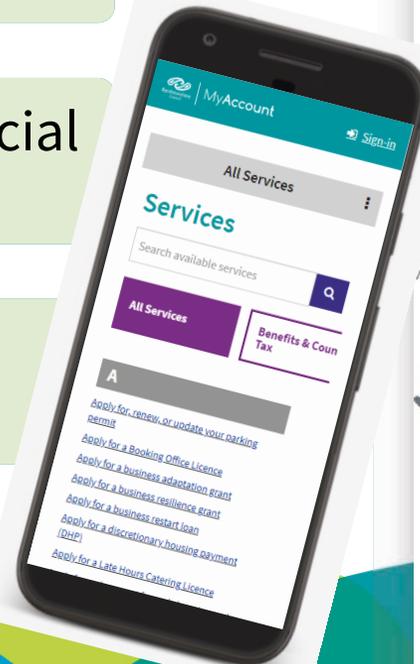
Train CSU & School Staff



Clear communication: Web & Social Media



Real time and beneficial MI



Renfrewshire Council

You are here: Home > Services > Schools, education and learning > Free school meals and

Apply online for free school meals and clothing grants



Free school meals and clothing grants

You may be able to apply for free school meals and a clothing grant if you are a parent or guardian of a child and are in receipt of particular benefits.

On this page:

- what is included in free school meals
- free school meal payments during the holidays
- what a clothing grant is
- who can apply for free school meals and clothing grants
- what evidence you need to provide
- apply for a clothing grant or free school meals
- how you will be paid your clothing grant

The screenshot shows a 'CaseViewer' dashboard with a sidebar menu on the left containing options like 'All open cases', 'Assigned to me', 'Assigned to my groups', 'Council Tax - Change of address', 'Net Zero Grant', 'Open extracts', 'Blue badge', 'CGFSM 23/24', 'Garden Waste 23/24', 'Missed Bins', 'Special Uplifts', and 'WILDS'. The main content area displays a table of cases with columns for 'Case ID', 'Due Date', 'Summary', and 'Notes'. Two cases are visible, both related to 'Apply for clothing grants and free school meals (2023-2024)'. The first case has a 'Parent Name' and 'Address' field that has been redacted with black bars. The second case also has redacted fields. Each case entry includes a 'Continue' button and a 'View' icon.

Improvements

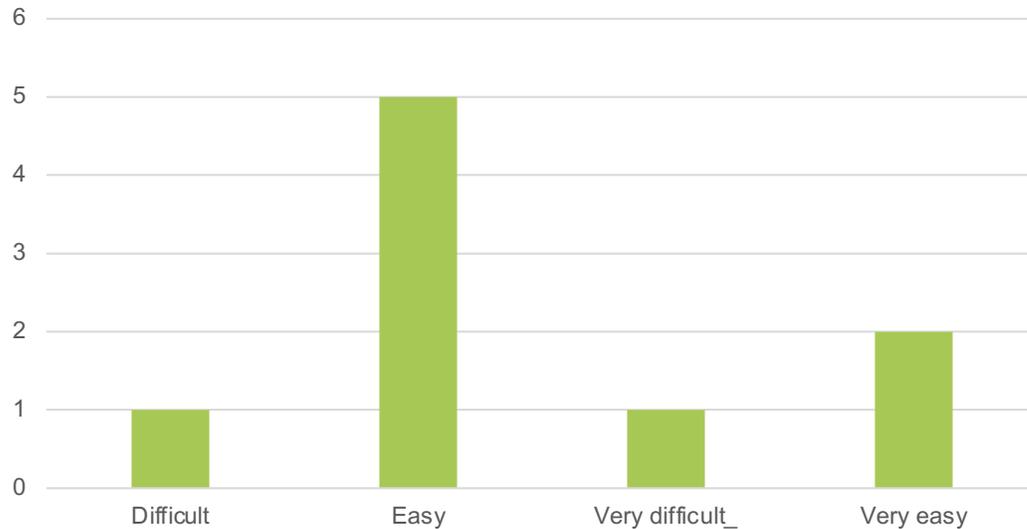
- 100% of applications and supporting docs submitted online
 - Processing times cut from up to three weeks to two days for Clothing Grants
 - Automated SEEMIS look-up improving efficiency and accuracy
 - Staff handling applications has reduced by 2 FTE
 - Minimal customer complaints (2022-23 school term zero complaints)
 - Nominated for Cosla excellence award
 - Won the Granicus award for Operational Efficiency
 - Real-time management information reporting
 - Automated payment files removed the need for manual BACS payments
 - Transaction used to cost 18p, this has decreased to 1.2p (90% reduction)
- 

Ask for Feedback...

Customer Surveys



How did you find the application process for Free School Meals, Clothing Grants?



“Thank you so much for clarifying [what I am entitled to]. I have been so stressed out with everything” – KP Gordon.

“Thank you. Very helpful payments [Free School Meals and holiday payments]. Please pass on my appreciation” – P Cairns.

“Thank you for the school meals payment during the Xmas break and the holiday payment. Makes a huge difference” – C Gray.

Testimonial

“The Digital Team have taken feedback onboard from previous years and developed a process for Free School Meals and Clothing Grants which prioritises the needs of the customer. Applications are processed quicker, resulting in payments to bank accounts within days, and this year the level of constituent enquiries received in my office has reduced to zero. An excellent example of how a focus on customer need can inform great service design.”

Councillor John Shaw, Convener of Finance, Resources and Customer Service Policy Board

Thank you

Questions?



Renfrewshire
Council