



Briefing

FOOD IN SCHOOLS: OPTIONS TO PROGRESS POLICY DEVELOPMENT

To: Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister, Minister for Child Poverty Reduction
Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education
Hon Carmel Sepuloni, Minister for Social Development
Hon Tracey Martin, Minister for Children

Date	29/11/2018	Priority	MEDIUM
Deadline	6/12/2018	Briefing Number	DPMC-2018/19-575

Purpose

- This briefing:
 - provides advice on developing a Food in Schools policy initiative for Budget 2020, including:
 - matters that will need to be addressed as the policy is developed and designed
 - high level indicative costings, to provide a sense of potential fiscal implications
 - considerations and options for the process to develop the policy and programme
 - seeks Ministerial agreement to the lead Ministers, initial objectives, timing of announcements, and next steps for the work.

Executive Summary

1. In response to further advice [briefing DPMC-2018/19-424 refers], joint Ministers (Child Poverty Reduction, Education, Social Development, Children) met and directed officials to develop a Food in Schools policy initiative, with a view to obtaining implementation funding through Budget 2020.
2. As previously advised [briefing DPMC-2018/19-424 refers], the Government has a relatively light footprint in funding and supporting the provision of food in education settings, with no

clear national policy framework in place. However, there are many national and small-scale, community-led breakfast and lunch initiatives in schools.

3. We understand from Ministers that the broad intended outcomes or goals for implementing a Food in Schools programme would be to reduce material deprivation and the impact of poverty on children, and to improve the lives of children and families more generally. Other expectations indicated to officials are that the programme should be universal within schools (rather than provided selectively on the basis of student need), food provided must be healthy and nutritious, and the policy and approach should support, and not replace, what schools and existing providers are doing in this area.
4. A key part of the strategic context for this work is the interaction with the Government's wider work programmes and objectives, including: the review of Tomorrow's Schools; the Government priority to make New Zealand the best place in the world to be a child; and the proposed Budget 2019 package of actions to improve wellbeing through healthy eating and quality physical activity. Other relevant government priorities include: supporting healthier, safer and more connected communities; delivering open, transformative and compassionate government; supporting thriving, sustainable regions; and transitioning to a clean, green carbon neutral New Zealand.
5. We recommend Ministers' agree to the following initial objectives to guide the early stages of this work:
 - a) Reduce material deprivation and the impact of poverty on children.
 - b) Minimise the risk of stigma.
 - c) Support the wellbeing of children and families more generally.
 - d) Avoid exacerbating inequities.
 - e) Minimise administrative burden on individual schools.
 - f) Leverage community resources and contributions.
 - g) Low environmental footprint.
 - h) Value for money.
 - i) Food provided is healthy, nutritious, and appealing.
6. Costs of a Food in Schools programme are highly dependent on the detailed design, and approach to rollout. For example, a sit-down, hot lunch in every school would likely involve a significant upfront capital investment in commercial school kitchens, and ongoing operating expenditure to fund the relevant staff, food provision, and other costs. On the other hand, a grab-and-go, lunchbox-style meal would not necessarily require much upfront investment, but may incur a higher level of ongoing funding.
7. An indicative estimate suggests that the potential fiscal implications of a Food in Schools programme range from around 9(2)(f)(iv) per year (excluding establishment and other costs). Options for managing the fiscal impact include targeting to some schools based on need / disadvantage, limiting to some school levels or years, and/or phasing the introduction or rollout. Some of the other policy and design considerations

which will have an impact on the costs of any Food in Schools programme include the locus of decision-making about schools' participation and the approach adopted, how food is prepared and implications for school property, and the approach to funding/contracting.

8. Officials will address and advise on these matters as part of the policy development process. In order to develop robust advice on these matters, officials will need to develop a good understanding of what is already happening on the ground and the impact it is having, as well as what will work for schools, students, parents, providers, and the wider community.

9. 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]
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[REDACTED].

Recommendations

- Note** that joint Ministers (Child Poverty Reduction, Education, Social Development and Children) recently met to discuss Food in Schools and directed officials to develop a Food in Schools policy initiative, with a view to obtaining funding in Budget 2020, to enable implementation.
- Note** that an indicative estimate suggests that the potential fiscal implications of a Food in Schools programme could range from around 9(2)(f)(iv) [REDACTED] per year (excluding establishment and other costs), depending on coverage, design, and approach to rollout.
- Agree** to designate the Ministers for Child Poverty Reduction, Education, and Children as lead Ministers on Food in Schools, with relevant advice copied to the Ministers of Social Development and Health, and Associate Minister of Health and Education.

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern

Yes/No

Hon Chris Hipkins

Yes/No

Hon Carmel Sepuloni

Yes/No

Hon Tracey Martin

Yes/No

4. 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

5. 9(2)(g)(i) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern

Yes/No

Hon Chris Hipkins

Yes/No

Hon Carmel Sepuloni

Yes/No

Hon Tracey Martin

Yes/No

6. **Agree** to the following initial set of objectives to guide the early stages of this work:

- a) Reduce material deprivation and the impact of poverty on children.
- b) Minimise the risk of stigma.
- c) Support the wellbeing of children and families more generally.
- d) Avoid exacerbating inequalities.
- e) Minimise administrative burden on individual schools.
- f) Leverage community resources and contributions.
- g) Low environmental footprint.
- h) Value for money.
- i) Food provided is healthy, nutritious, and appealing.

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern	Yes/No	Hon Chris Hipkins	Yes/No
Hon Carmel Sepuloni	Yes/No	Hon Tracey Martin	Yes/No

7. **Provide** feedback on any of the matters raised in this briefing.

8. **Direct** officials to prepare advice and seek lead Ministers' agreement on engagement (reflecting Minister's preferred approach to announcement), the policy framework (including confirming objectives and approach), and initial thinking on key policy and design considerations and associated fiscal implications.

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern	Yes/No	Hon Chris Hipkins	Yes/No
Hon Carmel Sepuloni	Yes/No	Hon Tracey Martin	Yes/No

9. **Agree** to forward this briefing to the Minister of Health, and the Associate Minister of Health.

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern	Yes/No	Hon Chris Hipkins	Yes/No
Hon Carmel Sepuloni	Yes/No	Hon Tracey Martin	Yes/No

Kristie Carter
Director, Child Poverty Unit

...../...../2018

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
Prime Minister
Minister for Child Poverty Reduction

...../...../2018

Damian Edwards Associate Deputy Secretary Ministry of Education /...../2018	Hon Chris Hipkins Minister of Education /...../2018
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Maree Brown Director, Child Wellbeing Unit /...../2018	Hon Tracey Martin Minister for Children /...../2018

Agency contacts, for telephone discussion if required:

Name	Position	Telephone		1st contact
Kristie Carter	Director, Child Poverty Unit, DPMC	9(2)(a)		✓
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Minister’s office comments:

- ☐ Noted
- ☐ Seen
- ☐ Approved
- ☐ Needs change
- ☐ Withdrawn
- ☐ Not seen by Minister
- ☐ Overtaken by events
- ☐ Referred to

Proactively Released

FOOD IN SCHOOLS: OPTIONS TO PROGRESS POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Background

10. In response to an initial briefing on Food in Schools-related initiatives in Budget 2019 [briefing DPMC-2018/19-291 refers], the Minister for Child Poverty Reduction indicated that she wanted advice on the Government's investment, role in, and approach to Food in Schools in the medium- to long-term.
11. In response to further advice [briefing DPMC-2018/19-424 refers], joint Ministers (Child Poverty Reduction, Education, Social Development, Children) met and directed officials to develop a Food in Schools policy initiative, with a view to obtaining implementation funding through Budget 2020. This briefing provides advice on the policy development process, and seeks Ministers' direction on their preferred approach.
12. Following the meeting between joint Ministers, we understand that the broad intended outcomes or goals for implementing a Food in Schools programme would be to:
 - a) Reduce material deprivation and the impact of poverty on children.
 - b) Improve the lives of children and families more generally.
13. Other expectations indicated to officials are that:
 - a) The food provided must be healthy and nutritious, so it supports the Government's wider health and education objectives.
 - b) Any Food in Schools policy and approach should support, and not replace, what schools and existing providers are already doing in this area. A goal is to empower schools and the policy should provide flexibility alongside clarity of funding.
14. We understand that Ministers also indicated a preference for any Food in Schools programme to be universal across schools, but were keen to explore cost implications and options for a phased implementation or more limited or targeted coverage (e.g. by disadvantage or year level of schooling). We understand that Ministers expect any programme should be universal within schools (as opposed to provision for selected students within schools based on need).
15. In terms of the current position of Food in Schools in New Zealand, as previously advised [briefing DPMC-2018/19-424 refers]:
 - a) ***The Government has a relatively light footprint in funding and supporting the provision of food in education settings.*** Unlike many other countries, New Zealand has no national school food programme. However, the Government currently contributes a total of \$1.550m per annum to two programmes (KickStart Breakfasts and KidsCan), and fully funds 'Fruit in Schools' (targeted at low-decile primary and intermediate schools) at \$8.125m per annum. Government's limited role and level of investment in Food in Schools programmes to date means that there has been little

work to establish an evidence base, policy rationale, and underpinning framework for Food in Schools.

- b) ***There are many national and small-scale, community-led breakfast and lunch initiatives in schools which receive no government funding support.*** As well as the programmes identified above, there are many more local and national Food in Schools initiatives which receive no government funding support (e.g. Fonterra Milk for Schools, and social enterprises like Eat My Lunch) [briefing DPMC-2018/19-291 refers]. At this stage we do not have a full picture of all of the programmes running at a school level, creating challenges for officials to develop a model that supports these programmes. Relatedly, we do not have a full picture of how many schools have facilities to enable food preparation and / or storage of pre-prepared food.
- c) ***Provision of food in a school is a decision that rests with the school board.*** Decisions about offering food to students, and how this is done, rest with individual school boards of trustees. In response to questions contained in international surveys,¹ between 27 and 31 percent of New Zealand primary schools indicated that they provided free meals (either breakfast or lunch) for some students. In a 2016 survey of New Zealand primary schools, 63% of primary schools reported participating in a food provision programme.² In addition to providing free meals, many schools have arrangements in place to enable students to purchase food. These include tuck shops (which in some instances generate additional funding for schools), and online ordering and delivery services (e.g. Pita Pit).

Strategic context for the development of a Food in Schools policy and programme

- 16. Food in Schools programmes have the potential to contribute to multiple government objectives, by mitigating the impact of poor nutrition and food insecurity on education and health outcomes. Depending on their design, Food in Schools programmes can also have positive psychosocial benefits for students, support stronger connections between schools and their wider communities, provide opportunities to build knowledge and skills relating to food production, preparation, and healthy eating, and reduce the time burden on families of preparing school lunches.
- 17. Proposed objectives to guide the development of a New Zealand Food in Schools policy and programme are set out in paragraph 19 of this briefing.
- 18. A key part of the strategic context for this work is the interaction with wider government work programmes and objectives, including:
 - a) ***The review of Tomorrow's Schools:*** The systematic provision of food in education settings should be considered in relation to the current reviews of education in New Zealand, including the review of Tomorrow's Schools. The review of Tomorrow's

¹ PIRLS in 2015, and TIMSS in 2014.

² School Food Environment Review and Support Tool, University of Auckland.

Schools focuses on the changes needed to governance, management, and administration in education to ensure the fitness of the school system to meet current and future challenges, and to achieve equity and excellence.

The main mechanism for targeting additional resources to address student disadvantage (Targeted Funding for Education Achievement or TFEA, which uses school deciles as the targeting mechanism) is also under review. If there is a move away from a decile system and/or the current school board structure, this will have implications for any targeting by disadvantage, and the locus of decision-making about Food in Schools.

Decisions on the outcomes of these reviews are likely to be taken later in 2019 or 2020, during the time that the Food in Schools policy is being developed. The Ministry of Education will be a key player in the development of a Food in Schools policy and initiative. The approach to Food in Schools will need to be designed with potential changes to the school system in mind.

- b) ***The Government's priority to make New Zealand the best place in the world to be a child:*** A key outcome for a Food in Schools programme would be to address food insecurity for children in poverty and/or facing socio-economic disadvantage in a non-stigmatising way. It will be important to understand children's views as part of the development of a programme. References to Food in Schools and food insecurity are already coming through in initial engagement with children and young people on the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy.

The introduction of a comprehensive Food in Schools programme would potentially be a significant change to the New Zealand Education landscape. We consider it essential to engage with children, parents, schools, and others regarding their needs and expectations in this area. We therefore recommend options to enable targeted engagement during the policy development process.

- c) ***The proposed Budget 2019 package of actions to improve wellbeing through healthy eating and quality physical activity:*** There is a Budget 2019 proposal by the Ministers of Sport and Recreation, Education, Health, and Associate Health and Education (Hon Jenny Salesa) for a package of actions to support schools and early learning settings to improve wellbeing through healthy eating and quality physical activity (the Joint Budget Package). s 9(2)(f)(iv)

[REDACTED]

9(2)(f)(iv)

[REDACTED]

- d) **Other Government priorities:** There are a number of other Government priorities that link to this work (or could be linked to this work), including to support healthier, safer and more connected communities, to deliver open, transformative and compassionate government, to support thriving, sustainable regions, and to transition to a clean, green carbon neutral New Zealand.

An emerging issue in overseas Food in Schools programmes is food waste. New Zealand should be looking to ensure that our Food in Schools approach front-foots such issues, by ensuring that any food and packaging waste, and other environmental impacts, are minimised, while also ensuring appropriate health and hygiene standards are met.

Objectives for developing a New Zealand approach to Food in Schools

19. We think it is useful to have an initial set of objectives to guide the early stages of this work:
- a) *Reduce material deprivation and the impact of poverty on children.*
 - b) *Minimise the risk of stigma* – not targeting or isolating vulnerable children or children in poverty, by potentially creating stigma around receiving food.
 - c) *Support the wellbeing of children and families more generally* – the provision of food to all students has the potential to reduce time and cost to parents of preparing lunches, thereby reducing family stressors.
 - d) *Avoid exacerbating inequities* – consideration needs to be given to the potential for wide variation in food quality between schools in terms of their ability to ‘top up’ Food in Schools funding via fundraising, financial or other contributions, or charges to parents.
 - e) *Minimise administrative burden on individual schools* – findings from international studies show that New Zealand school leaders have a high administrative burden compared with other countries; we want to avoid adding to that burden and ensure educational leaders are able to focus on the important job of pedagogical and staff leadership.
 - f) *Leverage community resources and contributions* – reflecting that there is significant goodwill and good work that already exists in this area, including through community volunteers and donations. Leveraging community spirit may mean avoiding displacement of existing work and investment by schools and the wider community.
 - g) *Low environmental footprint* – reflecting the importance of new policies meeting the Government’s transition to a clean, green carbon neutral New Zealand.
 - h) *Value for money* – including transparency and accountability for how money is spent, and giving due consideration to matters such as economies of scale.
 - i) *Food provided is healthy, nutritious, and appealing* – this is essential for both student and parent buy-in, and to ensure the programme achieves intended benefits for the immediate and long-term health and wellbeing of children.

20. These are starting objectives, so may evolve or be added to as officials undertake further work, particularly as the underlying policy framework is further developed. Potential trade-offs between the objectives will also be worked through in the detailed policy work and future advice.
21. We seek Ministers' agreement to this initial set of objectives as a starting point for more detailed analysis and advice.

Potential costs of a Food in Schools programme

22. Costs of a Food in Schools programme are highly dependent on the detailed design and approach to rollout. For example, a sit-down, hot lunch in every school would likely involve a significant upfront capital investment in commercial school kitchens, and ongoing operating expenditure to fund the relevant staff, food provision, and other costs. On the other hand, a grab-and-go, lunchbox-style meal would not necessarily require much upfront investment, but may incur a higher level of ongoing funding.
23. Table 1 provides some very indicative costings, intended to provide a sense of potential fiscal impact. We would note that these are very much 'back of the envelope' costings that would need to be subject to further analysis and testing.
24. The indicative costings assume a single per-student cost of 9(2)(f)(iv) which we understand to be very modest compared with the cost of some international models³. A single per-student cost may not reflect the different costs of providing food in more remote locations, differentiated targeting based on need, or the differing needs of different groups of children (e.g. secondary school students are likely to require a larger lunch than younger students).

³ 9(2)(f)(iv)

9(2)(f)(iv)

25. The per-student, per-day costings would need to cover food, staffing, transport, and administration. Other costings would be *additional* to the figures listed. Depending on the approach, these could include any upfront establishment costs, infrastructure or capital costs, accreditation or regulatory costs, exit costs for existing school-based commercial contracts with food services (e.g. cafeteria or tuckshop operators, external providers), and evaluation costs.
26. We would expect ongoing costs for a sit-down, hot lunch style programme (more in line with the Swedish and Finnish models) to be around double what is shown in the table above (i.e. 9(2)(f)(iv), or 9(2)(f)(iv) for a fully universal programme across all schools), with the likelihood of significant additional upfront capital and other costs.

⁴ Additional assumptions:

- 2018 July Roll Return data is used to identify student numbers.
- Private schools and the Correspondence School (Te Kura) are excluded for the purposes of calculating student numbers.
- Primary School Sector refers only to the following school types: Full primary (Year 1-8), Contributing (Year 1-6), Intermediate (Year 7-8) – and does not include Special Schools.
- A school year of 195 days of attendance, with food provided on each day.
- 100% take-up in participating schools (i.e. not targeted, but provided / available to all students in eligible schools).
- 'All deciles' includes some schools without a decile.

27. A key message we heard from the Swedish child wellbeing experts who visited last month [briefing DPMC-2018/19-380 refers] is that any Food in Schools programme should not be done cheaply. Having good quality, nutritious, and sufficiently appealing food will be an important part of student and parent buy-in, and achieving the desired outcomes.
28. Note that there are options for managing the fiscal impact by:
- a) Targeting to some schools based on need / disadvantage.
 - b) Limiting to some levels or types of schools or specific year levels (e.g. primary) only.
 - c) Phasing the introduction or rollout of the programme over a number of years.
29. Officials will be developing further advice on possible approaches and more detailed costings through the policy process.

Areas to be addressed through the policy development process

30. Some of the policy and design considerations that will have an impact on the costs of any Food in Schools programme include:
- a) *Extent of coverage across schools* – e.g. all schools; primary-only; Year 1-8 only (note targeting by year level may pose difficulties for composite schools).
 - b) *Locus of decision-making about schools' participation and the approach adopted* – e.g. mandatory or opt-in; whether schools determine their own programmes and food offering (e.g. breakfast or lunch), or are subject to central direction.
 - c) *How food is prepared and implications for school property* – e.g. hot/cooked meal; grab-and-go.
 - d) *Approach to funding/contracting* – e.g. provision of un-tagged funding; differentiated funding depending on school need; government central-purchasing/central-contracting.
 - e) *Other roles of government* – e.g. provide guidance to schools to support them to implement food programmes; nutritional guidelines/requirements; accreditation of food providers to be used by schools; setting accountability and reporting requirements on schools/providers.
 - f) *Approach to rollout* – e.g. rollout to most disadvantaged schools or communities first; regional/geographic rollout; rollout on the basis of expressions of interest by schools.
 - g) *Approach to existing funding/support* – e.g. future role of Fruit in Schools.
 - h) *Legal and commercial risks* – e.g. existing school contracts; food branding; liability when things go wrong.
31. There will also be more detailed considerations to work through as the programme is designed, such as ensuring children with allergies and other dietary requirements (e.g. ethnically appropriate food preparation practices, such as halal) are catered for.

32. Officials will address and advise on these matters as part of the policy development process. In order to develop robust advice on these matters, officials will need to develop a good understanding of what is already happening on the ground and the impact it is having, as well as what will work for schools, students, parents, providers, and the wider community. Engagement with stakeholders and experts will therefore be pivotal.

Approach to developing the policy

33. Key stages in the policy process to develop a Food in Schools programme could include:
- a) Confirm lead Minister(s) and agenc(ies), high level outcomes and initial objectives to guide further work, and the timing of any announcement (impacting potential engagement options).
 - b) Advice to Ministers in April 2019 on evidence, the policy framework (including confirming objectives and approach), and options for engagement.
 - c) Cabinet decision to take Food in Schools forward, indicating potential to allocate funding in Budget 2020 – which could be followed by engagement.
 - d) Advice to Ministers on detailed design, fiscal implications, and approach to implementation and rollout.
 - e) Seeking funding through Budget 2020 process.
34. There are three key decisions we seek from Ministers at this stage in the process. In addition to confirming the initial set of objectives (see paragraph 19), we seek confirmation of lead Ministers, and the preferred approach to announcement (impacting potential engagement options).

Lead Ministers

35. As previously advised [briefing DPMC-2018/19-424 refers], there is currently no clear lead agency for Food in Schools, as this area encompasses a range of considerations that sit across a number of Ministries. Existing government contracts and funding for Food in Schools programmes are administered by the Ministries of Social Development (though this is time-limited and subject to roll-over funding for two years in Budget 2019) and Health. The Ministry of Education is the lead agency for schooling policy, and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Child Poverty Unit and Child Wellbeing Unit) has a leadership and coordination role with regard to cross-agency actions to improve child wellbeing, and reduce and mitigate child poverty.
36. Following cross-agency discussions, officials have determined the Ministry of Education and Child Poverty Unit (in consultation with the Ministries of Health and Social Development, and the Child Wellbeing Unit) are best placed to jointly lead the policy development process.
37. We propose that the Ministers for Child Poverty Reduction, Education, and Children be designated as lead Ministers on Food in Schools, with relevant advice copied to the

Ministers of Social Development and Health, and Associate Minister of Health and Education.

Timing of announcement (impacting potential engagement options)

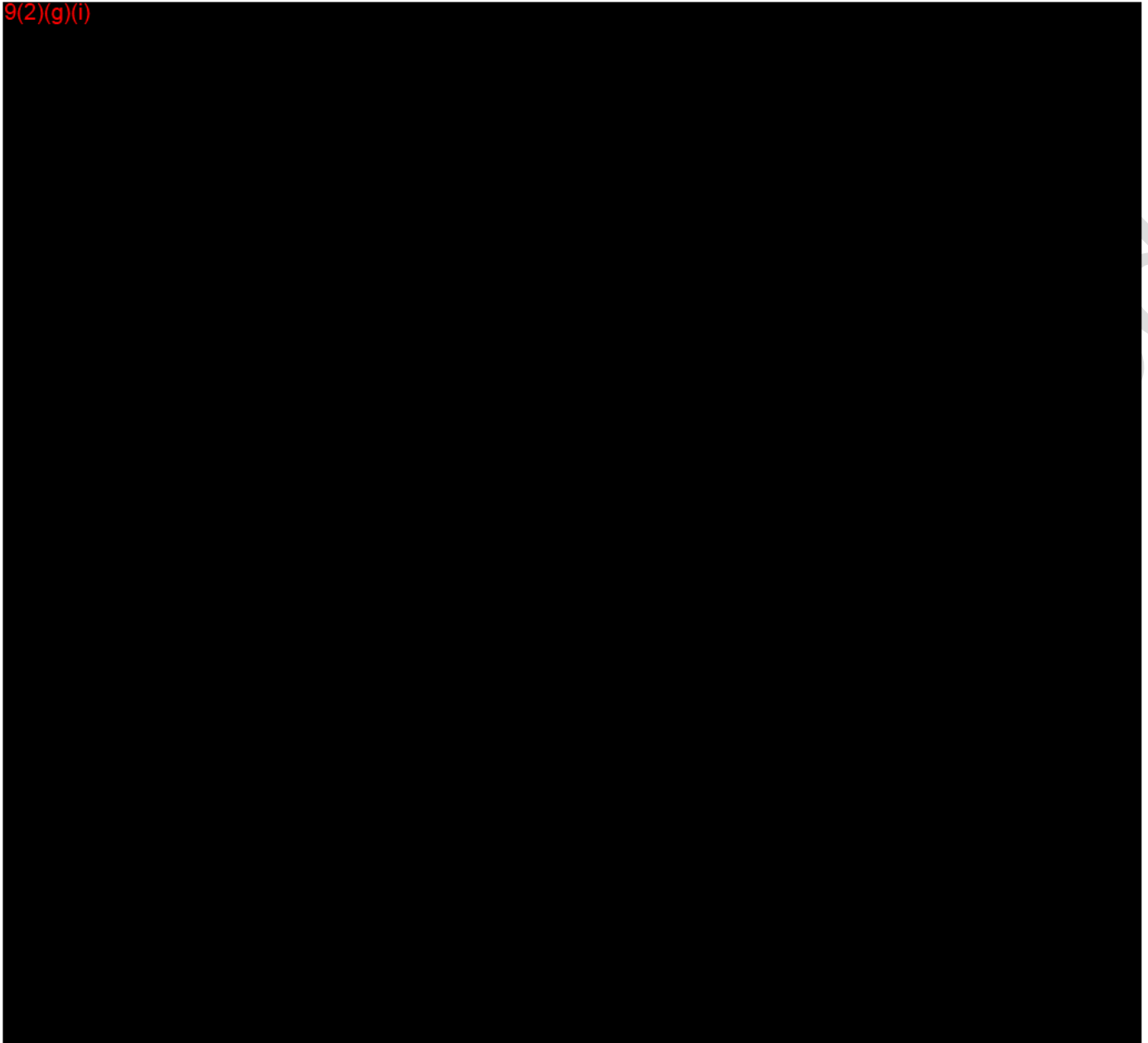
38. 9(2)(g)(i) [Redacted]
39. 9(2)(g)(i) [Redacted]
40. 9(2)(g)(i) [Redacted]
41. 9(2)(g)(i) [Redacted]

Table 2 – 9(2)(g)(i)

9(2)(g)(i)

[Redacted Table Content]

9(2)(g)(i)



42. 9(2)(g)(i)

[Redacted text block]

Next Steps

43. Subject to further direction from Ministers, officials will provide further detailed policy advice by April 2019. This would provide further advice on engagement (reflecting Ministers' preferred approach to announcement), the policy framework (including confirming objectives and approach), and initial thinking on the policy and design considerations outlined in paragraph 30 above (and associated fiscal implications).