

# **IF NOT NOW, WHEN?**

**Action for our children's future**

## **LACA POLITICAL AND POLICY UPDATE**

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# *2023 Political Update*

*6 July 2023*

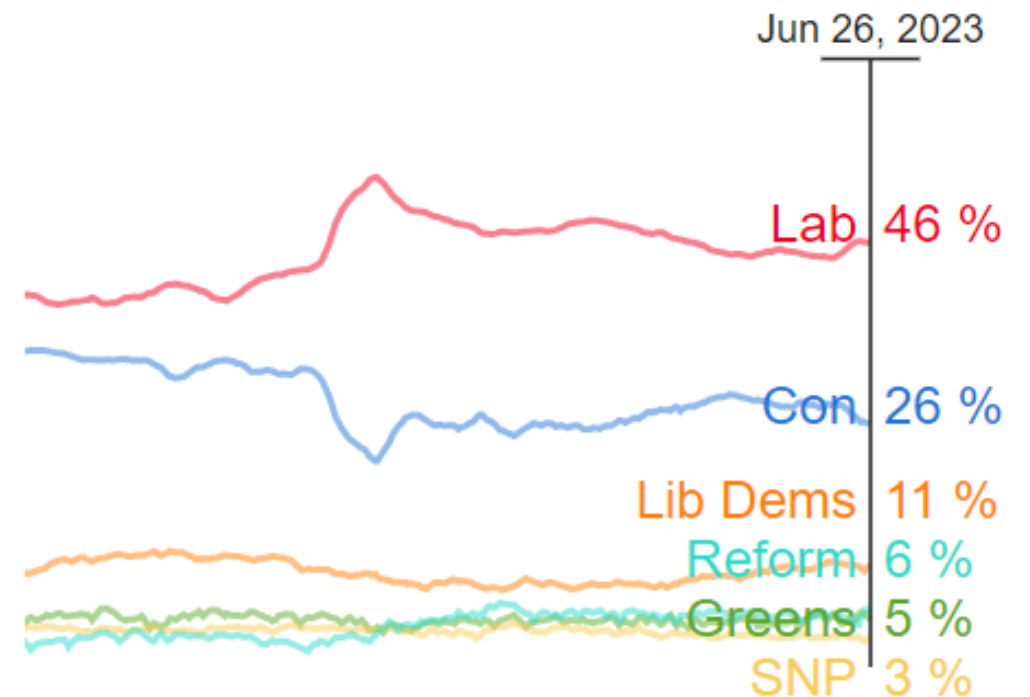
Prepared by FGS Global for LACA Main Event



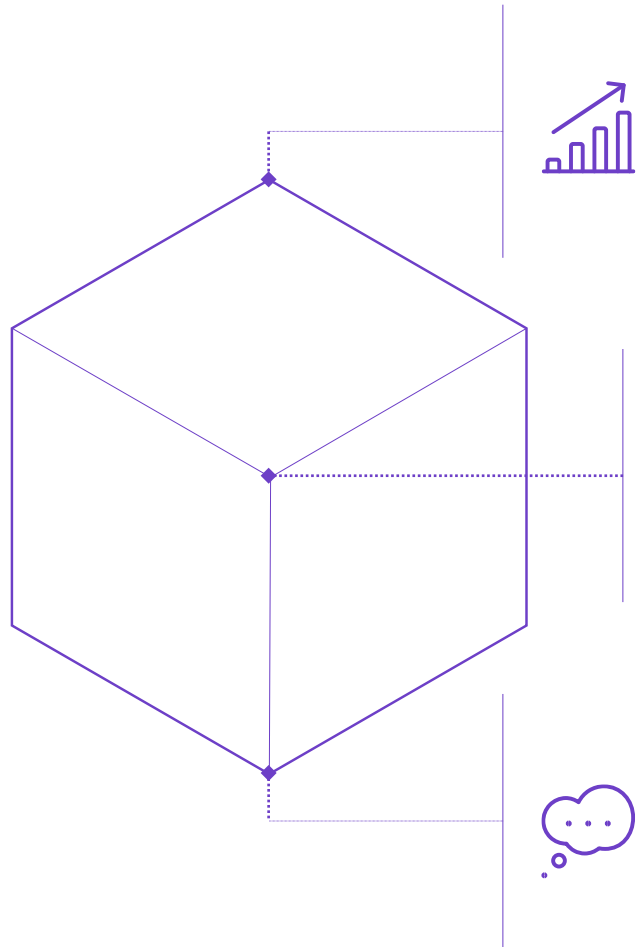
## Political Context

- A general election is expected towards the end of 2024 (early 2025 at the latest).
- Labour remains ahead in the polls. The Prime Minister has outlined 5 priorities for Government ahead of the next election, one of which being the reduction in inflation.
- The Labour Party is increasingly focusing on its manifesto formation and preparing for government, and, in Scotland, the resignation of Nicola Sturgeon has improved Labour's prospects.
- The next election is increasingly shaping the decision-making process for both the Conservatives in government and Labour in opposition. In many ways, the long election campaign has effectively begun.
- The Government is focusing on popular projects it can deliver and display to the electorate before the country goes to the polls. Labour is rapidly increasing their public and private engagement with business, and the business community is by and large responding in numbers.

### POLL OF POLLS: UK GENERAL ELECTION



# Challenges



**Food Inflation.** Across the board 50-70%, but incremental increase in funding.

**Economic constraints.** Both parties want to be perceived as 'fiscally responsible', which is impacting school meals funding.

**Competing interests.** Wide variety of lobbying going on for ever decreasing pots of money.

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## *Where we are: School Meals Policy*



- Funding for UIFSM has risen to £2.53. LACA has made clear this is not enough.



- Labour have said they will not introduce universal infant free school meals. This is a significant step change compared to their previous position.
- Bridget Phillipson has prioritized the roll out of breakfast.
- London Mayor Sadiq Khan announced FSM to all primary school children in London for the 2023/24 academic year. Other London councils have since announced additional provisions to support secondary school children. LACA engaged extensively and secured funding of £2.65.

# Approach

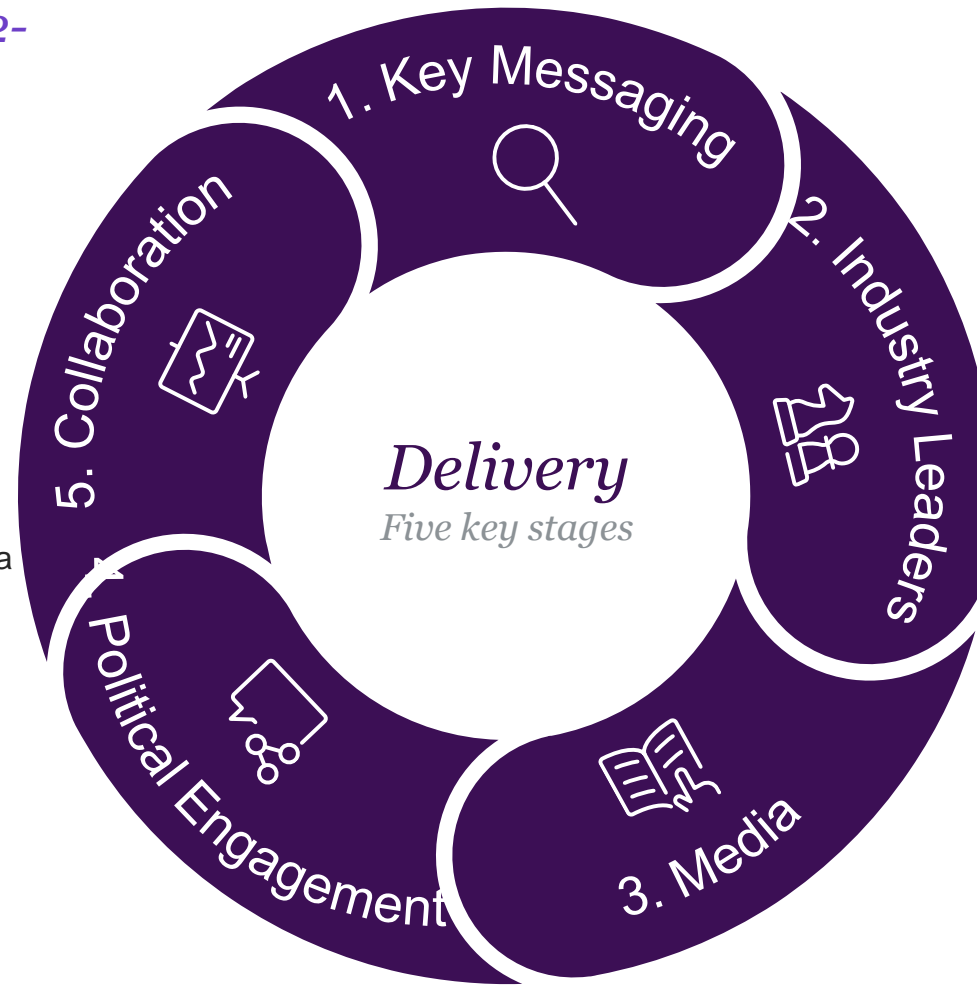
*Overview of what our strategy has been in 2022-23*

## *Key Messaging*

- We have used the survey data to highlight the challenges facing the industry.
- Shared with both political and media stakeholders.

## *Industry Leaders*

- Through a regular drumbeat of engagement, we have positioned LACA as the leader within the industry.



## *Media*

- We have targeted tier 1 media, including broadsheets and broadcast, to ensure the message is heard as widely as possible.

## *Political engagement*

- Continuously liaised with key political stakeholders, including DFE, Stephen Morgan and Munira Wilson.

## *Collaboration*

- Worked with other organisations to promote our key messages. For example, the NEU.



# Case Study: May 2023 Survey Results

## Context

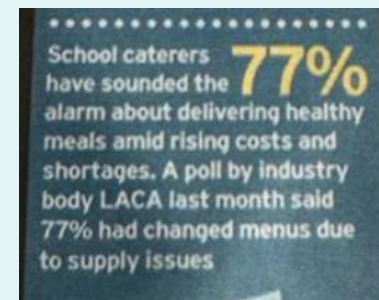
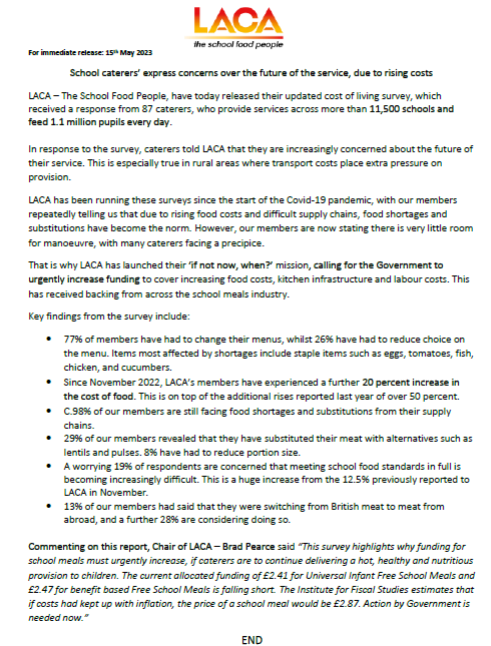
- In May 2023 LACA ran their third survey of the year.

## Approach

- Reached out to all key media stakeholders, including broadsheets and broadcast.
- Highlighted that caterers are increasingly concerned about the future of the service.
- £2.87 by IFS
- Ongoing issues such as menu changes, inflationary increases.
- Switching proteins, such as lentils for meat.

## Results

- Brad was invited on the Today Programme in May. He was then invited back last week to discuss the UIFSM Funding announcement.
- Brad also spoke to Radio 5 Live about the impact of rising food costs on the service.
- The Guardian covered the survey results.
- The Mirror has continued to use the survey results in their coverage, including last week.
- Schools Week and TES have also covered our survey.



## *Highlights of our Political Engagement*

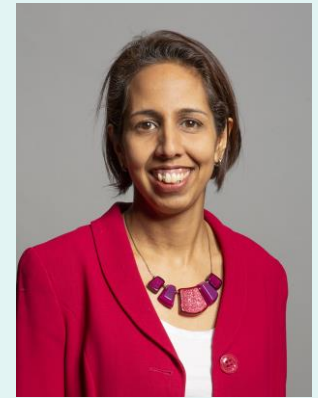
Over the last year, FGS Global has been working with LACA's Chair, Vice-Chair and leadership team to continue to raise awareness among political audiences on the challenges facing the industry.

We continue to meet monthly with the **Department for Education**.

We have also notably met with key political stakeholders including **Stephen Morgan**, Shadow Schools Minister and **Munira Wilson**, Education Spokesperson for the Liberal Democrats.

In April 2023, following our engagement with Chair of the Health Select Committee **Steve Brine MP**, he referenced LACA during a debate on FSM.

This included highlighting the “If not now, when?” campaign and our calls for funding to increase with inflation.



The Local Authority Caterers Association has in its membership over 300 local authorities, as well as contract caterers, catering managers, and kitchen and school staff, which means that some 80% of school food is provided by its members. It told me that without change, the future of the sector is, in its word, “bleak”. In March, it published its “If not now, when?” mission, which calls on the Government to reform school meal funding, address inflationary pressures, and commit to ongoing reviews that make adjustment for inflation. I echo that as my first ask this morning, and this is why: one school in my constituency—I will not name any of them, to respect their wishes—receives £2.41 per child, yet as of October last year, it pays £2.80 per child, per school meal, to the main provider in Hampshire. It told me that it had to subsidise meals with around £4,700 from the school budget between November 2022 and the end of the financial year, which has just passed.



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## *Looking ahead 2023-24*

- **General Election:** In the lead up to the next General Election, both the Conservatives and Labour will be campaigning against a backdrop of increased economic insecurity. We will continue to campaign on the challenges that the sector is facing.
- **Funding increase:** 5% increase in funding for UIFSM is not enough. We have made that clear to the Government both at the Ministerial and Official level. We will continue to call for £2.87.
- **Media and Political Engagement:** We will continue to make sure that LACAs membership is heard both within the media and during meetings with political stakeholders.



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