



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP 2019/0110, 7 May 2019

The Children's Future Food Inquiry

This pack has been prepared ahead of the debate to be held in Westminster Hall at 9.30am on Wednesday 8 May 2019 on the Children's Future Food Inquiry. The Inquiry was co-ordinated by the Food Foundation and led by the All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) on School Food, and Hunger and Food Poverty. The debate will be opened by Kerry McCarthy MP who was a member of the Inquiry committee.

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

1. The Inquiry

This briefing provides a background to the report and some of its conclusions, and in section 2 some of the relevant Government policies are outlined. The briefing is not intended to provide a comprehensive overview of all policy positions and relevant comment or concerns. A selection of recent Parliamentary comment and PQs, and relevant press is also included.

1.1 Background

The [Children's Future Food Inquiry](#) was led by the All-Party Parliamentary Groups ([APPGs](#)) on School Food, and Hunger and Food Poverty. It was co-ordinated by the Food Foundation think tank and supported by a number of other organisations and academic faculties.¹ The Food Foundation describes itself as follows:

The Food Foundation is an independent think tank that tackles the growing challenges facing the UK's food system in the interests of the UK public.²

The Inquiry report was developed by members of the Inquiry committee and fifteen young Food Ambassadors.³ The Inquiry committee was co-chaired by Sharon Hodgson MP (Chair of the APPG on School Food) and Dr Philippa Whitford MP. Kerry McCarthy MP (who is opening this debate) was also a member.⁴

The inquiry was launched in November 2017 and a press release at the time cited recent UNICEF figures on food insecurity in the UK and Office for National Statistics (ONS) data on increasing food prices.⁵

The Inquiry report described it as "the first attempt to systematically talk to children living in poverty and seek their views". The scope of the Inquiry was "the food situation of children living in poverty across the UK", from ages 0-18.⁶

The report outlines how it collected evidence:

- Workshops with nearly 400 children;
- An academic review of child food insecurity;
- Polling of young people;
- Evidence submissions from people working with children;
- A UK-wide policy review; and
- Secondary analysis of Government data on the affordability of a healthy diet.⁷

Regarding the territorial scope of the Inquiry, the report stated:

¹ Food Foundation, [Children's Future Food Inquiry](#) [accessed 3 May 2019]

² Food Foundation, [Our Vision](#) [accessed 7 May 2019]

³ [Children's Future Food Inquiry report](#), p. 9

⁴ Register of All-Party Parliamentary Groups, [APPG on School Food](#), 27 March 2019

⁵ Food Foundation, [Inquiry to help the millions of children using foodbanks this Christmas](#), 21 November 2017

⁶ [Children's Future Food Inquiry report](#), p. 23

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9

The recommendations in this report cover areas of policy which have varying levels of devolution across the four UK nations. They are addressed to all four governments, local authorities, schools and businesses, according to their powers.⁸

1.2 Launch of the report

The report of the Inquiry was launched on 25 April 2019 by the Inquiry Ambassador, Dame Emma Thompson, and the Inquiry's young Food Ambassadors.⁹ The full press release for the report is provided in Section 4 of this brief.

Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi spoke at the launch of the report and said the Government would consider the issues raised (the full speech is also included in section 4):

The government will reflect carefully on the report over the coming months and will consider how we can best respond to the important issues raised. [...]

It is vital that government considers children's views, alongside expertise from practitioners and the best available evidence. In addition, I know that many school leaders and local partners are taking positive steps locally to involve children in shaping provision in their schools and communities.

Overall, the Government is truly committed to delivering a country that works for everyone. We are determined to ensure that we target our support as effectively as possible towards the children that are most in need. I am very keen to hear from you about what we can all do to help address these issues, and we will reflect carefully on the recommendations contained in this report.¹⁰

The Minister highlighted recent and ongoing UK Government action addressing issues raised in the report.¹¹

1.3 Conclusions of the report

The report raises issues in three areas: at pre-school age, at school and at home (see [Executive Summary, pages 6-7](#)). For babies and pre-school years, the report raises concerns over support for breastfeeding, policies to support babies in low income households and food provision in early years and pre-school environments.¹²

At school, the report finds that free school meal provision is inconsistent across the Westminster and devolved Governments, while expressing concern with the way the free school meal policy works, for example the cost of meal provision for low income families that do not qualify or

⁸ Ibid., p. 13

⁹ Food Foundation, [The Children's Future Food Inquiry final report is here!](#), 25 April 2019

¹⁰ GOV.UK, [Nadhim Zahawi's speech at the Children's Future Food Inquiry](#), 25 April 2019

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., p. 6

exclusions from the policy, along with concerns the allowance is not sufficient to buy a meal and the higher price of healthier food.¹³

At home the report concludes that there are ‘loop holes’ in restrictions on junk food advertising for children, along with cost pressures in the home – particularly at school holiday time, but also the impact of the availability and price differential between convenient (fast) food and healthier options. For example, the report states that children from the poorest families are “more exposed to fast food outlets and more affected by the relatively higher costs of healthy food”.¹⁴

1.4 Recommendations of the report

The report contains a summary of conclusions (pp 6-8) and the *Children’s #Right2Food Charter* containing headline recommendations as follows (pp 12-13):

- The healthy lunch guarantee (expanding free school meals);
- The healthy food minimum (expanding voucher schemes and other policies addressing “the constraints of poverty on what we eat”);
- The Children’s Food Watchdog (see below);
- Health before profits (marketing of unhealthy foods); and
- Stop the stigma (additional recommendations regarding free school meals including renaming it as a “school meal allowance”).¹⁵

One recommendation is for a new, independent Children’s Food Watchdog, which would involve children and young people in its leadership. The report suggests that the watchdog:

could be housed by the Food Standards Agency in all four nations, staffed by secondees from relevant Departments, networked across nations and include an independent Board reporting to parliaments and informing the Children’s Commissioners in all four nations.¹⁶

The report recommends that the new watchdog should “consider costing” 16 policy initiatives across the UK, including an action plan to support breastfeeding, the expansion of free school meals and holiday provision, measures to “rebalance the cost” of healthy and unhealthy foods and the implementation of mandatory and monitored quality standards for food served in childcare settings.¹⁷

¹³ Ibid., p. 6-7

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 50

¹⁵ Ibid., pp 12-13

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 57. Note that the Food Standards Agency no longer has responsibility for Scotland, following the establishment of [Food Standards Scotland](#) in 2015.

¹⁷ [Children’s Future Food Inquiry report](#), pp 58-59

2. Policies on Children's Food

2.1 Free School Meals

Eligibility in England

Parents do not have to pay for school lunches in England if they receive any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after a person stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit – with household income of less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits) from 1 April 2018, with transitional protections for previously existing claimants (see page 11 of this briefing)

Prior to 1 April 2018, all claimants for Universal Credit in England were eligible for free school meals. The following protections are in place for existing claimants:

- From April 2018, all existing claimants will continue to receive free school meals whilst Universal Credit is rolled out. This will apply even if their earnings rise above the new threshold during that time.
- In addition, any child gaining eligibility for free school meals after the threshold has been introduced will be protected against losing free school meals during the Universal Credit rollout period.
- No further eligibility checks will be required for protected families during this period.
- Once Universal Credit is fully rolled out, any existing claimants that no longer meet the eligibility criteria at that point (because they are earning above the threshold) will continue to receive protection until the end of their current phase of education (e.g. primary, secondary)
- New claimants earning above the threshold after April 2018 will not be eligible for free school meals.¹⁸

Children who get any of the qualifying benefits in their own right can also get free school meals.

Children under compulsory school age who are in full-time education may also be able to get free school meals.

¹⁸ Department for Education, [Eligibility for free school meals and the early years pupil premium under Universal Credit](#), February 2018, p9

Free school meals are available to pupils in school sixth forms (maintained or academy) on the same basis as children of compulsory school age and this requirement was extended to [Further Education institutions](#) in 2014/15.¹⁹

Local authorities are responsible for providing free school lunches and applications must be made through the relevant local body.²⁰

Eligibility and Take-up Rates

As of January 2018, 13.6% of pupils in state-funded schools in England were known to be eligible for free school meals and claiming a meal on census day. The table below provides a break down by type of school.

Pupils Eligible for and Claiming Free School Meals State Funded Schools, England, 2018	
	Proportion of Pupils Known to be Eligible for FSM and Claiming a Meal on Census Day (%)
Nursery and Primary Schools	13.7
Secondary Schools	12.4
Special Schools	35.7
Pupil Referral Units	40.0
Local Authority Alternative Provision	15.9
Total	13.6

Notes

Proportions are calculated based on the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and claiming a meal on the census day as a proportion of pupils on roll

Source

[Schools, pupils and their characteristics: 2018, Table 3a, DfE](#)

Eligibility in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland

Information on the eligibility criteria for free school lunches in other parts of the UK can be found via the following links:

Scotland: Mygov.Scot website article, '[School meals](#)', 11 October 2018

Northern Ireland: NI Direct website article, '[Nutrition and school lunches](#)', undated.

Wales: Welsh Government, '[Free school meals: frequently asked questions](#)', 29 March 2019.

Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM): England

Introduction, funding, and advice for schools

Section 106 of the [Children and Families Act 2014](#) makes provision for free school meals to be provided for all pupils in Reception, Year 1 and

¹⁹ Department for Education, [16 to 19 funding: free meals in further education funded institutions for 2018 to 2019](#), 13 September 2018

²⁰ The gov.uk website publishes [up-to-date information on eligibility for free school meals](#).

Year 2. This duty took effect from September 2014 and is applicable for maintained schools, academies and free schools. [Departmental advice](#) is available for schools on fulfilling the duty, including funding information, most recently revised in July 2015.²¹

The policy of universal free school meals for infant pupils (UFSM) was [announced by the then Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg](#), in September 2013.^{22 23}

Concerns: school funding implications

Concerns were raised following the introduction of UFSM about potential implications for school funding.

Schools receive Pupil Premium funding for children who currently or previously qualified for free school meals. Schools reported concerns about missing out on this funding if parents did not register for meals that their children now received as a matter of course.

The Department for Education [webpage on UFSM](#) provides information on the funding of UFSM, including allocations for schools. The [conditions of grant for 2018/19](#) set out that each meal taken by an eligible pupil attracts £2.30. The allocation assumes that pupils will take 190 school meals over an academic year, providing £437 per eligible pupil.

Education Policy Institute report: the impact of UFSM

In January 2018, the Education Policy Institute (EPI) published an [Evaluation of Universal Infant Free School Meals](#). The EPI found a rapid increase of take-up of free school meals, and parental satisfaction as well as financial benefits for families. The EPI however found significant costs for schools, and potential future concerns about the levels of funding provided.²⁴

Breakfast clubs: England

Although the Conservative Manifesto for the 2017 General Election proposed free breakfasts for all primary school children in England²⁵, following the election, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System, Lord Nash, announced that the Government did not now plan to introduce free breakfasts.²⁶ Consequently, schools in England are not required to provide breakfast clubs, although many do so.

²¹ Department for Education, [UFSM: guide for local authorities and schools](#) [accessed 13 August 2015]

²² Department of Education, [Free school lunch for every child in infant school](#), 17 September 2013

²³ Department for Education, [The School Food Plan](#), p8-9

²⁴ Education Policy Institute, [Evaluation of Universal Infant Free School Meals](#), January 2018

²⁵ [Conservative Party Manifesto 2017](#), p51-52

²⁶ [HL Deb 4 Jul 2017, c792](#)

Meals during school holidays

Private Member's Bill

Concerns have been raised regularly about children who receive free school meals during term time but may not receive adequate nutrition during the holidays.

In September 2017, Frank Field MP presented the [School Holidays \(Meals and Activities\) Bill 2017-19](#) to Parliament. The Bill would require local authorities to facilitate the delivery of programmes that provide free meals and activities for children during school holidays.

More information about the Bill can be found in a [Library briefing](#) prepared ahead of the Second Reading debate.²⁷

The Bill's Second Reading debate in the Commons began on 19 January 2018 and was scheduled to continue on 27 April, but did not do so as the Bill was withdrawn by Mr Field following Government commitments on research and pilot programmes.

Ministerial response: research and pilots

The Minister stated during the debate on Mr Field's Bill that, while the Government would oppose the Bill, it would conduct research into how to make provision in this area.²⁸

On 28 March 2018, the Government [announced](#) £2million for research into ways of supporting disadvantaged families through "healthy meals and enriching activities" during the school holidays through the Holiday Activities and Food Research Fund, focused on:

- testing the effectiveness of interventions;
- looking at take-up of provision;
- identifying the costs involved; and
- considering whether there are particular areas where this kind of programme would be most effective.

This is initial research to be followed by a targeted pilot programme in the 2019 Easter and summer holidays. Initial information included directions on how to bid for funding (which was open until 18 April 2018).²⁹

More [detail on the pilot schemes](#) was announced by the DfE on 27 July 2018. The schemes would provide free meals as well as activities such as football and cooking classes. They would operate "across the country including the North East, Birmingham and London."

Initial pilots: statistics

The Department for Education published statistics on [holiday hunger schemes during the summer 2018 school holidays](#) in November 2018.

The short briefing listed the following key findings:

²⁷ House of Commons Library, [School Holidays \(Meals and Activities\) Bill - 2nd reading](#), 12 January 2018, CDP 2017/064

²⁸ [HC Deb 19 Jan 2018 c1247-48](#)

²⁹ DfE, [Boost to support disadvantaged families during the holidays](#), 28 March 2018

- The seven organisations supported the delivery of 283 new and existing holiday clubs, which together had a total of 3,649 sessions.
- The number of children recorded as attending at least one session was 18,200.
- The percentage of children attending more than one session was 71%, while the percentage of children attending more than 50% of sessions operated by the club was 25%.
- Forty-nine percent of attendees were recorded as receiving Free School Meals (FSM), but the true percentage could be higher as 24% of attendees had a recorded FSM status of 'not stated' or 'not known'.
- Of the 18,200 children recorded as attending, 49% were recorded as primary phase (year 1 to year 6), 19% as secondary phase (year 7 to year 11), 14% as pre-year 1 and 2% in post-16 education (year 12 to year 14). A further 15% did not state or know their school year group.³⁰

2019 holiday club programme

In December 2018, the [Government announced](#) that the pilots would be followed by a £9 million programme of holiday clubs for the summer break in 2019. A PQ response of 8 April 2019 stated that successful bids and geographical locations for the scheme would be announced later in the spring.³¹

2.2 Childhood obesity

The Government's [childhood obesity plan](#) was published in August 2016. Measures introduced by the plan included:

- A Public Health England (PHE) reformulation programme to reduce the sugar in foods aimed at children;
- Recommitment to the healthy start voucher scheme enabling low-income families to buy fruit and vegetables;
- Action to increase physical activity in schools;
- The soft drinks industry levy to apply to manufacturers and importers of added sugar soft drinks;
- Reassessment of school foods standards;
- A review of food labelling;
- Promotion of the use of technology to aid healthy choices; and
- A review of health professional training and education on obesity and nutrition.³²

The soft drinks industry levy came into effect in April 2018. The Government stated that the aim of the levy is to encourage companies to reformulate their soft drinks. Revenue raised from the levy contributes to funding physical education and breakfast clubs in schools.³³ More information about funding from the soft drinks industry levy is provided in the Library briefing paper on [Physical education and sport in schools](#).

³⁰ Department for Education, [Holiday Activities and Food: 2018 programme](#), p4

³¹ [PQ 240513, 8 April 2019](#).

³² GOV.UK, [Childhood obesity: a plan for action](#) [accessed 3 May 2019]

³³ GOV.UK, [Soft Drinks Industry Levy comes into effect](#), 5 April 2018

The June 2018 [Childhood obesity: a plan for action, chapter 2](#) set out further actions including:

- A 2020 review of the milk drinks exemption from the soft drinks industry levy;
- Consult on legislation ending the sale of energy drinks to children;
- Consideration of tax measures to promote healthy food if the voluntary sugar reduction programme does not deliver sufficient progress;
- Consult on introducing a 9pm watershed on TV advertising of HFSS products and similar protection for children viewing adverts online;
- Ban price promotions of unhealthy foods and drinks in the retail and out of home sector;
- An update of the School Food Standards to reduce sugar consumption;
- Consult on plans to use Healthy Start vouchers to provide additional support to children from lower income families.³⁴

The [energy drinks sales consultation](#) ran from 30 August 2018 to 21 November 2018.

Marketing and advertising

The Library briefing paper on [Advertising to children](#) (October 2018) and debate pack [The effect of junk food advertising on obesity in children](#) (January 2018) provide information on the broad policy area, and specific controls on advertising of HFSS foods respectively.

A ban on the advertising of HFSS foods during children's airtime and during programmes where there is a disproportionately high child audience was introduced in the UK in 2007.³⁵

Changes were introduced to the advertising of HFSS products on non-broadcast media in July 2017. The new measures apply across all non-broadcast media, including print, online and social media.³⁶

A [consultation](#) on restricting the promotion of food high in fat, salt and sugar ran from 12 January 2019 to 6 April 2019. The [consultation on introducing a 9pm watershed on TV advertising of HFSS products](#) is currently open, closing on 10 June 2019.

2.3 School and other provision

[Example menus and recipes for early years providers](#) were developed by the Department for Education, the then Department of Health and Public Health England and published in November 2017. The Government stated that the menus would "contribute to delivery of the

³⁴ HM Government, [Childhood obesity: a plan for action, chapter 2](#), pp 7-11

³⁵ Ofcom, [Television Advertising of Food and Drink Products to Children: Final statement](#), 22 February 2007

³⁶ Advertising Standards Authority, [Guidance on advertising food and soft drink products to children](#), 30 June 2017

government's ambitious Childhood Obesity Plan by helping early years settings meet the latest government dietary recommendations".³⁷

The Department for Education's (DfE) [2018 Holiday Activities and Food programme](#) provided total funding of £2 million to seven organisations, following a competitive tendering process. DfE reported in November 2018 that the programme had supported the delivery of 283 new and existing holiday clubs, with at least 49% of attendees receiving free school meals.³⁸

The [school food standards](#) were updated in March 2019. This includes information on planning and provision of school food, the school food plan, the provision of milk and the free fruit and vegetables scheme.³⁹

2.4 Breastfeeding

Health Minister Jackie Doyle-Price outlined the UK Government's policy on breastfeeding in response to a January 2019 PQ:

Public Health England (PHE) is committed to improving breastfeeding rates across England and has identified breastfeeding as a key priority within our maternity and child health programmes.

PHE works nationally to support local authorities (LAs) to improve breastfeeding rates. PHE, in partnership with the United Nations International Childrens' Emergency Fund (UNICEF), published an infant feeding commissioning toolkit to support the commissioning of interventions to improve breastfeeding rates, available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/infant-feeding-commissioning-services>

LAs and their partners are encouraged to provide a comprehensive universal service with access to specialist support when needed. The PHE breastfeeding fingertips profiles allow local areas to see performance against a range of indicators supporting them to plan and review services and local population needs. More information is available at the following link:

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk>

PHE supports action to improve breastfeeding rates through evidence to provide guidance to professionals, and address health inequalities. The guidance includes six high impact areas for early years aimed at health visitors includes promotion of breastfeeding and is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/563921/Early_years_high_impact_area3_breastfeeding.pdf⁴⁰

³⁷ GOV.UK, [Healthy eating guidance published for the early years sector](#), 13 November 2017

³⁸ DfE, [Holiday Activities and Food: 2018 programme: Management information on attendees in summer 2018](#), November 2018

³⁹ GOV.UK, [Standards for school food in England](#) [accessed 3 May 2019]

⁴⁰ PQ 205405 [on Breastfeeding], 9 January 2019

2.5 Devolved administrations

The Scottish Government's [diet and healthy weight delivery plan](#) was published in July 2018.⁴¹ The Scottish Government consulted on [Welfare Foods](#) in 2018. It proposes to replace Healthy Start Vouchers with Best Start Foods, administered through a smartcard system. It also proposes to offer free milk to all children in funded and non-funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) provision from 2020. Best Start Foods is expected to launch in summer 2019.⁴²

The Welsh Government published best practice guidance on food and nutrition for childcare settings in November 2018. This was [updated](#) in March 2019.⁴³

The Northern Ireland Department of Health operates the ten-year [Fitter Future for All](#) framework (launched March 2012). The [latest progress report](#) on the updated 2015-19 outcomes was published in June 2018.⁴⁴ The framework includes the [Food in Schools Policy](#), launched in September 2013 with the Department of Education.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Scottish Government, [A healthier future: Scotland's diet and healthy weight delivery plan](#), 2 July 2018

⁴² Scottish Government, *Welfare Foods: consultation*, [section 3.2](#)

⁴³ Welsh Government, [Food and nutrition for childcare settings](#), 13 March 2019

⁴⁴ Department of Health, [Obesity prevention](#) [accessed 3 May 2019]

⁴⁵ Department of Education, [Healthy food for healthy outcomes](#) [accessed 3 May 2019]

3. News items

Times

Free school meals were my lifeline. Now children depend on food banks

1 May 2019

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/free-school-meals-were-my-lifeline-but-today-s-children-depend-on-food-banks-qdv9zjmjd>

BBC News Online

NI schoolchildren 'should receive free fruit or veg'

30 April 2019

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-48095888>

Guardian

Breastfeeding reduces child obesity risk by up to 25%, WHO finds

30 April 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/apr/30/breastfeeding-reduces-child-obesity-risk-by-up-to-25-who-finds>

Conversation

Food poverty: agony of hunger the norm for many children in the UK

30 April 2019

<https://theconversation.com/food-poverty-agony-of-hunger-the-norm-for-many-children-in-the-uk-116216>

Guardian

Give local authorities extra powers to curb junk food ads – report

24 April 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/food/2019/apr/24/give-local-authorities-extra-powers-to-curb-junk-food-ads-report>

BBC News Online

Worsening child poverty harms learning, say teachers

14 April 2019

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-47902642>

Guardian

Tired, hungry and shamed: pupil poverty 'stops learning'

14 April 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/apr/14/tired-hungry-shamed-pupil-poverty-stops-learning>

ITV News

Pupils 'have not eaten for two days' and parents 'too poor' to buy new clothes, teachers say

14 April 2019

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-04-14/pupils-have-not-eaten-for-two-days-teachers-report/>

Independent

Children in low-income families facing 'hunger and shame', study finds

2 April 2019

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/hild-poverty-uk-children-hunger-hungry-meals-low-income-families-benefits-a8848041.html>

Telegraph

Children face growing deluge of junk food ads online, public health experts warn

14 March 2019

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/0/children-face-growing-deluge-junk-food-ads-online-public-health/>

The Grocer

UK food system is 'rigged' against healthy diets, says report

26 February 2019

<https://www.thegrocer.co.uk/health/uk-food-system-is-rigged-against-healthy-diets-says-report/590672.article>

Times Educational Supplement

DfE to expand programme targeting holiday hunger

21 December 2018

<https://www.tes.com/news/dfe-expand-programme-targeting-holiday-hunger>

Nursery World

Scotland pledges healthy meals and outdoor play for pre-school children

20 December 2018

<https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/nursery-world/news/1166440/scotland-pledges-healthy-meals-and-outdoor-play-for-pre-school-children>

Nursery World

Call for hot healthy meals for disadvantaged nursery children

27 November 2018

<https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/nursery-world/news/1166258/call-for-hot-healthy-meals-for-disadvantaged-nursery-children>

BBC News Online

Families 'can't afford to follow healthy diet guidance'

25 September 2018

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-45420295>

Independent

Universal credit changes will bar 2.6 million children from free school meals, warns Labour

3 June 2018

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/universal-credit-change-free-school-meals-benefits-labour-angela-rayner-a8380921.html>

Guardian

Third of poorer families in England missing out on free food vouchers

25 May 2018

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/may/25/poorer-families-england-healthy-start-free-food-vouchers>

Guardian

Children 'denied free school meals because of parents' immigration status'

9 May 2018

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/may/09/children-denied-free-school-meals-because-of-parents-immigration-status>

Guardian

Ministers urged to ban fast food outlets from opening near schools

23 April 2018

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/apr/23/ministers-urged-to-ban-fast-food-outlets-from-opening-near-schools>

4. Press releases

Children's Future Food inquiry

YOUNG PEOPLE JOIN DAME EMMA THOMPSON AT WESTMINSTER TO CALL FOR CHILDREN'S FOOD WATCHDOG

25 April 2019

- Young people join Dame Emma Thompson at Westminster launch to present their children's #Right2Food Charter, which calls for an independent Children's Food Watchdog
- The Children's Future Food Inquiry ambassador Dame Emma Thompson champions the project's final report, which calls for urgent political action on child food insecurity
- The Inquiry's recommendations come on the same day as reports that a record 1.6 million food bank parcels were given to people in the past year, with more than half a million of these going to children
- One in three (4.1 million) children live in poverty in the UK, with an estimated 2.5 million living in food insecure households
- Extensive report marks the first attempt to directly and systematically seek the views of children and young people from deprived backgrounds across the UK

Today the Children's Future Food Inquiry ambassador Dame Emma Thompson joins young 'Food Ambassadors' at Westminster to deliver a new report which calls for an independent Children's Food Watchdog to lead the charge on tackling children's food insecurity in the UK. The Children's Future Food Inquiry is the first attempt to directly and systematically seek the views of children and young people living in poverty across the UK. It has spent 12 months investigating children's food insecurity in each of the four UK nations, and the project's final report pulls together direct input from hundreds of young people, the frontline staff, academics and experts. Dame Emma Thompson, Children's Future Food Inquiry ambassador, said:

In a wealthy society that claims to value compassion and humanity, how can we tolerate the injustice of millions of children going hungry? In face of the government's refusal to help, the Children's Future Food Inquiry has brought together hundreds of young people to hear about their lived experience of food poverty, and it's time we listened to what they say. It's the younger generation who will deliver the change that's so urgently needed: we must act now to ensure every child in the UK has their right to food.

The #Right2Food Charter included in the report presents the Inquiry's young 'Food Ambassadors' (aged between 10 and 18 years) own recommendations for loosening the grip of food poverty on children in the UK and improving their access to enough nutritious food. Their key proposal is for a new Children's Food Watchdog, which will stand as an

independent body with children and young people involved in its leadership.

We had a referral from a local school asking for assistance as one of their pupils had been caught stealing sachets of ketchup to take home because he was hungry. - Crookston Community Group, Glasgow – Children’s Future Food Inquiry final report

With the first stage of the Inquiry concluded, the committee (made up of parliamentarians and civil society experts; including the Children and Young People’s Commissioner in Scotland and the President of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health) will focus on establishing the Children’s Food Watchdog, and its first action will be to conduct an economic costing of the full range of measures proposed in the report by the young people as solutions for the problems identified by the Inquiry. These measures aim to tackle the differences in policy and provision across the UK with the aim to achieve minimum equitable standards, including extending the entitlement of free school meals to the 23% of children not entitled to them who are missing lunch due to lack of money; ensuring the funding provided for free school meals is actually sufficient to buy a healthy lunch; and ensuring that more families benefit from the fruit and vegetable vouchers provided through Healthy Start (from which currently only 30% of children in poverty benefit).

If you’re not eating it can really trash your confidence. Makes it hard to concentrate – instead of thinking about what you’re learning, you’re thinking about food - Young Food Ambassador – Children’s Future Food Inquiry final report

Calls for robust policy responses to children’s food insecurity come on the same day as reports that a record 1.6 million food bank parcels were given to people in the past year, with more than half a million of these going to children.

We have spoken to children who have shoplifted for food, scavenged for food from bins, eaten tissue paper to fend off hunger, bartered for food at school, sold drugs for food, and mugged other children for money for food. - Laurence Guinness, Chief Executive of the Childhood Trust – Children’s Future Food Inquiry final report

The Children’s Future Food Inquiry report will be launched at a Westminster event co-hosted by Dame Emma Thompson and attended by Nadhim Zahawi MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families. Launches in Northern Ireland, Wales, and Scotland will follow in the coming weeks.

The report was initiated by a cross party group of MPs, peers and civil society experts, including Bruce Adamson, the Children and Young People’s Commissioner in Scotland; Professor Russell Viner, President of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health; and Matthew Reed, Chief Executive of Marie Curie and Formerly Chief Executive of The Children’s Society.

It covers all four UK nations, and looks at the three settings that characterise children’s lives: pre-school, school and home. It presents

the views of young people and those who work with them on the barriers to nutritious food for children in the UK, and addresses issues including holiday hunger, unhealthy food marketing and the stigma attached to free school meals.

I didn't have any breakfast cos there was nothing in the fridge. I don't eat breakfast much anyway. When we don't have any food for dinner my Dad will go out to borrow money from our neighbour. - Girl, 11 – Children's Future Food Inquiry final report

The Inquiry's evidence was gathered from workshops with nearly 400 children in 13 different locations around the UK, an academic review of child food insecurity, polling of young people 11-18 years, more than 100 submissions of evidence from people working with children, a UK-wide policy review and secondary analysis of government data on the affordability of a healthy diet.

I'd say to the government to make sure all children have the same amount of food no matter what their backgrounds are, where they come from, what school they go to, their behaviour or anything. Make sure that all youth has the same amount of food, and has enough. - Young Food Ambassador – Children's Future Food Inquiry

Anna Taylor OBE, Executive Director of the Food Foundation, said:

Children living in poverty have told this Inquiry directly that they don't have enough to eat, and that the food their parents can afford is harming their health. We should care about unlocking our children's potential, but instead the food insecurity experienced by millions of young people in the UK is hindering their growth, crippling their confidence and making it impossible to learn and develop. The Inquiry's report and its recommendations prove that there are things we can do, right now, to make sure children have enough nutritious food. It's an opportunity to right the wrongs we have tolerated for too long – we cannot let it pass us by.

Sharon Hodgson MP, Member of Parliament for Washington and Sunderland West, Shadow Minister for Public Health and Co-Chair of the Children's Future Food Inquiry:

As Co-Chair of the Children's Future Food Inquiry, I have heard directly from young people about their experiences of food poverty. "I believe that no child should be going hungry or experiencing food poverty. That is why I was proud to Co-Chair this inquiry and speak to young people who are experiencing food poverty in order to understand their hardships and how Government can better support them and their families.

Children are falling through the safety net, and families are having to rely upon charities and service providers for things such as breakfast clubs, holiday provision and foodbanks. These children, and their families, need support from the Government in order to have access to healthy and affordable food.

The Government must take this issue of food poverty seriously, and it must include young people in the conversation.

About the Food Foundation

The [Food Foundation](#) is an independent think tank that tackles the growing challenges facing the UK's food system in the interests of the

UK public. It has worked with the [Children's Future Food Inquiry](#) partners to coordinate the Inquiry and deliver the [final report](#).

About the Children's Future Food Inquiry

The Children's Future Food Inquiry was initiated to hear directly from children, young people and those who live and work with them about children's experiences of food and how it affects their lives. An estimated 4.1 million children are living in poverty in the UK, but almost nothing is known about how many of these children experience food insecurity. At the same time children are suffering from record levels of obesity and it is worse in the poorest parts of the country. The Inquiry will particularly focus on children who are disadvantaged, and will investigate this challenge in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; and is spearheaded by a cross-party parliamentary group. The involvement of young people in the Inquiry was thanks to the support of the Tudor Trust, Trust for London, The Big Lottery Fund and the Young people and Children's Commissioner for Scotland. The following organisations have been involved in the Inquiry: The Food Foundation, Fixers, Food Sense Wales, Children in Wales, Children in Scotland, Children in Northern Ireland, Leeds Beckett University and the University of Kent.

Department for Education

[Nadhim Zahawi's speech at the Children's Future Food Inquiry](#)

The Children and Families Minister on how the government can help build a healthier future for young people

25 April 2019

Department of Health and Social Care and Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

Restrictions on adverts for food high in fat, sugar and salt: public asked for views

The government is consulting on proposals to introduce a 9pm watershed on TV and online adverts for food and drink that is high in fat, sugar or salt.

18 March 2019

A new [public consultation](#) asks people for their views on ways to reduce the number of adverts for foods high in fat, sugar and salt that children are exposed to.

The consultation sets out proposals to tighten advertising restrictions. The restrictions will limit children's exposure across the media they engage with most, as part of efforts to tackle childhood obesity.

The restrictions being considered include a 9pm watershed ban on TV, online streaming sites and social media. The restrictions have been designed with a view to encourage industry to develop healthier alternatives.

Data shows children are spending many hours each week watching television and an increasing amount of time online.

In 2017, it is estimated that children were exposed to more than 700 million online adverts for foods high in fat, sugar or salt and almost 3.6 billion TV adverts.

Exposure levels on TV have fallen significantly since restrictions around children's programmes were introduced 10 years ago, but there remains a significant amount of exposure.

Evidence suggests advertising can affect what and when children eat, both just after seeing an advert and in the longer term by shaping children's food preferences from a young age. This has the potential to affect their likelihood to become or remain overweight as adults.

The proposals would target foods that contribute most to children's intake of calories. The restrictions would not apply to everyday staples like butter, oil or meat.

As part of the consultation, the government will consider the impact that further advertising restrictions may have on business, particularly broadcasters.

Currently, one in 3 children are overweight or obese and the number of severely obese children is on the rise. The proposals are part of a series of measures that will support the [NHS Long Term Plan](#) and help to halve childhood obesity by 2030.

Steve Brine, Public Health Minister, said:

It is not right that our children are so widely and easily exposed to adverts promoting foods high in fat, sugar and salt. Small amounts of excess calories every day over a long time causes obesity and all the associated health concerns. We are, however, clear: there is no one solution, so our world-leading plan is about joined-up action across a range of areas so we tackle childhood obesity from every possible angle.

The NHS is already preparing to treat more and more children for the serious effects of extreme obesity in the future – so we have a duty to address the underlying causes because we believe passionately in our NHS. This isn't about banning everyday staples like butter and olive oil. It's about reducing children's exposure to those products that have little nutritional value but that are part of a wider climate that is driving childhood obesity.

Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Secretary of State, Jeremy Wright, said:

We know that childhood obesity is one of the biggest health problems that our country faces. With children spending more time online it's vital that we look at all options to help us take action and improve the health of the nation – whether through increasing participation in sport, promoting healthy living through our media or through advertising.

The UK already has some of the toughest advertising restrictions in the world, but it is only right that we consult on further action on TV and online advertising for products that are high in fat, salt or sugar as part of our approach to tackling childhood obesity.

Food Foundation

NEW REPORT: The Broken Plate – ten vital signs revealing the health of our food system, its impact on our lives and the remedies we must pursue

February 2019

Ten vital signs revealing the health of our food system, its impact on our lives and the remedies we must pursue.

#BrokenPlate

[*The Broken Plate*](#) is a new report from the Food Foundation which identifies ten signs that show the UK's food system has led the country into a national health crisis, with children and households on low incomes suffering the severest health consequences.

Ten fatally-flawed cogs in the system that puts food on UK tables are working to damage our mental and physical health. The damage inflicted on public health by the UK food system, and the barriers to accessing affordable, healthy food, are evident: 20% of 11-year-olds are obese, 3.1 million people are registered with diabetes, 16% of adults report skipping meals because they don't have enough money and nearly four million children are living in households for whom a healthy diet is unaffordable. In the fifth biggest economy in the world, the poorest 10% of UK households would have to spend three quarters of their disposable income on food in order to afford a healthy diet as defined by the Government.

The Broken Plate makes recommendations for how to reshape the food system so that healthy diets are affordable, appealing and convenient for all. Preventing marketing unhealthy food to children, supporting public health in the Agriculture Bill, encouraging industry to create healthier products and harnessing the power of public procurement to deliver healthier meals in hospitals, schools and prisons would all help to put the right food on UK tables in order to support rather than harm public health. The report also calls for the Government and businesses to develop a bold vision for tackling the problem, and identifies cross-departmental accountability as crucial to reducing diet-related illness and health inequalities.

Read the full report [here](#).

Department for Education

Free holiday activities and meals for disadvantaged families

Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi announces funding for thousands of families to benefit from free healthy meals and activities in the summer holidays.

27 July 2018

A series of projects, backed by £2 million of government funding, will be run across the country including the North East, Birmingham and London, providing activities such as free football classes, play sessions and cooking classes.

These projects, running across the summer, will also provide free meals for the most disadvantaged families who may rely on the free school meals they receive during term time.

Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

For most pupils, the end of the school summer term signals the start of holidays, days out and a chance to make memories with friends and family. Other families, who might rely on the support provided by schools, are not so lucky.

These projects will provide a range of support for families during the summer break. They will also give children access to experiences that won't just create great memories but will help broaden their horizons and build the confidence they need to succeed in whatever path they choose to follow.

Academic standards are rising across the country and there are now 1.9 million more children in schools rated 'good' or 'outstanding' than in 2010. Most importantly, the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their more affluent peers has already shrunk by 10% at GCSE and 10.5% at KS2 since 2011.

Today's announcement is the latest in a series of government backed schemes to help disadvantaged children. These include the £2.25 billion pupil premium, free school meals and most recently a £26 million investment to kick-start or improve breakfast clubs in at least 1,700 schools.

Commenting on the announcement, Lindsay Graham, independent policy advisor who has campaigned on this issue in the past, said:

The school holidays can be a challenging and costly time for families, particularly for those on a limited income or whose children are reliant on term time free school meals.

The need for community led enrichment opportunities for children, young people and their families is paramount for helping the most disadvantaged in our society. Early research in the UK is telling us that these types of projects can make a difference.

Evidence suggests that attending out-of-school activities can have a positive impact on children's educational, health and well-being outcomes. The projects announced today will be run by Children North East, Family Action, Feeding Britain, Birmingham Holiday Kitchen, Onside Youth Zones, Street Games and TLG (Transforming Lives for Good).

This funding comes after the government announced that it would run a targeted pilot programme in the 2019 Easter and summer holidays.

This work aims to support children's education by:

- testing the effectiveness of interventions
- looking at take-up of provision
- identifying the costs involved
- considering whether there are particular areas where this kind of programme would be most effective

To ensure this work is implemented effectively, ministers will work closely with Frank Field MP and expert stakeholders, as it develops.

University of Manchester

23 May 2018

Voucher scheme shown to improve diets of low income families

A scheme providing fruit and veg vouchers to low-income families with young children has brought about significant nutritional improvements in families' diets, new research has shown.

The UK Healthy Start Scheme, which sees 450,000 families receive vouchers worth £3.10 per week per child, has increased their spending on fresh fruit and vegetables by around 15 per cent.

The findings from The University of Manchester, the University of Bristol and the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) come at a time of debate over the UK-wide sugar tax and the introduction of a minimum price for alcohol in Scotland – initiatives to help in the fight against obesity.

Although the [UK Healthy Start Scheme](#) isn't so widely-known, it has achieved significantly positive results since its introduction in November 2006. The means-tested scheme targets pregnant women and families with children aged one to three, giving them vouchers they can spend on fruit, vegetables and milk.

Using scanner data that records all grocery purchases families take home, the researchers compared grocery baskets before and after the introduction of the scheme for families that were eligible, compared to those for families that were ineligible, and found that eligible households were spending an extra £2.43 on fresh fruit and vegetables each month – a rise of 15 per cent.

Even though families could have compensated for buying more fruit and veg by spending less on other healthy items, researchers found this wasn't the case.

The nutritional make-up of all food purchases improved, driven by increases in levels of fibre, beta-carotene (vitamin A), potassium, iron and zinc, including a significant increase in the proportion of households meeting their recommended intake for iron and potassium.

The overall positive effect in spending is driven by households, who previously spent less than the value of the vouchers on fruit and

vegetables before the introduction of the scheme. These are households who are likely to benefit most from more fruit and vegetables in their diet.

[This study, published in the Journal of Health Economics](#), highlights the importance of the scheme for low-income families – a group most likely to benefit from more fruit and vegetables in their diet.

[Previous research from the University of Bristol](#) found that parents highly valued the scheme, arguing it made a significant contribution to their weekly shopping budget.

Here is evidence of a scheme that actually works and has increased spending on fruit and vegetables among a group of households that arguably need it the most. Adding fruit and vegetables to your diet delivers significant nutritional benefits, which in the longer term should translate into health improvements.

- Dr Stephanie von Hinke

The research was funded by the Medical Research Council (MRC), the European Research Council (ERC), and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

5. Parliamentary material

Debates

Westminster Hall debate - Holiday Hunger Schemes

HC Deb 6 November 2018 | Vol 648 c492WH-

<http://bit.ly/2PrxKJl>

Westminster Hall debate - Junk Food Advertising and Childhood Obesity

HC Deb 16 January 2018 | Vol 634 c247WH

<http://bit.ly/2omJeOc>

Ten-minute Rule Bill

Kirstene Hair MP - [Food Advertising \(Protection of Children from Targeting\)](#)

HC Deb 26 June 2018 | Vol 643 cc761-2

Deposited Paper

[Deposited Paper DEP2019-0431](#)

Letter dated 29/03/2019 from Lord Agnew to the Bishop of Durham regarding changes to free school meals and families with three or more children. 1p.

29 Mar 2019

PQs

[Food Poverty: Children](#)

Asked by: Jarvis, Dan

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Food Foundation's Children's Future Food Inquiry report published on 24 April 2019, what steps the Government is taking to support children who live in food insecure households.

Answering member: Will Quince | Department: Department for Work and Pensions

This Government is committed to helping families into work, as the best route out of poverty. We are also supporting over 1 million children

with free school meals, investing up to £26 million in school breakfast clubs, providing approximately 2.3 million children aged 4-6 with a portion of fresh fruit or vegetables each day at school, and, through the Healthy Start Programme, hundreds of thousands of low income families benefit from vouchers which can be redeemed against fruit, vegetables, milk and infant formula. In 2019/20, the government will be spending more than £95 billion a year on working-age benefits. The new set of food insecurity questions introduced into the existing Family Resources Survey from April will build a better understanding of household food needs, to help ensure we're targeting support to those most in need.

HC Deb 02 May 2019 | PQ 248684

[Pre-school Education: School Meals](#)

Asked by: Jarvis, Dan

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to provide meals for children accessing (a) free childcare and (b) pre-school provision.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi

The government's early education funding is intended to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week (for 38 weeks of the year) of free, high quality, flexible childcare for eligible 2, 3 and 4-year-olds. It is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services.

However, pupils attending a local authority maintained, academy or free school nursery are entitled to free school meals: as long as they are either in full-time education or receive education both before and after lunch and meet the benefits-based free school meal eligibility criteria. Pupils attending a private nursery or pre-school are not entitled to free school meals.

The government also provides help with up to 70% of childcare costs for people on low incomes through working tax credits, which in April 2016 increased to 85% through Universal Credit.

HC Deb 02 May 2019 | PQ 248685

[Free School Meals](#)

Asked by: Field, Frank

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much money was allocated from the public purse towards the provision of free school meals in (a) England, (b) Scotland, (c) Wales and (d) Northern Ireland in the most recent financial year for which data is available.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | Department: Department for Education

For benefits-based free school meals (FSM) the department allocates around £440 per pupil per year currently eligible for and claiming FSM through the national funding formula to local authorities.

Local authorities then distribute this money to schools through their local funding formula, which is set in consultation with schools. For 2018-19, local authorities collectively allocated £505 million in respect of pupils currently eligible for FSM.

For the academic year 2017/2018 - the latest year in which data is available - the Department for Education spent £649 million delivering free meals for all infant children in reception, year 1 and year 2 in state funded schools through the universal infant free school meals policy.

FSM are fully devolved so the department does not hold information on how much was spent in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

PQ 248590 2 May 2019

[Free School Meals](#)

Asked by: Bradley, Ben

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of pupils who (a) were and (b) were not eligible for free school meals in their last year of compulsory secondary school (i) entered at least one A level, (ii) achieved three or more A-levels, (iii) achieved grades ABB or better at A level, and (iv) achieved A*A*A or better at A-level in the last year for which figures are available.

Answering member: Nick Gibb | Department for Education

The Department publishes student's achievements in A levels, in different grade combinations, split by characteristics. This information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/>

[statistics/a-level-and-other-16-to-18-results-2017-to-2018-revised](#).

Table 1, attached, uses this data to provide the number[1] of students entering at least one A level[2] and those who achieved A*/A*/A, A/B/B and E/E/E[3] [4] [5] or better, split by their free school meals (FSM) status[6] at the end of Key Stage 4. Figures are based on 2017/18[7] revised data, for students in state-funded schools and colleges. The Department does not publish estimates of the proportion of Key Stage 4 FSM pupils who go on to enter and achieve these different A level combinations by the end of 16-18 study. However, an estimate can be derived by comparing the published numbers to the size of the FSM and non-FSM groups from two years previously in 2016. These are shown in table 2, attached.

[1] The cohort of students is based on those who are eligible for inclusion in the AAB measure, however this is further restricted (see footnote 2). Inclusion in the AAB measure refers to those who entered at least one full size A level, excluding applied A levels (this includes double award A levels, but does not include AS levels, general studies or critical thinking). If students are entered for less than three full size A

levels, they are only included in the measure if they have not entered for other academic, applied general and T level qualifications greater than or equal to the size of an A level. Where a student has only been at a provider for one year, they need to have entered three A levels to be included.

[2] Includes A level entries only (excludes double awards, AS levels and Applied A levels); it also excludes general studies and critical thinking.

[3] Each student's total grades are taken and compared to the requested groupings. Inclusion in each group occurs when the student has the exact grades, or when three (or more) of their grades match or are higher than the required grades. Therefore, students with only 1 or 2 grades are excluded as they do not match or beat all three required grades. These figures will differ slightly from measures published for all students nationally, due to this slight methodological difference.

[4] Only includes students with pass grades (A* to E). Discounting has been applied in line with performance tables methodology (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-qualifications-discount-codes-and-point-scores>).

[5] The E/E/E combination identifies those who achieved three or more A levels as an E grade is the lowest passing grade.

[6] Students FSM status is taken from the census recorded completed in their final year of Key Stage 4 year study. Students who completed their Key Stage 4 study in independent schools will not have been included in the census and are grouped as 'unknown FSM'.

[7] Based on students who finished their 16 to 18 study in 2017/18. Covers results achieved during all years of 16-18 study (up to three years, i.e. the 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 academic years).

PQ 247784 2 May 2019

[Food Banks](#)

Asked by: Baroness Boycott

My Lords, food poverty is particularly hard on children. In last week's Children's Future Food Inquiry we found many things. Rickets is now at its highest rate in 50 years and is stunting height—children are 1 centimetre shorter at the age of 10 if they have grown up on bad diets. Can the Minister give me any idea what the Government are doing to ensure everyone in this country, regardless of income or geography, can access decent, affordable and healthy food?

Answered by: Baroness Buscombe |

I agree with the noble Baroness: everyone should have access to decent, healthy food. Tackling disadvantage will always be a priority for this Government. We welcome the new report from the Children's Future Food Inquiry. Employment is at a record high and wages are outstripping inflation, but we know that there is more to do to ensure that everyone has access to nutritious, healthy food. We have already

taken steps to tackle food inequality by providing free school meals and our Healthy Start vouchers. We are also investing up to £26 million in school breakfast clubs and £9 million to provide meals and activities for thousands of disadvantaged children during the summer holidays.

HL Deb 01 May 2019 | Vol 797 c965

[Free School Meals](#)

Asked by: Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether schools are allowed to provide different food to those in receipt of free school meals compared to other pupils; whether children of immigrant parents whose passports are stamped "no recourse to public funds" are entitled to free school meals if the family income would otherwise qualify; and whether children of asylum seekers are entitled to free school meals.

Answering member: Lord Agnew of Oulton | Department: Department for Education

Compliance with the attached School Food Standards is mandatory for all maintained schools. We also expect all academies and free schools to comply with the standards, and since 2014, we have made this an explicit requirement in their funding agreements. All meals provided must meet the School Food Standards.

It is not acceptable for schools to stigmatise pupils by limiting choice for free school meal pupils at lunchtime. The vast majority of schools and caterers already make use of cashless systems and other methods to ensure that children who are eligible for free school meals are not identified separately.

Free school meals are available to disadvantaged families in receipt of certain qualifying benefits. Decisions as to whether immigrants or refugees have recourse to public funds are made by the Home Office. Those granted refugee status can access full mainstream benefits, and asylum seekers receiving support under Part VI of the Immigration & Asylum Act (1999) are also entitled to free school meals.

The Home Office is able to exercise discretion to grant recourse to public funds where the family would otherwise be destitute. Where this entitles the family to receive certain benefits they may also be able to claim free school meals.

PQ HL15144 25 April 2019

[Food Poverty: Academic Year](#)

Asked by: Hendrick, Sir Mark

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to support local authorities and third sector organisations in helping to prevent holiday hunger during school holidays.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | Department: Department for Education

Last year I announced a programme of work to explore how best to support disadvantaged children to access healthy food and enriching activities during the school holidays. This included £2 million awarded to 7 third sector organisations to deliver this sort of provision, free, to disadvantaged pupils over the 2018 summer holidays.

We are more than quadrupling that amount for the 2019 summer holidays where we will be exploring how the coordination of this sort of provision across a local authority can help more disadvantaged pupils to access free high quality holiday club provision. Funding will support providers to deliver free high quality holiday provision (including healthy food) to disadvantaged children and young people in a number of local authorities.

We have received applications for a share of this £9 million from a range of organisations including local authorities and third sector organisations, and will be announcing the successful bidders and the geographical locations for the scheme later in the spring.

This programme of work will enable the government to make an evidence-based decision about if, and how, to intervene in this issue in the longer term.

HC Deb 08 April 2019 | PQ 240513

[Children: Food Poverty](#)**Asked by: Farrelly, Paul**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the effects of food poverty on children and young people's physical, emotional and educational well-being.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi Department for Education

The government supports the provision of nutritious food in schools, which ensures pupils are well nourished, develop healthy eating habits and can concentrate and learn. We encourage a healthy balanced diet and healthy life choices through school funding, legislation and guidance. Under the benefits-based criteria, around 1.1 million of the most disadvantaged children are eligible for and claiming free school meals – saving families around £400 per year. Benefits-based free meals were extended to disadvantaged further education students in September 2014. A further 1.5 million infants receive free nutritious meals under the universal infant free school meals scheme.

We are also investing up to £26 million to the National Schools Breakfast Programme. This money will kick-start or improve breakfast clubs in over 1,700 schools and target the most disadvantaged areas of the country, including Opportunity Areas. Healthy breakfast clubs can play an important role in ensuring children from all backgrounds have a healthy start to their day so that they enhance their learning potential.

In addition, in 2018 the government announced a programme of work to explore how to ensure disadvantaged young people can access healthy food and enriching activities over the school holidays. We awarded £2 million to 7 organisations to deliver free healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children during the 2018 summer holidays. In November 2018, we announced details of a £9 million fund for summer 2019 to set-up local coordinators of free holiday activities and food provision in summer 2019 in a number of local authorities.

HC Deb 08 April 2019 | PQ 239901

[Pupil Exclusions: Free School Meals](#)

Asked by: Timms, Stephen

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of children excluded from full time education had previously been in receipt of free school meals in each year for which information is available.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi Department for Education

The National Statistics release 'Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England 2016 to 2017' includes numbers and rates of exclusions. The full release is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england-2016-to-2017>.

The number of pupils eligible for free school meals that were excluded and the total number of exclusions in state-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools can be found in Table 9 (Free school meal eligibility as at January 2017).

Information for earlier years can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-exclusions>.

PQ 240465 8 April 2019

[Free School Meals](#)

Asked by: Thomas, Gareth

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the number of (a) free school meals and (b) Government-funded holiday schemes that offered food to participants, by local authority area in the last 12 months for which statistics are available; and if he will make a statement.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | Department: Department for Education

This government has taken significant steps to raise the living standards of low-income families, including introducing the National Living Wage, raising the personal tax allowance so no-one pays tax on the first £12,500 earned and improving financial incentives to work. The government is committed to delivering a country that works for everyone and I want to ensure that all children have access to healthy

food and enriching activities during the school holidays. Last year I announced £2 million for projects to deliver this sort of provision, free to disadvantaged pupils during the 2018 summer holidays. We are more than quadrupling that amount for the 2019 summer holidays where we will be exploring how the local coordination of this sort of provision can help more disadvantaged pupils to access free high quality holiday club provision during the school holidays.

The information requested on data on the number of free school meals served in each local authority is not held centrally. However, data on the number of pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals in state-funded schools for each local authority is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2018>.

Accompanying this answer is a table showing the number of holiday clubs the Department for Education funded within each local authority, through its summer 2018 Holiday Activities and Food Research Fund. Please note that the total number of clubs included in this table is greater than the 283 clubs referred to in the 'management information release' related to this fund due to some clubs not returning usable management information. The management release is available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/755139/Holiday_Activities_and_Food_2018_Programme_revised.pdf.

PQ 237585 5 April 2019

[Healthy Start Scheme](#)

Asked by: Thomas, Gareth

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people (a) eligible for and (b) that have taken up Healthy Start vouchers.

Answering member: Jackie Doyle-Price | Department: Department of Health and Social Care

Between 4 February and 3 March 2019 there were 515,210 beneficiaries eligible to make an application for Healthy Start vouchers. Of these, 282,303 beneficiaries have made an application and have been accepted onto the scheme. There may, in some cases, be more than one beneficiary per household.

HC Deb 02 April 2019 | PQ 236268

[Pupils: Food](#)

Asked by: Stevens, Jo

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the level of in-school hunger among children in England.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | Department: Department for Education

The government supports the provision of nutritious food in schools, which ensures pupils are well nourished, develop healthy eating habits and can concentrate and learn. Under the benefits based criteria, around 1.1 million of the most disadvantaged children are eligible for and claiming free school meals – saving families around £400 per year. Benefits based free meals were extended to disadvantaged further education students in September 2014. A further 1.5 million infants receive a free nutritious meal under the Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme. We are also investing up to £26 million to the National Schools Breakfast Programme. This money will kick start or improve breakfast clubs in over 1,700 schools and target the most disadvantaged areas of the country, including Opportunity Areas.

PQ 238408 2 April 2019

[Pupil Premium](#)

Asked by: Dodds, Anneliese

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of changes in the level of take-up of the pupil premium in each year since 2015; and what assessment his Department has made of the causes for such changes in the level of take-up.

Answering member: Nadhim Zahawi | Department: Department for Education

Eligibility for the pupil premium is founded on the number of pupils recorded through the annual school census as claiming free school meals (FSM) currently or at any point in the last 6 years. The numbers and proportions of pupils attracting pupil premium each year are published here:

https://www.gov.uk/search/advanced?group=guidance_and_regulation&topic=%2Feducation%2Fpupil-premium-and-other-school-premiums.

This shows a small downward trend in the proportion of pupils attracting the pupil premium since 2015, from 27.07% of the pupil population in 2015 to 25.13% in 2018. The reduction is seen in a large number of areas across the country and is related to there being fewer parents than in previous years claiming the benefits which would make their children eligible for FSM.

Schools and local authorities have worked hard over recent years to encourage all eligible families to register for FSM, to ensure that schools receive the full amount of pupil premium funding to which they are entitled. We provide an eligibility checking system to make the checking process as quick and straightforward as possible for schools and local authorities, and have developed a model registration form to help schools encourage parents to sign up for FSM.

PQ 231556 15 March 2019

[Healthy Start Scheme: Food](#)**Asked by: Ashworth, Jonathan**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding his Department has allocated to healthy start welfare foods payments in each year since 2012-13.

Answering member: Jackie Doyle-Price**| | Department: Department of Health and Social Care**

The Healthy Start and Nursery Milk schemes are demand led statutory schemes. This means that the Department must meet expenditure arising from legitimate claims made in line with the legislation. Funding is allocated to the schemes to meet the actual demand, rising or falling in line with the overall uptake for each scheme, and the Government works to ensure that eligible people are aware of the schemes and how they can benefit from them.

The funding allocated to the schemes is accounted for through a single cost centre with total costs is shown in the following table. A split by individual scheme is not available in the format requested.

Total
2010 - 2011 £133,996,866
2011 - 2012 £139,569,214
2012 - 2013 £141,366,339
2013 - 2014 £137,790,212
2014 - 2015 £128,904,379
2015 - 2016 £124,890,649
2016 - 2017 £112,556,870
2017 - 2018 £104,709,791

Audited spend data for the 2018-19 financial year is not yet available.

HC Deb 13 March 2019 | PQ 228740

[Pupils: Health](#)**Asked by: Baroness Boycott**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the publication on 26 February of the report Implications for Business and Trade of a No Deal Exit on 29 March 2019, what plans they have to mitigate the impact of a 6.3 to 9 per cent shrinking of the UK economy on pupils' health and wellbeing; and what assessment they have made of a temporary increase in eligibility for free school meal provision to all children from families receiving (1) Universal Credit, and (2) other benefits.

**Answering member: Lord Agnew of Oulton | Department:
Department for Education**

Leaving the European Union with a deal remains the government's top priority. Our eligibility criteria for free school meals (FSM) support children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds by providing a free and healthy school meal each day. This is an important benefit for disadvantaged children. We have no plans to change these criteria, including under a no-deal scenario for exiting the European Union, and have made no assessment of any potential impact on the number of children eligible for FSM in a no-deal scenario.

We want to make sure as many eligible pupils as possible are claiming their FSM and to make it as simple as possible for schools and local authorities to determine eligibility. All local authorities have access to the Eligibility Checking System, which significantly reduces the time otherwise taken to check eligibility. We have also shared a model registration form and guidance, which schools can use as part of their enrolment process. In addition, we provide guidance to work coaches so that they can make Universal Credit recipients and those on income-related legacy benefits aware that they may also be entitled to wider benefits, including FSM.

PQ HL14086 11 March 2019

[Infant Foods](#)

Asked by: Berger, Luciana

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 28 January 2019 to Question 213341, for what reasons his Department has no plans to reinstate the UK-wide Infant Feeding Survey.

Answering member: Jackie Doyle-Price | Department: Department of Health and Social Care

The Infant Feeding Survey can only provide information at national level because of the sample size. It does not have sufficient individual records to provide data at a local level.

Since 2015 Public Health England has published experimental statistics on breastfeeding prevalence at six to eight weeks. These derive from record level administrative data collected on all children, which is collated at a local level and is statistically significant. This makes it possible to benchmark the outcomes for local areas against the national average and other areas of the country.

These data are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/breastfeeding-statistics>

HC Deb 07 February 2019 | PQ 216350

[Obesity](#)

Asked by: Alison Thewliss

Scotland's childhood obesity plan recognises breastfeeding as the best start to life for babies. Will he look at that in his plans and ensure that the support is available to allow women to breastfeed for as long as they wish to?

Answered by: Steve Brine | Department: Health and Social Care

Yes, we will. We recognise that it gives a good start in life. Working with my colleague, the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, the hon. Member for Thurrock (Jackie Doyle-Price), I will meet one of the groups in that area to talk about it shortly. I know the hon. Lady chairs the infant feeding all-party group, and I am happy to talk to her about that at any time. We see it as an essential start in life.

HC Deb 15 January 2019 | Vol 652 c1003

[Breastfeeding](#)**Asked by: Sobel, Alex**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to promote breastfeeding.

Answering member: Jackie Doyle-Price | Department: Department of Health and Social Care

Public Health England (PHE) is committed to improving breastfeeding rates across England and has identified breastfeeding as a key priority within our maternity and child health programmes.

PHE works nationally to support local authorities (LAs) to improve breastfeeding rates. PHE, in partnership with the United Nations International Childrens' Emergency Fund (UNICEF), published an infant feeding commissioning toolkit to support the commissioning of interventions to improve breastfeeding rates, available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/infant-feeding-commissioning-services>

LAs and their partners are encouraged to provide a comprehensive universal service with access to specialist support when needed. The PHE breastfeeding fingertips profiles allow local areas to see performance against a range of indicators supporting them to plan and review services and local population needs. More information is available at the following link:

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk>

PHE supports action to improve breastfeeding rates through evidence to provide guidance to professionals, and address health inequalities. The guidance includes six high impact areas for early years aimed at health visitors includes promotion of breastfeeding and is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/563921/Early_years_high_impact_area3_breast_feeding.pdf

HC Deb 09 January 2019 | PQ 205405

[Fast Food: Schools](#)

Asked by: Dakin, Nic

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will revise planning system guidance so that the clustering of fast food and junk food outlets near to school premises is discouraged.

Answering member: Dominic Raab | Department: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Current planning policy guidance provides local authorities with advice in relation to healthy food environments. It already states that local authorities may consider limiting a certain use of building class in an area, providing there is evidence to support such a decision.

Considerations can include the proximity to locations where children and young people congregate, which would encompass schools but also play areas and community centres. Levels of obesity and the over-concentration of a use class within an area are also factors a local authority may consider.

On 5 March the Government issued for consultation our proposed revision of the National Planning Policy Framework, which sets out stronger and clearer expectations of local planning authorities in their approach towards healthy communities. The revised framework has a greater emphasis on the importance of health and wellbeing in our communities and places, including through greater access to healthier food and recreational facilities.

HC Deb 03 May 2018 | PQ 139465

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