

Minister Bridget Philipson and Minister Liz Kendall,
Chairs of the Child Poverty Taskforce.

September 2024

Dear Ministers

We are writing to you as Food Ambassadors for The Food Foundation, a diverse group of young people and parents from across the UK, working together to achieve the charity's mission to change food policy and business practice to ensure everyone in the UK – no matter their background - can afford and access a healthy and sustainable diet.

Many of us have lived or are currently living in poverty and food insecurity, or see our friends and peers experiencing it. We know what it's like to go hungry, to make impossible choices between eating and other essentials, and to worry about where our next meal will come from. This is the daily reality for many families like ours. Right now, a worrying 18% of households with children are experiencing food insecurity. This is having a devastating impact on the physical and mental health of children across the country, robbing them of their future potential. Families struggling with food insecurity are being forced to cut back on healthy foods like fruit and vegetables resulting in a widening of already severe health inequalities where children in poverty are facing much greater risks of obesity, tooth decay and other preventable conditions.

We were heartened to hear that the Government has established a Child Poverty Taskforce, and commend the commitment to listen to the voices of children living in poverty and their families. It is absolutely essential that children's and parents' voices are heard in this process. The Food Foundation's work with Food Ambassadors began with the Children's Future Food Inquiry in 2018, which was the first attempt in the UK to speak directly to children and young people about their experience of food and how it affects young people's lives.

Trustees: Laura Sandys CBE (Chair), Baroness Rosie Boycott, Professor Sir Michael Marmot, Professor Sir Charles Godfray, David Edwards, Essie North, Dr Mehroosh Tak, Andrew Hobbs, Tom Lindsay, Pat Biggers.

Executive Director: Anna Taylor OBE

Since then, we have been campaigning for the right of all people to be able to access healthy, affordable food. We have experience engaging with Ministers, MPs and civil servants, and would like to offer you the opportunity to hear directly from us. Our experiences with poverty and food insecurity, as well as the solutions we recommend, will provide invaluable insight into what the Taskforce must do to fulfil its ambition of reducing child poverty.

We are relying on you to take bold action to reverse the injustice of children going hungry and not being able to access the food they need to grow up healthy in this country. We hope you accept our offer of a meeting so we can work with you to achieve this.

Kind regards,

The Food Foundation's Food Ambassadors

Dev Sharma, 19, Leicester

Ryan McShane, 22, Glasgow

Keira-Leigh Forrestee, 16, Stockport

Mirzan Kama, 17, London

Dan White, 52, Fareham

Caroline Woollam, 42, Stockport

Jacob Joseph Kennedy, 20, Glasgow

Magdalena Rechnio, 43, Liverpool

Glory Omoaka, 50, Glasgow

Sharon Berhane, 20, London

Grace Alex-Egyavoen, 16, London

Nimrah, 15, Halifax

Gino Obaseki, 26, Glasgow

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Mithesh Mugundan, 14, Belfast

Zahistha Begum Raj Gafoor, 22, London

Fayeth Jones, 18, Rhyl

Penny Walters, 54, Newcastle

Wena Isemane, 47, Edinburgh

Abdul Jamial, 21, Hull

Rushda Mahmood, 15, Halifax

Ruwaad Rahman, 17, London

And Dame Emma Thompson, Actress and Food Foundation Ambassador

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