



21 November 2017

Inquiry to help the millions of children using foodbanks this Christmas

Today, a parliamentary inquiry will be launched to gather vital information on the urgent issue of childhood food insecurity. In June this year UNICEF estimated that an alarming [10% of children](#) in the UK (1.17 million) are living in households affected by **severe** food insecurity. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child June 2016 report stated concerns about the lack of comprehensive data on child food insecurity in the UK as well as high prevalence of overweight and obesity. Yet the true scale of the issue in the UK is still unknown.

Last week the Office for National Statistics released [new data](#) showing food prices up by 4.2% on 12 months previous, putting more pressure on families already struggling to put food on the table. Children who benefit from free school meals during term time, will become an extra mouth to feed in the Christmas holidays, sparking more concerns of holiday hunger. Food banks this month have voiced concerns about meeting demand for emergency food supplies this Christmas given the impact of the introduction of Universal Credit

The Inquiry, being led by Sharon Hodgson MP, Chair of the School Food APG and has cross-party support from both the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The launch of the Inquiry will take place on 21st November in Portcullis House. The inquiry will build on the [Feeding Britain report](#) in 2014 to investigate child food security in depth. It will result in concrete policy recommendations generated from extensive consultation and witness hearings with children, adults and experts. This is the first inquiry of its kind in the UK.

Sharon Hodgson MP, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on School Food, said: *"Food insecurity is growing problem here in the UK and it is important that we tackle it head on, instead of ignoring it and allowing it to continue on as it has for so long. This is especially important when it comes to those children who face food insecurity which has a knock-on effect on their development as they grow.*

"That is why I am honoured to chair this cross-party, all-nation Children's Future Food Inquiry, which will be the first of its kind to consult and listen to children and young people about food insecurity and what policies should be developed that will benefit them.

"Children's and young people's voice's will be heard on this serious societal issue and brought to the very heart of Westminster. It is a big task to complete but one that is of utmost importance if we are to ensure the next generation of children are as healthy as possible."

Professor Sir Michael Marmot, Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health at University College London said *"Even in a rich country like ours we know that vast numbers of people are food insecure. And that's before we've begun to talk about the quality of food. We've got to address the fundamental drivers of inequalities in our society in order to give every child the best start in life and nutrition is key."*

This contributes to the Food Foundation's ongoing work to secure a regular measurement of household food insecurity.



Notes to Editor

- For all queries contact Alex Ward 07780451377
- The Food Foundation is an independent think tank funded by Esmee Fairbairn and Nuffield Foundation
- Source of 10% of children: <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/900/>
- [The School Food APPG](#)