



## **MARCUS RASHFORD MBE LAUNCHES PETITION TO URGE UK GOVERNMENT TO ACT WITHOUT DELAY ON ENDING CHILD FOOD POVERTY**

#ENDCHILDFOODPOVERTY

Digital Embargo until 0700 on Thursday 15th October 2020

- **The England International Footballer launches Parliamentary Petition on Government website, calling on the General Public to pledge support to #endchildfoodpoverty.**
- **Mechanism to demonstrate high levels of public support for the Government to implement the 3 National Food Strategy policy recommendations without delay.**
- **Food Foundation releases data showing that 1.4 million children (18%) reported experiences of food insecurity over the summer holidays**

**Link to petition will go live 0700 15 Oct and is [here](#)**

England International Footballer, Marcus Rashford MBE, has today launched a petition on the Parliamentary Petition website asking for Government to support vulnerable children by implementing 3 vital recommendations from the Government commissioned National Food Strategy:

These are:

- 1) Expansion of free school meals to every child from a household on Universal Credit or equivalent, reaching an additional 1.5million 7-16 year olds
- 2) Expansion of holiday provision (food and activities) to support all children on free school meals, reaching an additional 1.1million children
- 3) Increasing the value of the Healthy Start vouchers to £4.25 per week (from £3.10) and expanding into all those on Universal Credit or equivalent, reaching an additional 290,000 pregnant women and children under the age of 4

The National Food Strategy was written by Henry Dimbleby.

The #endchildfoodpoverty campaign is supported by the Child Food Poverty Task Force which was formed by Marcus Rashford, a further 20 charities and key names in the food industry. They are calling on Government to allocate sufficient budget to the three National Food Strategy recommendations, as part of an urgent recovery package for vulnerable children this Autumn.

Data released by the Food Foundation today reveals 18% of 8-17 year olds (1.4 million children) reported experiences of food insecurity over the summer holidays (1). Experiences of food insecurity included:

- a. Having to eat less and make food last longer because of lack of money to buy more (6%)
- b. Parents not eating because there wasn't enough food at home (5%)
- c. Children being hungry but not eating to avoid using up food at home (4%)
- d. Children being hungry but not eating because of lack of food at home (4%)
- e. Not eating a proper meal due to lack of money for food (4%)
- f. Eating at a friend's house because there wasn't enough food at home (3%).

6.3% of children said they were worried about going hungry during the October half term.

Rising numbers of families are struggling with an 11% (850,000) of children aged 8-17 reporting that either they or their families had visited a foodbank in the summer holidays. This was over 60% higher in non-white British ethnic groups (1).

The Food Foundation's recent You Gov survey (2) showed that 31% of parents of children on Free School meals across the UK said they received no form of help over the summer holidays. For those that did get help, most (75%) received vouchers. 10% of all parents said that changes in the household budget affected their ability to purchase food over the summer holidays.

The Food Foundation is also launching the Children's Right 2 Food Dashboard which is a one-stop-shop for data and research on what children across the UK are eating and the effects on their wellbeing and long-term health. <http://www.childrensright2food.co.uk/>

*ENDS*

**Marcus Rashford, England International Footballer said** *"For too long this conversation has been delayed. Child food poverty in the UK is not a result of COVID-19. We must act with urgency to stabilise the households of our vulnerable children. In 2020, no child in the UK should be going to bed hungry, nor should they be sat in classrooms concerned about how their younger siblings are going to eat that day, or how they are going to access food come the holidays. The school holidays used to be a highlight of the year for children. Today, it is met with anxiety from those as young as 7-years old. Many have said that education is the most effective means of combating poverty. I do not disagree with this statement, but education is only effective when children can engage in learning. Right now, a generation who have already been penalised during this pandemic with lack of access to educational resources are now back in school struggling to concentrate due to worry and the sound of their rumbling stomachs. Whatever your feeling, opinion, or judgement, food poverty is never the child's fault. Let's protect our young. Let's wrap arms around each other and stand together to say that this is unacceptable, that we are united in protecting our children. Today, millions of children are finding themselves in the most vulnerable of environments and are beginning to question what it really means to be British. I'm calling on you all today to help me prove to them that being British is something to be proud of."*

**Emma Thompson, Ambassador Children's Right2Food Campaign said** *"In the sixth richest economy in the world these figures speak for themselves. There is absolutely no need for any child to go hungry in the UK. The fact that they are and in increasing numbers suggests cracks in a broken food system that can and must be repaired as a matter of the utmost urgency. Apart from the moral duty we owe to children, this is a severe public health problem."*

**Anna Taylor, Executive Director of Food Foundation said:** *“School holidays are a financial pressure point which many families just can’t afford at the moment. Hunger does not take a holiday. The government needs to put in place a permanent solution to school holiday hunger and implement the recommendations in the National Food Strategy. While children have been spared the virus, they have not been spared it’s economic impacts and we must act to protect them.”*

**Jo Whitfield, CEO, Co-op Food, said:** *“Child hunger is heart breaking and a growing problem in the UK as the number of children claiming free school meals is increasing. Co-op was founded on the principle of fairness and we joined the taskforce to help campaign for greater help for those who need it most in our communities. We can now all play a part by signing this important petition.”*

**Jojo de Noronha, Kraft Heinz Northern Europe President, said:** *“Here at Heinz we are committed to tackling child food poverty through our work with Marcus, the Task Force, and our campaign to ‘Silence the Rumble’ with Magic Breakfast. It’s pretty shocking that in one of the richest economies in the world, this is a battle we still have to fight. It’s vital that this issue is at the forefront of the political agenda during this very troubled time and we urge the Government to act now, so that no child has to go hungry. Join us in signing the petition and let’s show the Government that we want to #endchildfoodpoverty NOW.”*

**Spokesperson for Deliveroo said:** *“These are important recommendations on tackling child hunger from experts. This is an issue that affects far too many families and we hope these recommendations will be considered and implemented by Government.”*

**Bruce Adamson, Children’s Commissioner for Scotland said:** *“Poverty and food insecurity was the biggest human rights issue facing children in the UK before the COVID-19 pandemic and we know that the pandemic continues to disproportionately affect children already most at risk. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child warned of the grave physical, emotional and psychological effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and called on governments to activate immediate measures to ensure that all children have regular, permanent and unrestricted access to nutritious food. Despite the significant efforts of schools, charities and communities, all across the UK, governments are still failing to provide all children with access to food – one of the most basic of human rights.”*

**Francesca Theokli, Marketing Director at Weetabix Food Company said:** *“For many of us the idea of not having a few pence to provide a simple bowl of breakfast to feed your children seems hard to imagine, but the sad truth is that many families struggle to do so. We believe every child deserves to start their day in the right way, and work hard with charities and our retail partners to improve access to nutritious, good value breakfasts. We would urge all those who feel the same way to join us in backing Marcus’ petition.”*

**Andrew Forsey, National Director, Feeding Britain:** *“Holiday clubs providing nutritious meals, enriching activities, and childcare this year proved themselves to be flexible, adaptable, and robust enough to deliver high-quality services for children and their families. But their coverage remains patchy and there are still too many children from families on low incomes at risk of falling through the cracks and being exposed to hunger. A multi-year funding settlement, as set out in the National Food Strategy, is required so that clubs can offer this provision across the whole of England”*

**Saffron, 15 years old, Portsmouth said:** *“After the U-Turn this summer, it felt like the Government finally understood that children can’t be left to go hungry during the holidays. But now we’re back in the same position of having to ask for help. Covid-19 isn’t going away, and even more families are struggling. Children need support during the holidays now more than ever.”*

**Tyler, 15 years old, Blackburn said:** *“My friends who have free school meals during term time already face being bullied about it, but at least they get the meal they need. But during the holidays, when we hang out together, they are clearly ashamed that they don’t have enough money to buy basics, like a drink or a bite to eat. This can really divide kids and make those that go without feel excluded. The*

*holidays, which we are meant to look forward to, are instead just really stressful.”*

**Felix, 15 years old, Norfolk said:** *“I come from a family of 9. For a really big family like mine, the holidays mean much more pressure on our parents – with me and my siblings at home there needs to be more meals, extra childcare, higher bills. For families fallen on hard times and for parents have lost their jobs because of Covid, the pressure to provide during the holidays must be overwhelming.”*

### **Available for Comment**

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- (1) Childwise data was obtained from a survey of 1,064 children aged 7-17 years carried out in the United Kingdom conducted between 8th -20th September. The survey was carried out online and is nationally representative.
- (2) Data referring to parents are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,309 parents or guardians living with children under 18 years. Fieldwork, unless otherwise stated, was undertaken between 24th August and 1st September 2020. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults aged 18+.

The Food Foundation’s Children’s Right to Food Dashboard can be found

<http://www.childrensright2food.co.uk/>

- (3) The method used for deriving population figures is described [here](#).

### **Social Media**

Twitter: @Food\_Foundation

#EndChildFoodPoverty

#Right2Food

### **About the Food Foundation**

The [Food Foundation](#) is a charity working to influence food policy and business practice, shaping a sustainable food system which makes healthy diets affordable and accessible for all. We work in partnership with researchers, campaigners, community bodies, industry, investors, government and citizens to galvanise the UK's diverse agents of change, using surprising and inventive ideas to drive fundamental shifts in our food system. These efforts are based on the continual re-evaluation of opportunities for action, building and synthesising strong evidence, convening powerful coalitions, harnessing citizens' voices and delivering impactful communications.

The Food Foundation's [COVID-19 tracker](#) is live, providing analysis of key developments and insights from the front line on how coronavirus is impacting the food system, and how those changes are affecting citizens.

Registered Charity Number 1187611

### **About the Child Food Poverty Task Force**

Formed by footballer Marcus Rashford, the Child Food Poverty Task Force is a group of businesses and charities who, since September 1st, have dedicated their platforms to sharing real stories of those most affected by child food insecurity in the UK, supported by real-time statistics. The task force includes Aldi, Asda, Co-Op, Deliveroo, The Food Foundation, Fareshare, General Mills, Greggs, Heinz, Iceland, Kellogg's, Lidl, Marcus Rashford, Mars, McDonalds, Marks & Spencers, Ocado, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Waitrose & Partners and Weetabix.

The intention and objective of the task force is to see sufficient Government funds allocated to implement the 3 policy recommendations without delay – a unifying step to identifying a long-term solution to child food poverty in the UK.