



**EDUCATION LEADERS JOIN MARCUS RASHFORD CAMPAIGN CALLING FOR  
GOVERNMENT TO ACT ON CHILD FOOD POVERTY  
#ENDCHILDFOODPOVERTY**

00:01 Monday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020

- **Education Leaders ask Ministers to act in support of Marcus Rashford's Campaign to #endchildfoodpoverty**
- **The England International Footballer's Parliamentary Petition on Government website hits 280,000 signatures in 48 hours. Link to petition is [here](#)**
- **Food Foundation releases data showing that 1.4 million children (18%) reported experiences of food insecurity over the summer holidays**
- **Link to Letter – [here](#)**

In support of the #endchildfoodpoverty campaign over 30 influential education leaders have written a letter to Ministers to urge Government to act on the policy asks in Part 1 of the National Food Strategy. General Secretaries of the leading headteachers unions, Governance Association and 17 leaders of the largest multi academy trusts (representing 400 schools) have all joined forces to urge the Government to respond. The letter has been sent to Rishi Sunak, The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State for Education and Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

The Education leaders are asking for Government to support vulnerable children by implementing 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

The National Food Strategy was written by Henry Dimbleby.

The letter is part of the growing momentum behind the **#endchildfoodpoverty** campaign which is already supported by the Child Food Poverty Task Force formed by Marcus Rashford MBE, and a further 20 charities and key names in the food industry. They are calling on Government to allocate sufficient budget to three National Food Strategy recommendations, as part of an urgent recovery package for vulnerable children this Autumn. A petition launched on the Government Parliamentary Petition website reached 100,000 signatures within hours and today over 280,000 have signed ensuring the issue will be put forward for consideration for a debate.

Last week the Food Foundation revealed an extremely high demand for Free School Meals. The data, acquired through a sample survey conducted by Childwise, showed that 29% (2.2 million) children aged 8-17 reported being registered for Free School Meals, with an astounding 42% of these children (900,000) newly registered to the scheme this Autumn (1). Data released by the Food Foundation also 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.

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.

*ENDS*

**Dr Jenny Blunden OBE, Chief Executive of Truro and Penwith Academy Trust said:** “Here in Cornwall, we know that many of our families are experiencing very real economic problems due to reduced incomes. Some of our schools are seeing significant increases in the proportion of children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), in one school this has been from 14.9% in March to 24.1% on return to school this September. We know how important it is to ensure our catering services are providing healthy meals to children and we wish to highlight the food poverty which will continue during the holiday periods and to extend this concern to our many more families living in poverty but who are not currently eligible for FSM.”

**Steve Taylor, CEO Cabot Learning Federation said** “Learning takes energy and requires a child to be physically and mentally prepared: a hungry child is neither. At a time when more families are experiencing new hardships, children are relying on us to advocate for them. A quality daily lunch now will reap significant benefits later.”

**Geoff Barton, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders said:** “Schools are working incredibly hard to help children catch-up with lost learning amidst ongoing disruption caused by rising Covid infection rates, and the pupils who need the greatest degree of support are often those from disadvantaged backgrounds. “To then have a situation where they are potentially going hungry through holiday periods is very obviously detrimental to both their welfare and educational progress.”

**Anna Taylor, Executive Director of Food Foundation said:** “We are now seeing a huge increase in the number of families struggling with loss of income due to the pandemic and many children are experiencing food insecurity. It is vital that the Government expands the entitlement of a Free School Meal to every family on Universal credit if we are going to protect the most vulnerable from going hungry.”

**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. This can really divide kids and make those that go without feel excluded.

**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

Anna Taylor OBE, Executive Director of Food

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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 MBE, 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 MBE, 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.