



**MARCUS RASHFORD MBE AND JAMIE OLIVIER MBE WRITE TO GOVERNMENT
CALLING FOR URGENT REVIEW OF FREE SCHOOL MEALS**

14th January 2021

For immediate release

- **Letter calling for urgent review of Free School Meals sent to PM Boris Johnson**
- **The letter has been signed by Marcus Rashford, Jamie Oliver, Dame Emma Thompson, Tom Kerridge, Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall and over 40 major NGO's, Charities and Educational Leaders**
- **This follows the call from the [Food Foundation](#) for Government to act urgently to protect the 4 million children living in poverty in the UK many of whom are not currently receiving Free School Meals**
- **2.3 million children experienced food insecurity and during the 2020 summer holidays 850,000 children reported that they or their families visited a food bank (Food Foundation)**

[Link to Letter](#)

In light of recent developments on current food provision for Free School Meal pupils during Covid-19 school closure, a letter signed by Marcus Rashford MBE, Jamie Oliver, Dame Emma Thompson, Tom Kerridge, Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall and over 40 NGOs, Charities and Education Leaders has today

been sent to Prime Minister Boris Johnson calling on the Government to conduct an urgent comprehensive review into Free School Meal policy across the UK to feed into the next Spending Review.

The letter coordinated by the Food Foundation details the main areas the review should cover:

It needs to:

1. Review the current eligibility thresholds for Free School Meals across all four nations to eliminate disparities and to explore whether disadvantaged children are being excluded in line with National Food Strategy recommendation. The ongoing eligibility for children with No Recourse to Public Funds should be considered explicitly.
2. Urgently consider how funding for Free School Meals can deliver the biggest nutritional and educational impact, supporting children's learning and well-being throughout the school day and during the school holidays (including breakfast provision and the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme). This should include whether the current allowance for Free School Meals is adequate and whether funding for national breakfasts adequately covers all who would benefit from access to provision.
3. Explore how schools can be supported to deliver the best quality school meals which adhere to school food standards and which ensure the poorest children receive the best possible offer, including by introducing mandatory monitoring and evaluation on an ongoing basis of Free School Meal take-up, the quality/nutritional adequacy of meals, and how the financial transparency of the current system can be improved.
4. Consider what we have learned from Covid-19 and its impact on children in low-income families and the implications of this for school food policy for the next 5 years, as the country recovers.
5. Consider how existing school food programmes (such as Free School Meals, holiday and breakfast provision) can eliminate experiences of stigma for the poorest students. Review the impact that Universal Infant Free School Meals has had on stigma, health and education.
6. Consider the role of family income (wages and benefits) in enabling families to afford quality food in and outside of school time and during the holidays with choice and dignity.

The process should involve input from all the devolved nations and done in consultation with children and young people, as well as teachers, charities, NGOs, frontline catering staff and school meals service providers. It should draw on evidence of food insecurity and health inequalities.

LIST OF SIGNATORIES

Individuals

Marcus Rashford MBE

Jamie Oliver MBE

Dame Emma Thompson
Tom Kerridge
Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall

Civil Society, Professional Bodies and Industry

Anna Taylor OBE, Executive Director, Food Foundation
Stephanie Slater, Founder/CEO, School Food Matters
Naomi Duncan, Chief Executive, Chefs in Schools
Mark Russell, Chief Executive, The Children Society
Barbara Crowther, Coordinator, Children's Food Campaign
Paul Wright, Lead, Children's First Alliance
Andrew Forsey, CEO, Feeding Britain
Rob Percival, Head of Policy, Soil Association
Mark Game, CEO, The Bread and Butter Thing
Clara Widdison, Head of Social Inclusion, Mayor's Fund for London
Stephen Forster, National Chair, LACA The School Food People
Peter McGrath, Operational Director, Meals & More
Bill Scott, Chair Poverty and Inequality Commission
Lindsay Graham, Vice Chair Poverty and Inequality Commission
Sabine Goodwin, Coordinator, Independent Food Aid Network UK
Kieron Boyle, Chief Executive, Impact on Urban Health
Sam Butters and Gina Cicerone, Co-CEOs, The Fair Education Alliance
Melissa Green, General Secretary of the WI
Jayne Jones, National Chair, ASSIST FM
Alysa Remtulla, Head of Policy and Campaigns, Magic Breakfast
Thomas Lawson, Chief Executive, Turn2Us
Joseph Howes, Chief Executive, Buttle UK
Graham Whitham, Director, Greater Manchester Poverty Action
Judith Cavanagh, Coordinator, End Child Poverty Coalition
Andy Elvin, CEO, TACT
Irene Audain MBE, Chief Executive, Scottish Out of School Care Network
Cara Cinnamon, CEO, Khulisa UK
Dr. Nick Owen MBEC EO, The Mighty Creatives
Joseph Howes, Chief Executive, Buttle UK
Dr Wanda Wyporska, Executive Director, The Equality Trust
Satwat Rehman, CEO, One Parent Families Scotland
Claire Donovan, Campaigns Manager, End Furniture Poverty
David Holmes CBE, CEO, Family Action
Paddy Lillis, General Secretary, USDAW
Alison Garnham, Chief Executive, Child Poverty Action Group
James Toop, CEO, Biteback2030
Jess McQuail, Director, Just Fair
Sue Tanner, Oxford & District Action on Child Poverty, Chair of the Board of Trustees, Rose Hill &

Donnington Advice Centre, Oxford
Barbara Crowther, Coordinator, Children's Food Campaign
Jo Whitfield, CEO, Coop Retail

Health Bodies

Dr Max Davie, Officer for Health Improvement, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
Diane Ashby, Change Programme Director, The British Psychological Society
Dr Ruth Allen, CEO, British Association of Social Workers

Education Leaders

Geoff Barton, General Secretary, Association of School and College Leaders.
Emyr Fairburn, Headteacher, King's Cross Academy
Julian Drinkall, CEO, Academies Enterprise Trust
Steve Taylor, CEO, Cabot Learning Federation
Chris Tomlinson, CEO Co-op Academies Trust
Catherine Barr, CEO, The Shared Learning Trust
Susan Douglas, CEO, The Eden Academy Trust
Elizabeth Wolverson OBE, Chief Executive, LDBS Academies Trusts (LAT and LAT2)
Emma Knights OBE, Chief Executive, National Governance Association
Louise Johns-Shepherd, Chief Executive, Centre for Literacy in Primary Education
Russell Hobby, CEO, Teach First

QUOTES

Anna Taylor, Executive Director Food Foundation said: *'How our country's most needy children are fed should be a top government priority. School food has lurched from one crisis to another in the last few months. It's time for a root and branch review to put in place the provision needed and help our children recover from the tragedy which this pandemic has inflicted.'*

#EndChildFoodPoverty
www.endchildfoodpoverty.org

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Social Media

Twitter: [@Food_Foundation](https://twitter.com/Food_Foundation)

#EndChildFoodPoverty

#FreeSchoolMeals

#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 galvanize 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 synthesizing strong evidence, convening powerful coalitions, harnessing citizens' voices, and delivering impactful communications.

A YouGov poll, commissioned by the [Food Foundation](#) earlier this year, found that 10% of parents/guardians, affecting an estimated 1.9million children, reported that food insecurity had affected their children in a variety of ways in the last 6 months forcing them to rely on only a few kinds of low cost food to feed their children (6%) and provide unbalanced meals (5%), and to resort to smaller portions (1%) or skipping meals entirely (2%) ([Food Foundation](#)).