

**21 March 2017**

To:

Rt Hon Justine Greening MP, Secretary of State for Education, UK Government  
John Swinney MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, Scottish Government

Cc:

Kirsty Williams AM, Cabinet Secretary for Education  
Mark Drakeford AM, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government  
Rt Hon Damian Green MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions  
Jeane Freeman MSP, Minister for Social Security  
Lindsay Graham, Child Food Poverty Policy Advisor

### **Eliminating 'Holiday Hunger' in the UK**

For many low-income families who are reliant on free school meals during term time, school holidays can be a time of great stress. Throughout these periods, parents have the challenges of managing increased childcare demands, heavier domestic bills and the cost of providing extra meals. Children living in these circumstances can experience multiple difficulties including hunger, poor-quality food, social isolation, learning loss and family tension. This issue is commonly known as 'Holiday Hunger'. Over the Easter holidays projects will take place in schools, leisure centres, church halls and children's centres to address this need. They are run by faith groups, play workers, food bank volunteers, sports staff and school meal services. However, we do not believe that this is an issue that should be left to the third sector alone to resolve.

We believe that the issue of 'Holiday Hunger' is not only a social injustice, but also that it is one that is solvable. Children, particularly those living in poverty, cannot change their circumstances by themselves. Holiday provision of good food and support services beyond the school term is not only the back bone of children's welfare, it is part of their rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We know this issue is currently being addressed by hundreds of voluntary and statutory partnership projects across the UK with little or no funding support and these projects are increasing in numbers.

In January 2017, the Welsh Government announced a year of (2017/18) funding of £500k for 'Lunch and Fun' clubs in areas of need in school summer holidays. This follows the success of 'Food and Fun Wales' - an award winning school holiday enrichment programme. This will help thousands of disadvantaged children from across Wales to eat well, stay connected to services and engaged in positive fun learning activities during the long summer break. This is a welcome move to improve the health and life chances of children from low-income families and a great step towards tackling child poverty. It also supports Wales' Well-being of Future Generations Act which aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

We congratulate the Welsh Government on their support and urge them to maintain and build on this commitment. We are calling on the other UK administrations to commit to playing their part in eliminating the social injustice of 'Holiday Hunger' for all children in the UK. We are therefore calling on the UK administrations to:

- Sign up publicly to the shared ambition to eliminate 'Holiday Hunger' in a decade
- Initiate ring-fenced funding for holiday provision with an associated UK research programme that will inform long-term policy
- Support sharing of good practice and evaluation to underpin sustainable approaches

Yours sincerely (in alphabetical order by organisation)

Dr Caroline Wolhuter, Head of Social Inclusion and Holiday Kitchen, Accord Group  
Prof. Alex Kendall, Associate Dean Research & Innovation, Faculty of Health, Education & Life Sciences, Birmingham City University  
Pem Hulusi, Programme manager for Meals & More (Holiday Provision support), Brakes  
Alison Garnham, Chief Executive, Child Poverty Action Group  
Gloria Davies-Coates, Manager, Children's Health Fund  
Laurence Guinness, Chief Executive, The Childhood Trust  
Linda Cregan, Chief Executive Officer, Children's Food Trust  
Niall Cooper, Director, Church Action on Poverty  
Lindsay Boswell, Chief Executive, FareShare  
Dr Helen Crawley, Director, First Steps Nutrition Trust  
Dan Crossley, Executive Director, Food Ethics Council  
Katie Palmer, Food Cardiff  
Anna Taylor, Executive Director, Food Foundation  
Victoria Williams, Director, Food Matters  
Michele McKendry, CEO, Futureversity  
Seb Mayfield, Founder, Independent Food Aid Network  
Kate Prince, Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, Kellogg's UK  
Simon Shaw, Coordinator, London Food Poverty Campaign  
Clare Holley, Lecturer, School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University  
Rachel Warwick, Founder & Director, MakeLunch  
Kim Chaplain, Director of Charitable Portfolio, Mayor's Fund for London  
Dr Deborah Harrison, Coordinator, North East Child Poverty Commission  
Professor Greta Defeyter, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Planning & Engagement), Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, Northumbria University  
Professor Neena Modi, President, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health  
Stephanie Wood, Founder/CEO, School Food Matters  
James Cashmore, Director, Soil Association Food for Life  
Kath Dalmeny, Chief Executive, Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming  
Tom Andrews, Director, Sustainable Food Cities  
David McAuley, Chief Executive, The Trussell Trust  
Bharat Mehta CBE, Chief Executive, Trust for London

Contact for correspondence: Simon Shaw, Sustain, Development House, 56-64 Leonard Street, London EC2A 4LT. Email: [simon@sustainweb.org](mailto:simon@sustainweb.org). Tel: 020 7065 0902