



All Party Parliamentary Group on School Food

Minutes of meeting of the School Food APPG

Tuesday 16 October 2018, 2-4pm, Committee Room 18

Present

Sharon Hodgson MP (SH),

Vickie	Hacking (VH)	Association of Public Service Excellence
Gavin	Squires (GS)	Bidfood
Dale	Wild (DW)	Birmingham City Council
Tom	Embury (TE)	British Dietetic Association
Frances	Meek (FM)	British Nutrition Foundation
Richard	Griffiths (RG)	British Poultry Council
Judith	Gregory (JG)	Cardiff Council
Brad	Pearce (BP)	CaterEd
Henry	Dimbleby (HD)	Chefs in Schools
Nicole	Pisani (NP)	Chefs in Schools
Kate	Evans (KE)	Derbyshire County Council
Nigel	Argyle (NA)	Elygra Marketing Services
Jeanette	Ore (JO)	Food for Life
Tom	Lambeth (TL)	Food for Thought Ltd
Daniel	Reeves (DR)	Food for Thought Ltd
Louise	Parker (LP)	Food Teachers Centre
Liz	Wright (LW)	Hyperactive Childrens Support Group
Linda	Cregan (LC)	ISS Education
Louise	Ulrich (LU)	ISS Education
Lord Currie		Kirkharle (Cross-Bencher)
Stephen	Foster (SF)	LACA Ltd
Michael	Hales (MH)	LACA Ltd
Carmel	McConnell (CM)	Magic Breakfast
Julie	(SM)	Member of Parliament
Seem	Malhotra	Member of Parliament
Lorna	Hegenbarth (LH)	National Farmers Union
Olivia	Gordon (OG)	Oakhill Communications
Lee	Peter (LP)	Oakhill Communications
Robin	Tyne (RT)	Office of Neil Coyle MP
Jessica	Faulkner (JF)	Office of Sharon Hodgson MP
Patricia	Fellows (PF)	Patricia Fellows Consultancy
Helena	Houghton (HH)	Royal Academy of Culinary Arts -Adopt a school

Letterhead designed by pupils at Harehills Primary School, Leeds



Sara-Jane	Stanes (SJS)	Royal Academy of Culinary Arts -Adopt a school
Stephanie	Wood (SW)	School Food Matters
Sue	Leuty (SL)	School Food Plan Alliance / NSMW
Joe	Leuty (JL)	School Food Plan Alliance / NSMW
Paul	Evans (PE)	School Health UK
Nicola	Noble (NN)	Surrey Square Primary School
Samantha	Murray (SM)	University of Hertfordshire
Jason	O'Rourke (JOR)	Washingborough Academy

1. Chair's Welcome

SH welcomed all attendees to the meeting. She advised that the Annual General Meeting for the All-Party Parliamentary Group on School Food (APPG) had been held prior to the start of the meeting.

2. Chefs in Schools – Henry Dimbleby and Nicole Pisani

HD outlined the Chefs in Schools Programme and the key points raised were noted as follows: -

- (i) The programme had come about after a local primary school had been looking for a chef in their kitchen.
- (ii) NP had applied for the position after making the decision to undertake a role that allowed her to gain a better work life balance.
- (iii) Following the success of her appointment, it became clear that there could be an opportunity for other schools to appoint chefs who had worked in the restaurant environment to their kitchens.
- (iv) To date approximately 100 schools had expressed an interest and over 100 chefs had applied to become involved in the Programme.
- (v) The Programme has 3 main aims: -
 1. What works well, trying new approaches to cooking and teaching. The Programme aims to bring together the experience of the profession chef and build on what works well in the school environment. In addition, the Programme were looking to partner with Kings London to establish some robust data to support what has worked well.
 2. School by school – This involves meeting with the schools that have expressed an interest in the programme, finding a suitable chef and retraining the chef to work in the school environment.
 3. Better was possible –This aim was to create a national voice that would promote good school food, this would include creating an online magazine and other resources.

NP provided details of her experience in the role and advised. On the two-day trial she found that being able to pass on her passion for good food to children was very exciting prospect.

Following training the kitchen in the new way of working, it became clear that it was not enough to serve good food. The children needed to be excited about the food they were eating. Four years on and the school, children and parents were engaged and all the food was now being prepared from fresh produce on a daily basis, including baking bread.

HD concluded by commenting that concern had been raised in relation to how the programme had been received and the fact that the messaging around the programme indicated that a restaurant chef was the only way to improve school food. HD stated that this was not the case as the chef was only one member of the team and the restaurant chef can bring learning to the whole of the catering team

In response to a question from SH regarding the cost of the school meal, it was reported that this had reduced from between £0.90 and £1.20 per meal to £0.75 per meal. The cost had been reduced by changing the menu to include two vegetarian days and food not used on a given day was used to create meals for the following day. In addition, all the dishes were prepared from scratch.

PF stated that the aims were very laudable. However, raised concern regarding the message that was being derived from the Programme and stated that there were 22,000 schools, each of which was unique. Schools need to be acknowledged for the hard work that they had undertaken to overcome the many challenges in delivering school food. There was still work to be done on improving standards but the progress that school caterers had made to date needed to be respected and the staff valued.

SH queried if HD believed that the roll out of the School Food Plan had been successful. He expressed the view that he was pleased that the funding for Universal Infant Free School Meals had not been removed. How the government monitored the Plan had been disappointing and this had been exasperated by the Children's Food Trust ceasing to exist.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the Chefs in Schools programme would be rolled out nationally. Chefs taking up positions in school received training which included details of the experience and journey that NP had been on since her appointment. Templates were provided to give guidance on how the chefs could approach teaching the children about good food.

It was commented by JOR that this information could be included in the syllabus of teacher training courses and suggested that this was something that Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs could look at as part of the National Food Strategy.

Lord Currie stated that the engagement of Ministers in school food was sporadic and it was up to the sector to work up a logical argument to emphasise its importance. Linking school food to key indicators such as sustainability and childhood obesity would assist in gaining longer term support from government.

JO commented that there had been hard work undertaken to publicise professional standards as set out in the School Food Plan and the Programme should continue this work and promote these standards.

LC advised that the website resources from the Children's Food Trust were still available online and could be accessed by headteachers and schools.

In response to a question from MH it was confirmed that there had been a mixture of maintained schools and academies that had expressed an interest in the Programme.

JC queried if the socio-economic background of the children had an impact on what food was served in the school. NP confirmed that this was not something that was considered, it was about serving the children fresh food that they were happy to eat.

SH concluded by advising that she challenged MPs to stay for a school lunch when they visited their local schools as this provides an opportunity to gain an understanding of the lunch time experience and raised the importance and profile of the school lunchtime meal.

3. Breakfast Club – Surrey Square Primary School

SH reported that she had visited the breakfast club at Surrey Square Primary School and the children and their headteacher, Nicola Noble (NN) had been invited to present to the Group and share their experiences of the breakfast provision at the school.

NN reported that the school was situated in a deprived area and hunger was a big issue. The school strived to offer two meals a day for every child as the school recognised that the personal needs of the child needed to be met to allow the school to meet its academic requirements and for the children to achieve their potential.

She introduced four children from the school who provided an overview of what the breakfast club meant to them and shared their personal situations. They advised of the food that was available at the club and the activities that they could take part in while at the sessions.

In response to a question it was reported that all the breakfast items provided were healthy items.

CM commented that the children highlighted the impact that Magic Breakfast was having and she advised that its success was due to the ethos of the school.

SM commented that it was really important to hear from children how important breakfast was to them and asked if it made a difference to the start of their day. NN advised that the family could attend the breakfast club, which reduced some of the stress on them in the mornings and enabled to the children to be more receptive to learning at the start of the

school day. The aim of the breakfast club has been to be universal and inclusive. There was no criteria or charges made for attending the club and this helped remove any stigma.

SH stated that the stories and experiences highlighted by the children emphasises the importance of breakfast.

SW stated that breakfast and lunch were both important in the child's day and the case had to continually be made to politicians to ensure that they understood the need and the benefits of school breakfast and lunch provision.

4. Update on LACA School Meals Week – Nigel Argyll / Michael Hales

MH provided some background to Lead Association for CAtering in Education's (LACA) Schools Meals Weeks and NA gave an overview of the events that were taking place. The key points were noted as follows: -

- (i) It was the 25th Anniversary of the event
- (ii) The week was being sponsored by Kraft Heinz
- (iii) A video promoting the events was available to view on the National School Meals website
- (iv) The Powered by School Meals event had been very successful and there was a range of events scheduled to take place during School Meals Week.
- (v) School caterers were being encouraged to send pictures of good school food to #cookeditmyself and the best entry would win £500 for the school and the chef would win afternoon tea for two at the Ritz.
- (vi) Curry and chocolate pudding had been voted for as the best school meal in a recent LACA poll. School chefs were being encouraged to serve these dishes on their menus during School Meals Week.
- (vii) Prince Charles celebrates his 70th Birthday in School Meals Week and LACA would be baking a cake which would be delivered to Clarence House.
- (viii) There were now over 50 venues supporting the 'Host a school chef' initiative including restaurants such as the Shard. It was reported that the Programme was available all year round.
- (ix) On Tuesday 20 November 2018 an event was scheduled in the House of Commons where a school dinner was being served to MPs.
- (x) The Food for Life Roast Dinner Day was taking place on Wednesday 21 November 2018.

Following the presentation, SH advised that she would arrange for an email to be circulated to MPs to publicise the school dinner event being held on the 20 November.

5. Update on School Food Plan Alliance – Stephanie Wood and Jeanette Orrey

SW provided an overview of the work that was being undertaken by the Alliance and the key points were noted as follows: -

- (i) APSE and LACA were currently conducting a survey regarding school meal uptake, the deadline for submissions was the 26 October 2018 and the headline findings would be launched on the 13 November 2018 in Parliament.
- (ii) Research was currently being conducted into the impact of Brexit on school food. A questionnaire was currently available for frontline catering staff and although there were some emerging findings it was too early to provide feedback. However, it was interesting to note that the main reasons stated for working in school catering was work life balance and feeding and education children about good food.
- (iii) The Department for Education (DfE) were unable to attend the meeting. However, they had provided a statement that provided the following information: -
 - The consultations resulting from the Childhood Obesity Plan were now open for comment,
 - The DfE stated that they were committed to reviewing School Food Standards and there were working with Public Health England to gain the required nutritional advice. Changing the Standards required a that Secondary Legislation change and a sufficient period of notice for the sector was required prior to the Standards being introduced.
 - Money was now being distributed through the Healthy Pupil Capital Fund.
- (iv) The Alliance had raised concern about the costs that rural small schools were being charged by caterers for providing school meals. JO advised that one school had reported that they were being charged £4.50 per meal, however, the parents were only being charged £2.50 which was having a major impact on their budget. It was commented that the issue was increasing and could be a topic for discussion at a future APPG.

Following the update, a discussion ensued and the key points raised were noted as follows: -

- (i) PE commented that there was a number of primary school headteachers who were awaiting information regarding the outcome of the bid that they had submitted to local authorities for the funding.
- (ii) Concern was expressed regarding the monitoring that the government were undertaking in relation to how the money from the Healthy Pupil Capital Fund was being spent. In response, it was commented that a Parliamentary question could be raised to gain further information.

6. AOB



SH advised the Group of the following: -

- (i) CM had been awarded, 'Women of the Year campaigner award' for the work that she had undertaken with Magic Breakfast.
- (ii) There had been 17 submissions to the APPG on School Food Award and the winner had been CATERed.
- (iii) The DfE was holding a market engagement event on the 31 October 2018 about the provision of grant funding for Holiday Provision.

Date of next meeting

15 January 2019