



All Party Parliamentary Group on School Food

## Minutes of meeting of the School Food APPG

**Thursday 2 February 2023, 2-4pm – Hybrid meeting – Room Q, Portcullis House and Zoom.**

### Present

Sharon Hodgson MP (SH) – Chair

Name			Organisation
Lily	Fairbairn	LF	Rethink Food
Neil	Ward	NW	Hyperactive Childrens Support Group
Andrew	Burrell	AB	
Alice	Chicken	AC	Department for Education
Alistair	Dale	AD	ISS
Arthur	Fyfe-Stocia	AFS	Magic Breakfast
Adrienne	Gristwood	AG	Redbourne Upper School
Angus	Holford	AH	University of Essex
Andrew	Kyle	AK	
Alison	Last	AL	Kellogg
Amanda	Moody	AM	Surrey County Council
Anne-Marie	Sowden	AMS	CATERED
Annabelle	O'Toole	AO'T	Let's Get Cooking Children's Food Trust
Angie	Row	AR	St Marks Meals
Amanda	Whatley	AW	HC3S Hampshire
Bethan	Cowell	BC	NFU
Brad	Pearce	BP	LACA
Caroline	Alexander	CA	Educaterers LTD
Colette	Fox	CF	ProVeg UK
Caroline	Morgan	CM	Local Food Links
Chris	Ross	CR	Edinburgh City Council
Carol	Stebbing	CS	HC3S Hampshire
Donald	Bundy	DB	World Food Programme
Derek	Price	DP	Birmingham City Council
Danielle	Smtih	DS	Aspens
Dale	Wild	DW	Birmingham City Council

Letterhead designed by pupils at Harehills Primary School, Leeds



Secretariat - APSE

Elaine	Hindal	EH	British Nutrition Foundation
Eleanor	Toms	ET	Chefs in Schools
Emma	Taylor	Eta	APSE
Elena	Vacca	EV	The Food Foundation
Finlay	Allmond	FA	Magic Breakfast
Georgina	Burt	GB	Child Poverty Action Group
Gary	Farquhar	GF	
Gabby	Lake	GL	
Hayley	Green	HG	
Harriet	Heath	HH	Food and Drink Federation Scotland
Hannah	Shattock	HS	World Food Programme
Ian	Henderson	IH	Ace Advice Ltd
Isabelle	Lloyd	IL	
Janette	Aquilina	JA	BPC
Jake	Barwood	JB	
John	Figgins	JF	West Sussex County Council
Judith	Gregory	JG	Cardiff Council
John	McKendrick	JMcK	Glasgow Caledonian University
Jeanette	Orrey	JO	Co-Founder Food for Life
Jason	O'Rourke	JO'R	Washingborough School
Jack	Taylor	JT	Chefs in Schools
Jo	Wilson	JW	Department for Education
Kristin	Bash	KB	University of Sheffield
Kate	Jeffels	KJ	Together Middlesbrough & Cleveland
Kate	Morris	KM	University of Sheffield
Kay	Nicholls	KN	Department for Education
Kate	Osbourne	KO	Member of Parliament
Louise	Allen	LA	ProVeg UK
Laura	Chan	LC	Soil Association
Linda	Cregan	LCr	ISS
Louise	Davies	LD	Food Teachers Centre
Lindsay	Graham	LG	Poverty & Inequality Commissioner
Lisa	Marley	LM	ProVeg UK
Lucy	Michaels	LMic	
Lynda	Mitchell	LMit	LACA
Leigh	Powell	LP	UNISON
Lianna	Reed	LR	Department for Education
Lindsey	Roberts	Lro	
Lana	Simpson	LS	The Global Poverty Project
Linda	Schultz	LSc	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Liz	Todd	LT	Newcastle University
Lauren	Walker	LW	
Myles	Bremner	MB	Bremner Consulting
Maria	Herron	MH	Office of Sharon Hodgson MP
Michael	Hales	Mha	Juniper Ventures Ltd
Matthew	Knight	MK	Hillstone Primary School
Melanie	Reed	MR	Rethink Food
Mark	Stein	MS	University of Salford

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Maria	Taylor	MT	
Nigel	Argyle	NA	Elygra / LACA
Naomi	Duncan	ND	Chefs in Schools
Naomi	Fallon	NF	UK Food Systems
Nikita	Sinclair	NS	Impact on Urban Health
Oli	Ratcliffe	OR	Sustain
Philip	Adams	PA	
Patricia	Fellows	PF	Consultant
P	McGrath	PMcG	
Rhys	James	RJ	
Rosie	King	RK	Let's get quizzical
Rosie	Molinari	RM	Sodexo
Rebecca	O'Connell	RO'C	
Sarah	Atkinson	SA	Surrey County Council
Stephen	Briggs	SB	Northern Ireland Education Authority
Samantha	Craven	SC	Transforming Lives for Good
Stuart	Clarke	SCI	
Simon	Gray	SG	Food Teachers Centre
Shane	O'Grady	SO'G	Bidfood
Stephanie	Slater	SS	School Food Matters
Suzanne	Spence	SSp	Newcastle University
Sean	Turner	ST	School Food Matters
Stacey	Warren	SW	Family Action
Vicki	Hislop	VH	Bidfood
Vickie	Hacking	Vha	APSE
Victoria	Howe	Vho	The Farm Kitchen
Wendy	Wills	WW	University of Hertfordshire

## 1. Chair's Welcome

SH welcomed attendees to the Group. She also thanked the speakers for attending the meeting.

## 2. School Food Plan Alliance Update – Stephanie Slater (SS)

SS provided an update from the School Food Plan Alliance to the group and in so doing the key points were noted as follows: -

- BP had provided feedback from a roundtable that LACA had convened. He reported that the purpose of the event was to bring together people from across the school food sector and the catering industry to agree on a common set of aims for them all to work towards and campaign for. As a result of the roundtable a list of challenges and a 'wish list' for the sector was drawn up.
- Rethink Food attended the meeting and provided an overview of the organisation and detailed the programmes of work that were being undertaken.
- Tower Hamlets Council attended the meeting and detailed the proposals that had been put forward to the council regarding the extension of Universal Infant Free School Meals to all secondary schools in the borough.

- Nestra attended and provided an overview of the project that the organisation was undertaking in Wales to maximise Universal Free School Meal uptake.
- The DfE attended the meeting and provided an update on the school food standards pilot, the template for schools to report their whole school food approach and the planned training for School Governors in relation to school food.

### **3. A look at the four nations, CR, BP, JG, and SB**

SH introduced the agenda item and advised that this session would take a look at school meals, policy developments, the extension of free school meals and common issues for public sector caterers in the four nations.

CR presented an overview of the position in Scotland and in so doing the key points were noted as follows:-

- Scotland had been providing free school meals to children in P1-P3 since January 2015.
- The Scottish Government had extended free school meals to early years pupils.
- Local authority caterers continued to see the benefits of good nutrition habits throughout the child's school journey.
- UIFSM was introduced to P4 in August 2021 and to P5 in January 2022.
- Local authorities were working on a further expansion to P6 and P7 pupils by 2026.
- The key aims and outcomes from the Case for Good food were outlined.
- An overview of the current delivery challenges was provided.

BP presented an overview of the position in England and in so doing the key points were noted as follows:-

- An overview of the statutory provision in England was presented.
- It was highlighted that the service in England was fragmented due to the policy implementations from the UK Government
- The funding mechanisms and eligibility criteria for UIFSM and FSMs were outlined.
- An overview of the key findings from a survey LACA had undertaken in November 2023 was presented and included details of how shortages and substitutions had impacted the service, food inflation and the increase in the cost of ingredients, selling price to pupils, staff recruitment and retention, and maintaining standards.

In concluding BP detailed the 'Wish Lish' for the benefits of the school food sector and the barriers and challenges for the industry.

JG presented an overview of the position in Wales and in so doing the key points were noted as follows:-

- An overview of the context that school meals were delivered in Wales.
- Details of the Programme for Government: Cooperation Agreement were presented.
- The Welsh Government committed to introducing Universal Primary Free School Meals in Wales with implementation beginning in September 2022 to the youngest learners, and provision was to be expanded to all primary school age learners by September 2023.
- Details of the phasing and associated funding for the roll out were presented.

- Revenue funding of up to £200m has been set aside for local authorities to deliver the commitment, £40m of which was provided in 2022/2023, £70m for 2023/2024 and £90m for 2024/2025.

JG concluded by outlining the risks and the challenges to the rollout of UPFSM.

SB presented an overview of the position in Northern Ireland and in so doing the key points were noted as follows:-

- An overview of the school meals service in Northern Ireland was provided including details of the eligibility criteria for Free School Meals and the pricing structure for pupils that paid for school meals.
- Details of the challenges were presented which included the increasing cost of purchasing products and utilities, supplier engagement, the recruitment and retention of staff, decreasing numbers of paying pupils and the current financial pressures within the Northern Ireland Education System.
- The opportunities for the service were outlined as being an introduction of a Service Improvement Team in mid-2022, customer engagement, menu development leading to new food concepts and offerings, a marketing strategy and new branding across the service and investment into the employees in the service.

In response to the four presentations, the following questions and comments were raised:-

- SH commented that the divergence in policy had highlighted the disparities across the four nations.
- BP stated that some good discussions had been undertaken with MP's and the DfE but he questioned what the sector could do to improve the situation in England.
- DB commented that there was a research collaboration that was supporting school meals across 75 countries and was looking at comparing variations in the OECD, sharing case studies and researching the respective programmes.
- In response to a question from FA, it was advised that preparations for breakfast provision had been made whilst putting in the changes required to increase Universal Free School Meal Provision.
- It was asked why the uptake in Northern Ireland was as low as 80%, SB commented that there had been no analysis done on this. However, it was believed that there was a range of factors including the leadership of the school.
- It was queried where the information regarding the nutritional standards for school food in the four nations could be obtained and how the outcomes were measured.

#### **4. School Plates, CF**

CF presented an overview of ProVeg Uks School Plates programme and in so doing the key points were noted as follows:-

- It was commented that the programme aimed to make school food healthier, more sustainable and to save money.
- The programme was working with over 40 partners
- A comparison was provided regarding changing a meat-based Bolognese dish with a plant-based Bolognese.
- The programme looked to review school food menus to make the vegan / vegetarian options more appealing to children.

- Chris Packham was supporting the programme and there was a book of recipes that had been developed for school chefs as part of the programme.
- A School Plates awards had been launched in January 2023

In response to the presentation the following questions and comments were raised:-

- It was queried if the School Food Standards were a barrier to providing more meat free options on the menu. CF confirmed that this was the case.
- JO'R commented that he had experienced the programme first hand and the children loved the food.

## **5. Ingredients for Success, JM**

JM presented an overview of the 'Ingredients for success' research that had been undertaken by Glasgow Caledonian University and in so doing the key points were noted as follows:-

- A series of questions were asked as part of the research regarding food education and the associated supplies.
- The key findings from the survey were highlighted and these included details regarding cost as a barrier to participation, the impact of pupils not bringing in ingredients, and does food education have a role in tackling food insecurity.

In concluding the presentation JM reported that the research will be published in the coming weeks.

In response to the presentation the following questions and comments were raised:-

- JM confirmed that schools in Scotland were provided money to deliver food education.
- Georgina commented that the current guidance stated a charge could be levied for activities in which the child took home what they had made.
- Louise commented that teachers were paying for ingredients and that there was a lack of food technicians in schools.

## **6. AOB**

SH reported that a letter had been sent to the minister regarding the concerns raised with regards to public sector procurement and the response that had been received was lacking in detail.

ST reported the details of the campaigning that was taking place in relation to extending the provision of Free School Meal and reported the findings from Bite Back 2030. He concluded by commenting that many local authorities were taking the lead on extending provision and there needed to be a greater awareness of the impact that the cost-of-living crisis was having on children.

Sustains 'Say yes to school meals' campaign was due to be launched on 9 March 2023

**Meeting concluded at 16.40pm**

