



Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

xx March 2019

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Good Food Nation Consultation: Children in Scotland concerns

Children in Scotland is writing in advance of our response to the Good Food Nation Consultation (29 March 2019) regarding our position on the proposed legislation and the supporting programme of measures.

Children in Scotland has been heavily involved in the ongoing development of the Good Food Nation as a member of the Food Commission. Throughout, we have advocated for a strong focus on social justice within the proposals. Challenging inequalities through food is a central focus of our current work, with our award-winning [Food, Families, Futures](#) project being one example.

The Good Food Nation presents an opportunity to make the systemic changes needed to ensure children, young people and their families have access to healthy food. However, we are concerned that the Good Food Nation proposals as currently formed will not achieve this change. Well-meaning legislation is not being supported by an ambitious, wide-reaching programme of measures.

Scotland has a modern, well-developed economy. However, it is clear that many children, young people and families are struggling to access enough food. 2018 statistics suggested that reliance on food banks has increased by 13%, with The Trussell Trust alone providing 87,981 in Scotland between April and September 2018. 28.8% of children and young people are at risk of being overweight or becoming obese in Scotland.

Clearly, the food environment is not working for many children, young people and families in Scotland. Children in Scotland believes poverty is the root cause of this. Current statistics from the Institute of Fiscal Studies show that up to 100,000 children could be living in poverty in Scotland by 2020. Experience of deprivation is linked to poorer diets among children and young people. This problem will only get worse.

Children in Scotland believes that at present the proposals focus too much on food production and individual behaviour change. This is to the detriment of the wider determinants that impact on families' access to food.

To tackle the systemic issues of food insecurity, childhood overweight and obesity and the longer-term health issues associated with these requires a joined-up approach to policy-making that we are concerned is not reflected in the current proposals.

The delivery of the Good Food Nation must take into account a range of national and local policy levers across a wide range of government portfolios. There must be a role for education, social security and health, and links with national policy such as the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan.

There also must be a link with local children's services planning and local poverty action reports. We also urge the Scottish Government to consider the findings of the Poverty and Inequality Commission throughout its work to deliver the Good Food Nation.

To achieve the systemic change that the Good Food Nation requires, Children in Scotland urges you to:

- Bring forward legislation to incorporate a right to food now.
- Advocate for the £5 top-up to child benefit as an immediate means of meeting the Scottish Government commitment to deliver an income supplement to support the aims of the Good Food Nation.
- Reduce the density of fast food restaurants in high Scottish Indicator of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) areas.
- Ensure tight restrictions on the advertising and marketing of unhealthy food products.
- Tighten regulations on the amounts of fat, salt and sugar allowed in foods.

We also call for further funding of holiday clubs based around our *Food, Families, Futures* model. This would support children, young people and their families to access food and activities together in the summer months when we know many experience stress and challenges accessing adequate food.

Food insecurity and increased access to unhealthy food products are caused by poverty. They have a hugely damaging impact on children, young people and their families. Not utilising the opportunities provided by the Good Food Nation may mean children, young people and families continue to be exposed to these problems.

Yours sincerely,

Jackie Brock, Chief Executive, Children in Scotland

