



## **Proposed Right To Food (Scotland) Bill**

**14 September 2020**

**Children in Scotland**

### **Children in Scotland**

Giving all children in Scotland an equal chance to flourish is at the heart of everything we do.

By bringing together a network of people working with and for children, alongside children and young people themselves, we offer a broad, balanced and independent voice. We create solutions, provide support and develop positive change across all areas affecting children in Scotland.

We do this by listening, gathering evidence, and applying and sharing our learning, while always working to uphold children's rights. Our range of knowledge and expertise means we can provide trusted support on issues as diverse as the people we work with and the varied lives of children and families in Scotland.

Children in Scotland is pleased to respond to the consultation on the proposed Right To Food (Scotland) Bill. We conduct a range of work aimed at supporting the health and wellbeing of children and young people. A key strand of our work is Challenging Inequalities Through Food, which aims to ensure that all children, young people and families are able to access healthy food and drinks across the whole year. Our award-winning project Food, Families Futures<sup>1</sup> aims to make a meaningful difference to people's lives, partly by meeting immediate need and tackling food insecurity, and partly by tackling underlying causes of food insecurity. Importantly, it makes a positive change with families. We know through all of this work that actions taken to eradicate food insecurity have the power to change habits, broaden experience and challenge health inequalities.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://childreninScotland.org.uk/lessons-for-a-new-social-settlement-publication-of-reports-mark-completion-of-groundbreaking-five-year-food-project/>

## Poverty, food insecurity and health inequalities

Children, young people and families face a range of systemic issues with accessing food and accessing healthy food. We agree with Elaine Smith MSP that tackling the challenges in Scotland which contribute to food insecurity must be given even greater priority and resources, and support her proposed Bill reflecting this view.

Underpinning our stance is the need to tackle poverty and health inequalities. We know that food insecurity is socially patterned and contributes to poorer health and wellbeing for those who experience it. It is therefore important that Scottish Government interventions of this nature are supported by ongoing action to tackle the social determinants that drive this, including poverty, inequality and place.

We know many children, young people and families are struggling to access food, and that they experience food insecurity. Children in Scotland understands that poverty is the key driver of this. The latest figures produced by the Scottish Government suggest that child poverty in Scotland has increased by 10,000 over the last year, with 24% now living in poverty<sup>2</sup>. Data produced by the Resolution Foundation suggests that child poverty could increase to 29% by 2023 -24<sup>3</sup>. We believe this is likely to deepen reliance on food banks and contribute further to food insecurity.

According to the Scottish Health Survey, 26% of children and young people in Scotland are at risk of being overweight or obese<sup>4</sup>. Poverty and deprivation are key issues highlighted in the State of Child Health Report 2019. Experience of food insecurity contributes to a less healthy and balanced diet. It can mean consumption of fewer fruit and vegetables, and more unhealthy products<sup>5,6,7</sup>. The Children's Future Food Inquiry has shown that healthy foods can be around three times more expensive than unhealthy alternatives<sup>8</sup>. This will contribute to the decisions families make about food, particularly those experiencing poverty and food insecurity. Research with parents has found they felt food insecurity impacts on their ability to provide a nutritionally balanced diet for their children<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/statistics-publication/2019/03/poverty-income-inequality-scotland-2015-18/documents/poverty-income-inequality-scotland-2015-18/poverty-income-inequality-scotland-2015-18/govscot%3Adocument>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2019/03/Wrong-direction-briefing-note.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-health-survey-2017-volume-1-main-report/>

<sup>5</sup> Gorton, D., Bullen, C., & Mhurchu, C.N. (2010) Environmental influences on food security in high income countries, *Nutrition Reviews*, 68, 1-29

<sup>6</sup> <http://dro.dur.ac.uk/14914/1/14914.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Drewnowski, A., & Eichelsdoerfer, P. (2009) The Mediterranean Diet: does it have to cost more? *Public Health Nutrition*, 12, 9A, 16216-1628

<sup>8</sup> <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Childrens-Future-Food-Inquiry-report.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0195666316300046>

Food insecurity is exacerbated over the school holidays, particularly the longer summer holiday. A 2015 report by Kellogg's UK identified that 41% of parents in low income families have skipped a meal to feed a child in the holidays<sup>10</sup>. The lack of provision of free school meals over summer holidays creates a particularly acute issue for families who access these as they have to provide more food with no extra income.

Furthermore, place can be a key driver of the food environment experienced by children, young people and families. Research shows that areas of higher deprivation have a greater density of fast food outlets<sup>111213</sup>. Our recent Health Inequalities: Participative Research project added weight to this research: we identified a high density of fast food restaurants in the two areas that we worked in<sup>14</sup>. This clearly demonstrates another way in which children and young people from particular backgrounds face inequalities in the food they can access and subsequently the level of health they are likely to experience.

### **Delays in policy and legislation**

We understand from the Scottish Government that the Good Food Nation Bill will no longer go ahead but that consideration has been given to non-legislative means by which the Good Food Nation objectives can be achieved.

We understand that due to insufficient time to introduce all of the primary legislation given the impact of COVID-19, the work that has been achieved on the Good Food Nation Bill, along with a proposed Bill on restricting junk food promotion, has been delayed.

We also note that the issue of tackling food insecurity was not addressed in the most recent Programme for Government announcement (1st September 2020.)

The Child Poverty Scotland Act (2017) is an important driver in this change. However, the lack of progress towards the targets included in the Act means children and families continue to experience food insecurity.

Also, significant measures for tackling poverty, including the delivery of the Scottish Child Payment and the latest update on the government's Child Poverty Action Plan, have experienced delays as a result of COVID-19. Children in Scotland was disappointed that the 2020-21 Programme for Government did not announce provision of any additional financial support to families before the payment is introduced in February.

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<sup>10</sup> Kellogg's (2015) *Isolation and hunger: the reality of school holidays for struggling families*, Manchester: Kellogg's, P.2

<sup>11</sup> <https://ijbnpa.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1479-5868-6-52>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16242594>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17189662>

<sup>14</sup> <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Health-Inequalities-Report-Chris-Ross.pdf>

We recognise that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill provides a unique opportunity to enshrine children's right to health in law.

However, these other significant policy and legislation setbacks come at a time when radical and urgent government action has never been more needed. Tackling the challenges children and families face around food must, now more than ever, be a priority.

## Questions

### 1. Which of the following best expresses your view on enshrining the human right to food into Scots law?

#### x Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Children in Scotland believes that all children, young people and families have the right to food that is available and accessible to people – financially and geographically – and food that is adequate in terms of nutrition, safety and cultural appropriateness.

Article 24 of the UNCRC asserts: "States Parties recognise the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services."<sup>15</sup>

The Scottish Government (and UK Government, local authorities and public bodies) have a responsibility to create an environment where all children and young people are protected from hunger and poor nutrition and can have access to food in a dignified and non-stigmatising fashion. This responsibility extends to supporting children, young people and their families to access healthy food and experience better health.

We believe that incorporating a right to food would give children, young people and families a necessary mechanism for redress if they are facing food insecurity. We see this as a key measure of accountability for ensuring that the Scottish Government meets its obligation to provide all children, young people and families with access to healthy, affordable food and drink.

We agree with Elaine Smith MSP's proposed Bill that a culture of individual blame does nothing to alleviate the challenges faced by individuals and merely masks the fact that the state is failing in its duty of care. Short-term actions to tackle food insecurity lack cultural appropriateness and dignity. Our response to food insecurity must proceed without stigmatising families and without incurring a loss of dignity.

A right to food is about more than food insecurity – it is about taking a whole-systems approach to tackling challenges such as poverty, diet-related illness and climate change. It has an opportunity to play a transformative role in supporting children, young people and families who most struggle to access food.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

## **2. Which of the following best describes your view on the creation of an independent statutory body with responsibility for the right to food?**

### **x Partially supportive**

Please explain the reasons for your response.

We agree with Elaine Smith MSP's proposed Bill that a joined-up approach to a right to food and independent monitoring of progress towards meeting the right to food is necessary.

However, Children in Scotland believes that there are various other appropriate measures of accountability for the Scottish Government to consider.

The Scottish Government should explore the opportunities for oversight roles for existing statutory bodies that could use their expertise on rights and social justice to measure how the right to food and tackling food insecurity is supporting children, young people and families in their areas of expertise.

We believe it would be wise to have a clear role for the Poverty and Inequality Commission in scrutinising progress being made to tackle food insecurity. The Commission has a formal role scrutinising progress towards achieving child poverty targets, and has already engaged with the topic of food insecurity, including identifying support for co-ordinated summer provision such as that provided by FFF<sup>16</sup>. Their expertise should be utilised when measuring progress on the equity of the food environment.

We also believe that there should be closer links made with Child Poverty Delivery Plans and Local Poverty Action Plans. Progress and action in these areas could also be used as a measure of change as these will be working to tackle many of the underlying causes of food insecurity.

We also believe that the Scottish Government could make clearer links to the wider children's services landscape in the programme of measures and identify how these will support the aims of the legislation, thus ensuring a wide range of children's services will engage with the legislation and support the delivery of the right to food. We know that local authorities are currently reviewing/renewing their Children's Services Plans. There is an opportunity to explore how supporting delivery of the right to food fits within these plans.

Local authorities already have a range of duties and requirements to produce plans that will interact with the completed Good Food Nation work. It would be of value to make clear reference to this within the legislation and outline how these processes can support the overall aims.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://povertyinequality.scot/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Poverty-and-Inequality-Commission-advice-on-poverty-in-school-holidays.pdf>

Finally, Children in Scotland would like to see a clear detailed plan for how children, young people and families will be able to contribute to measures of accountability for implementing the right to food. This should link with colleagues in Scottish Government who are responsible for the Participation Action Plan. The framework is attempting to streamline the engagement of children and young people to avoid replication. Children and young people must be involved in this process, in line with the UNCRC.

### **3. What do you think would be the main practical advantages and disadvantages of the proposed Bill?**

The proposed Right To Food (Scotland) Bill will have a significant impact on longstanding food insecurity issues that have been exacerbated further by the pandemic in 2020.

We agree with the assertions made in the proposed Bill that food insecurity has worsened in recent years as a consequence of stagnating wages, zero-hours contracts, frozen benefit levels and issues with the roll-out of Universal Credit. Welfare reform and the rise of in-work poverty are just two of the driving forces behind food insecurity.

COVID-19 has had a further detrimental impact on families. The End Child Poverty Coalition states that since the beginning of March, Children 1<sup>st</sup>'s Parentline has reported a 158% increase in calls about finances and employment and the Scottish Welfare Fund saw an 88% increase in requests for assistance in April, compared with the same period last year. The Coalition also states families are reporting that they have bare cupboards and fridges and, struggling to cope with the impact of income loss, are forced to make increasingly difficult choices<sup>17</sup>. We are supportive of the Coalition's call on the Scottish Government to address immediate need by providing interim payments to low-income families while they wait for the Scottish Child Payment to be delivered in 2021.

### **4. Which of the following expresses your view of enshrining a right to food into Scots law as a priority in advance of any further Scottish Government legislation on wider human rights?**

**Partially supportive**

Please explain the reasons for your response.

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<sup>17</sup> [https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/policypost/ECP%20core%20briefing\\_final.pdf](https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/policypost/ECP%20core%20briefing_final.pdf)

Children in Scotland believes that targeted legislation will allow the Scottish Government to respond to changes and bring forward relevant legislation as appropriate.

We believed the Good Food Nation Bill was the best place within which to incorporate a right to food. However given the Scottish Government has dropped the proposals for this Bill, we believe standalone, targeted legislation to be appropriate.

We agree with Elaine Smith MSP's assertion that framework legislation would offer further opportunities to develop sufficient strategies, targets, responsibilities and measurements to enable Scotland to fight the obesity epidemic, and ease the heavy burden placed upon the NHS by dietary issues.

We are delighted the Scottish Government's incorporation of the UNCRC into Scots Law is a priority. The Right to Food will complement this and should also be prioritised to ensure children and families enjoy healthy lives.

The scale of the task of absorbing human rights into legislation means that the process would be likely to take significantly longer than the process of incorporating a right to food into law on a separate basis. Furthermore, incorporating the right to food will strengthen protection of human rights and is complementary and supportive of any forthcoming human rights legislation. We welcome the significant progress made towards separately incorporating the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership has acknowledged that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill acts as a step on the road to wider human rights legislation. A Right to Food Bill could provide another step.

We understand that a process has begun, led by the Ministerial Working Group on Food, to develop a non-statutory statement of policy on food. This will incorporate the experience gained in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, with ongoing work under the umbrella of the Good Food Nation policy.

We acknowledge that this work is in the initial stages but welcome the recognition that a cross-cutting approach is needed to take forward key aspects of national policy and that the Scottish Government recognises the significant impact COVID has had on families from the point of view of accessing healthy food.

**6. Which of the following best describes your view of placing responsibility for guaranteeing the right to food on the Scottish Government?**

**Fully supportive**

Please explain the reasons for your response.



As stated above, the Scottish Government has the responsibility to create a positive, reinforcing food environment that supports children, young people and their families and enables them to access healthy food and experience better health.

We believe the right to food would lead to the Scottish Government to be held accountable for any regression or failure to meet its obligations, with a requirement for the Scottish Government to check its policies and performance against the requirement to progress this right.

For this to be successful, input will be required from a broad range of government portfolios encompassing social security, health and education to ensure a positive food environment for children, young people and families. Links should also be made with current Scottish Government policy, particularly the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan.

We urge the Scottish Government to consider how the following policy measures can be used to support the overarching aims of the Good Food Nation work:

- 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.

The Scottish Government should also make clearer reference to how a wider range of local and national policy levers will be used to support the aims of the right to food.

**7. What impact do you believe bringing the right to food into law would have on:**

(a) Reducing food insecurity

x **Significant impact**

(b) Improving people's health

x **Significant impact**

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Tam Baillie, former Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland, stated that "unless their basic need to be well nourished is met, we cannot expect children to concentrate at school or on other activities"<sup>18</sup>.

Bringing the right to food into law will support an 'upstream' system change which will have a significant impact on opportunities for children and families to access healthy food and ultimately improve their health outcomes. We believe this will spur meaningful action on a range of issues and will tackle food insecurity.

We know that food insecurity can lead to periods of hunger for children and young people and has an effect on their health and wellbeing. The acute problem experienced by children, young people and families in receipt of free school meals outwith school term times has become known as 'holiday hunger'. 'Holiday hunger' can have a range of impacts that contribute to the health, wellbeing and learning of children and young people who experience it.

Among population subgroups in high-income countries, food insecurity has been shown to be associated with compromised nutrition, poor general health, and a variety of chronic health conditions. Food insecurity has also been shown to be a marker of poor mental health, with studies identifying associations with mood and anxiety disorders and suicidal ideation<sup>19</sup>.

Children specifically are suffering the consequences of poor nutrition, partially because they are inundated with junk food promotions, and the shops around their schools sell junk food at cheaper prices than healthier alternatives.

Children from more deprived backgrounds are more likely to be overweight and obese when entering school, and the diet they consume contributes to this.<sup>20</sup> The impact of poor diet at this stage can have a clear impact throughout their life. They are more likely to have poorer attainment in school, be overweight or obese later in life, and have a higher mortality rate<sup>21</sup>.

We are confident that incorporating the right to food will encourage meaningful action to tackle food insecurity, with a positive effect on health and wellbeing across the areas discussed here.

## **8. Taking account of both costs and potential savings, what financial impact would you expect the proposed Bill to have on:**

(a) Government and the public sector

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<sup>18</sup> <http://thirdforcenews.org.uk/tfn-news/plea-for-government-to-top-up-child-benefit-to-help-feed-kids-who-are-hungry>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6068629/>

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-05/state\\_of\\_child\\_health\\_2017report\\_updated\\_29.05.18.pdf](https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-05/state_of_child_health_2017report_updated_29.05.18.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-05/state\\_of\\_child\\_health\\_2017report\\_updated\\_29.05.18.pdf](https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-05/state_of_child_health_2017report_updated_29.05.18.pdf)

x **Unsure**

(b) Businesses

x **Some increase in cost**

(c) Individuals

x Unsure

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Children in Scotland does not feel able to quantify overall costs of the proposals.

However, we agree with Elaine Smith MSP's assertion that securing a right to food would ultimately lead to a substantial long-term saving for the NHS in Scotland, given that a number of the most prevalent and costly conditions are linked to obesity and poor diet. We believe the proposed Bill will require some investment to ensure that people's right to food is met but that broadly we expect this to have a positive effect on public spending by improving health outcomes.

Article 18 of the UNCRC states that all children 'have a right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health'. Children in Scotland believes that the health needs of children and young people should take precedence over the needs of business. While we appreciate the need for a supportive environment for industry, we believe that the regulatory environment within which they operate should in this instance be focused on supporting health and wellbeing. At present we are concerned that certain measures, including food production, have been given greater prominence and that the emphasis placed on these seems to reflect the Scottish Government's priorities for the legislation as a whole. Ultimately, we are concerned that the proposed and identified measures are aimed at tackling individual behaviour as a response to food related issues as opposed to tackling the wider systemic issues that children, young people and families face.

We know that areas of high deprivation tend to have a higher density of fast food restaurants<sup>22</sup>. We do not believe this to be a coincidence. This increases access to unhealthy food products for families who are already at risk of health issues. Anecdotally we know that many schools have an abundance of unhealthy food outlets close by that offer cheap lunch deals. This increases the access to and availability of unhealthy products and can promote consumption of an unhealthy diet. The Scottish Government must seek to redress this by developing a regulatory environment that restricts the density of fast food outlets within a particular area.

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<sup>22</sup> <https://ijbnpa.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1479-5868-6-52>

The Children's Future Food Inquiry identified that advertising of foods high in salt, fat and sugar is not well regulated in the UK<sup>23</sup>. Their research shows that unhealthy food advertising is more likely to occur during times when families will be watching TV, suggesting it is specifically targeted towards these groups to impact on their purchasing habits. Obesity Action Scotland has also highlighted the importance of advertising in influencing the products children and young people buy themselves<sup>24</sup>.

Children in Scotland has expressed particular concerns about the impact that multi-buy offers on processed foods, ready meals and sugar-based snacks, which increase the affordability of unhealthy items, may have on children, young people and families who are experiencing poverty. There is clear evidence that this type of marketing can change shopping patterns<sup>25</sup>. Obesity Action Scotland has also identified that multi-buy offers are a particularly effective form of marketing of unhealthy products to children and young people<sup>26</sup>.

There is a range of evidence, including a paper written by Gilmore, Savell and Collin that highlights how tobacco, alcohol and food companies have succeeded in influencing regulatory processes to benefit them<sup>27</sup>. The recent analysis of the consultation on the Diet and Healthy Weight Strategy highlighted these companies' continued opposition to measures including restricted marketing and advertising that would support better health and wellbeing<sup>28</sup>.

We understand that business has a role to play in supporting the aims of the previous Good Food Nation work and will be key in aspects of the delivery in the right to food. We know that business can be a key partner in supporting efforts with children, young people and families. Brakes has been vital in supporting our Food, Families, Futures project, providing healthy food to clubs running through the summer across Scotland.

Evidence shows the most effective way to ensure compliance from food companies is to tighten public regulation<sup>29</sup>. We believe the onus is on Scottish Government to develop the regulatory environment that directs how business engages with the right to food in a way that benefits the health and wellbeing of children, young people, families and the wider community and urge the

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<sup>23</sup> <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Childrens-Future-Food-Inquiry-report.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.obesityactionscotland.org/briefings/> Obesity And Price Promotions

<sup>25</sup> Tedstone A, Targett V, Allen R Sugar reduction. The evidence for action. 2015.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.obesityactionscotland.org/briefings/> Obesity And Price Promotions

<sup>27</sup> <https://academic.oup.com/jpubhealth/article/33/1/2/1548658>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/healthier-future-action-ambitions-diet-activity-healthy-weight-analysis-consultation/pages/2/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140673612620893>

evidence presented above to be considered in developing the role for business in supporting the delivery of the right to food.

**10. What overall impact is the proposed Bill likely to have on equality, taking account of the following protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010): age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation?**

**x Positive**

Please explain the reasons for your response.

We believe that food insecurity and related poor physical and mental health disproportionately impacts on women, those living in more rural areas and people from minority ethnic groups as we know these groups are more likely to experience poverty and reduced access to food and related services.

For example, women are overrepresented among low-income groups compared to men, with minority women and single mothers experiencing high rates of poverty. Women's poverty rates, and subsequently child poverty rates, will rise as a result of low-paid women being at particular risk of Covid-19 job disruption, including unemployment, enforced reduction of hours and being furloughed<sup>30</sup>.

Studies suggest that women may be particularly vulnerable to poor mental health in conjunction with poverty and food insecurity and for women with children, that the stress associated with these experiences has possible ripple effects, negatively impacting their children's physical and mental health as well<sup>31</sup>. The relationship between food insecurity and poor mental health among women is of particular concern given this ripple effect on wider family circumstances.

According to End Child Poverty, COVID has had a further impact on these vulnerable groups. Income crisis is being disproportionately experienced by the very priority groups set out in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan: BAME families, women, lone parents, families with a disabled adult or child, young mothers, families with a child under one, and larger families<sup>32</sup>.

**11. In what ways could any negative impact of the Bill on equality be minimised or avoided?**

An understanding of lived experience is essential in this process. Therefore an in-depth analysis of how different children, young people and families experience

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<sup>30</sup> [https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/policypost/ECP%20core%20briefing\\_final.pdf](https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/policypost/ECP%20core%20briefing_final.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6068629/>

<sup>32</sup> [https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/policypost/ECP%20core%20briefing\\_final.pdf](https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/policypost/ECP%20core%20briefing_final.pdf)

food insecurity, and further quality consultation work, will be necessary to ensure that the Bill recognises the needs of those families with protected characteristics.

This must be done sensitively, uphold dignity and avoid stigmatising children and families further.

**12. Do you consider that the proposed bill can be delivered sustainably, i.e. without having likely future disproportionate economic, social and/or environmental impacts?**

x **Yes**

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Children in Scotland believes that the Right to Food Bill can be delivered sustainably. We see it having a positive economic and social effect as it has the potential to improve health and wellbeing for people across the country.

We also see it as potentially having a positive environmental impact. We believe a whole systems change approach to food is required and incorporating a Right to Food is one part of this. Ultimately we see this as having a role to play in making our food system more sustainable. Scotland has a food system which is stable and produces more than enough food for everyone. However, we need to do more to minimise waste, and this is the case across government, local authorities, businesses and households. Scottish households throw away 600,000 tonnes of food waste every year<sup>33</sup>. This is not just an obscene level of waste due to the levels of food insecurity and poverty in our society, it is also bad for our shared environment,

We know through our Food, Families, Futures project that co-designed and co-developed family-centred projects, focused on food and food literacy, have a positive impact on food waste. When families and children are engaged in the design process of the service and activities, levels of food waste reduce. When children and families cook and eat together in this activity clubs food waste is also reduced<sup>34</sup>.

**13. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the proposal?**

We believe the Right To Food Bill must consider and make a positive change on the various aspects of food that impact on children and families lives.

Food literacy

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.greenerscotland.org/food-waste/about-food-waste/food-waste-facts#:~:text=Avoidable%20food%20and%20drink%20waste,to%20%C2%A3437%20per%20year>

<sup>34</sup> [https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/FFF\\_CiSMainReport\\_2017\\_FINAL\\_28.6.182.pdf](https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/FFF_CiSMainReport_2017_FINAL_28.6.182.pdf)

We know from our direct work that many children, young people and families face issues with 'food literacy'. Many families do not have the knowledge and skills to cook food and opportunities are not available to develop these skills. This impacts on the ability to prepare healthy, nutritious food and can contribute to consumption of unhealthier products.

We know that in some schools there are currently particular issues around the delivery of the Food and Health strand of Curriculum For Excellence. Some schools do not have cooking classrooms and there has been a national shortage of Home Economics teachers in recent years. Add the pressures of COVID to this and even fewer young people are developing their knowledge and skills in this area at this time.

The challenges with food literacy can be exacerbated by inconsistent laws around food labelling and packing that make it difficult to identify healthy and unhealthy products. Front of packaging labelling is currently not a statutory requirement. There are also two systems for providing labelling information. The lack of clarity around this can make identifying healthy products difficult for children, young people and families.

#### Food standards

The Children and Young People's Panel on Europe, a group of 19 children and young people, made reference to how they think the Scottish and UK Government should respond to Brexit in relation to the food environment<sup>35</sup>. The Panel was deeply concerned about the impact of exiting the EU on food standards and clearly want to maintain these standards. They recommended that the Scottish Government and UK Government should make sure that trade deals ensure high food standards and that food products must be known to be safe before being sold<sup>36</sup>. This is in keeping with the wider ethos of the Good Food Nation work and the right to food and we ask the Scottish Government to have regard for this going forward.

#### Children and Young People's Food Policy

Children in Scotland is supportive of the Good Food Nation Bill as an opportunity to embed a Right to Food. However, in the event that this is not included we are in favour of a Children and Young People's Food Policy.

Legislation should identify how children, young people and families will be supported to experience a food environment where this food is available, accessible and healthy. It must also set a clear vision of how the food environment will be used to promote better outcomes for children in their health, wellbeing and education.

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<sup>35</sup> [https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Brexit\\_FINAL\\_nobleed.pdf](https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Brexit_FINAL_nobleed.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> [https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Brexit\\_FINAL\\_nobleed.pdf](https://childreninscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Brexit_FINAL_nobleed.pdf)