

Correspondence from Children in Wales, Save the Children Cymru, Barnardo's Cymru, Action for Children Cymru/Wales, NSPCC Cymru/Wales, The Children's Society, TGP Cymru, NYAS Cymru, Home-Start Cymru

Good afternoon Jayne

I'm getting in touch to let you know and seek your support/action. There has been significant disquiet this week amongst our national children charities members* in regard to media reports that free school meals during the school holiday will no longer be available for children in Wales. Our understanding is that some parents have begun receiving letters via their schools (but not all have as yet), informing them that Welsh Government will be ceasing the provision of holiday vouchers for free school meals with immediate effect. With three weeks before the summer break, this leaves parents little time to plan (for those of course who can). As the cost-of-living crisis plunges more families into poverty, this decision will result in more children going hungry over the coming weeks.

We have today written, alongside 8 other national children's charities, to the Minister for Education/Minister for Social Justice/DM for Social Services to express our profound concern of the impact this will have on children, parents and the third sector services who are already overstretched trying to meet rapidly growing need. We have also asked why there has been no public announcement this week or prior notification that this was going to happen.

This also comes at a time when the Welsh Government are consulting on their Child Poverty Strategy; have announced a cut in the Schools Essential Grant from next school term and have received recommendations from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child to address food insecurity, improve access to free school meals for disadvantaged children and to enhance children's access to food.

I'm sure that you share our concerns, and we would be delighted if you and/or other members could raise this with Welsh Government at the earliest opportunity.

Should you require more information, please do get in touch

Diolch

Sean

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