



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

16 July 2021

Good morning,

**HOLIDAY HUNGER WEEK: 19-25 JULY**

As we draw towards the summer holidays can I first thank you and your team for all the work, unpaid hours, extra effort and commitment you have put into helping your students over the past year. It has not been easy but our schools and colleges have shown enormous commitment to our city's young people. Thank you.

As you will be well aware, a large number of children in Plymouth rely on free school meals, and I am concerned that there is a greater risk of kids going without healthy nutritious meals over the school holidays.

I recently met with a number of food aid organisations from across Plymouth to discuss this issue and what can be done about it, as we get ever closer to the summer holidays. I floated the idea of holding a Plymouth Holiday Hunger Week in the last week of term for most schools, as a way to get schools and organisations to make a huge push towards reaching out to families and ensuring everybody knows what help is out there, to help prevent their children from going hungry.

I know many schools will already be planning their activities and support. Starting on **Monday 19th July** I will be raising awareness across my social media channels of holiday hunger and helping people find out how they can access help and support and challenging the stigma that all too often is connected with poverty.

I am hoping that your school may be able to support this effort to share information to parents and the wider school community of where people can access support and how, no matter how hard things get, know that they are not alone.

The main resource to highlight would be the **Plymouth Food Aid Network Map**, a new tool which shows exactly where you can go for free meals:

<https://pfan.adoddle.org/food-access-map>.

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I have also attached a leaflet that has been shared with me by Food Plymouth. On one side it has a map for food resources, and on the other side you will see other support available, including for school uniforms, baby and children's clothes and basics, football kits and pet food.

Holiday hunger is a crisis which will affect over 3 million children across the UK this year. When term time ends, so do free school meals, and the Government's late decision to vote against year-round free food provision will leave a huge number of schoolchildren unprovided for over the holiday period.

I have spoken with various Plymouth charities, organisations and volunteers about Holiday Hunger Week and there is a real determination to make sure every child has access to free and healthy food over the holidays. There will be locations serving free school meals all summer long – including food banks, schools, and churches – and starting 19th July, Holiday Hunger Week will focus on raising awareness so that every family knows how to access them.

In one of the richest countries on earth, there is never a good enough excuse for kids going hungry. There is more than enough food to go round in Plymouth – Holiday Hunger Week is all about making sure it's readily available to those who need it most.

I hope that you will be able to support this non-party political initiative in trying to raise awareness with families about what is available for them over the holidays, and in breaking down the stigma associated with reaching out for help.

Best wishes,



**Luke Pollard MP**

Labour and Co-operative MP for Plymouth Sutton and Devonport