

Newham Council adds voice to the #EndChildFoodPoverty campaign to address holiday hunger facing thousands of school children this half term

Newham Council has today confirmed its support for the #EndChildFoodPoverty campaign, announcing additional money to ensure no child goes hungry during this half term break.

Cabinet Member for Education, Cllr Zulfiqar Ali said: “We share the huge disappointment expressed by England footballer Marcus Rashford following the government’s vote against plans that would have shielded children from hunger this half term.

“Responsibility for this decision lies solely with the government. It’s an absolute outrage that it has turned its back on our most vulnerable families already hit by poverty and low incomes, through a callous disregard for the impact this will have on the needs of children at this most difficult time.

“Food poverty is already a huge priority for the Council and that’s why, in addition to the existing free schools meals programme, we support thousands of local children through our universal Eat for Free food scheme during the school term.

“As well as this, we have been addressing food poverty as part of our response to Covid-19, through the establishment of the borough-wide Newham Food Alliance. Working with more than 30 voluntary sector organisations, we have been feeding thousands of low income families throughout the pandemic.

“We have also invested additional money to ensure that children and families can access food during this half term break. The additional provision includes extended opening hours for families to access food and increasing food supplies to meet growing demand.”

Residents can find more information about the Newham Food Alliance and order food here or call 07790 975 086 Monday to Friday between 9am and midday to secure food parcels.

Newham’s Eat for Free scheme offers free school meals to ALL primary school aged children, not just those in Key Stage 1 or who meet eligibility criteria. This means that 28,000 local primary school children have the option of a free school meal should they want one.

Newham Council has already this year invested £364,000 in the Newham Food Alliance, which sees the council working arm-in-arm with more than 30 voluntary

organisations to ensure that Newham's poorest residents do not go hungry. The council's support helps towards logistical support, coordination and dedicated Newham Food alliance vehicles to distribute food to hubs around the borough to where it is needed most.

Thousands of Newham families benefit from the Food Alliance, and there is surplus food stock available to help meet any surge in demand.

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Important Links:

<https://www.newham.gov.uk/news/article/528/newham-council-adds-voice-to-the-end-childfoodpoverty-campaign-to-address-holiday-hunger-facing-thousands-of-school-children-this-half-term>

<https://www.newham.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-support-vulnerable-high-risk-people/3>