

## ICELAND FOODS BACKS FOOD FOUNDATION'S CALL TO EXTEND PROVISION OF FREE SCHOOL MEALS IN ENGLAND

- Iceland Foods has declared its public support for the **Feed the Future** campaign which is being coordinated by The Food Foundation.
- The campaign calls on the government to immediately increase eligibility of Free School Meals to all families in receipt of Universal Credit or equivalent benefits.
- If enacted, the extension would provide an additional 1.4 million children with nutritious school meals – supporting their health, happiness, and prospects.
- Iceland Foods is committed to supporting families throughout the cost-of-living crisis as part of its wider [‘Doing it right: right now’](#) philosophy.

**2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022:** Iceland Foods has announced its public support for Feed the Future campaign being coordinating by The Food Foundation, supporting the call for all children in state funded schools across England from families in receipt of Universal Credit or equivalent benefits to immediately become eligible for Free School Meals.

As the levels of food insecurity among British households with children [rose to 26% in September](#), Iceland is supporting this campaign to help ensure children have access to nutritious food. Free School Meals are a simple and cost-effective way to guarantee this.

With an estimated 800,000 children living below the poverty line not currently qualifying for free school meals in England, The Food Foundation’s proposed eligibility extension would represent an urgent first step towards a longer-term goal for the provision of comprehensively funded, nutritious school food for all children. The total cost of a Free School Meal is just £2.47 per child per day, and can boost their health, happiness and life prospects, as well as relieving stress on their families.

In England, after Year 2, only children from households earning less than £7,400, after benefits, are currently eligible for Free School Meals. This compares poorly to Scotland and Wales, where universal provision across all primary schools is being rolled out – and Northern Ireland, where eligibility based on household income is set at almost double the level of England (£14,000).

**Richard Walker, Managing Director of Iceland Foods**, said: “As the cost-of-living crisis continues to worsen, families are increasingly concerned about keeping food on the table – we see these worries first hand from our customers. By widening the criteria for Free School Meal eligibility, we can relieve the burden of stress that so many parents are experiencing and help to give children the support they need. Iceland is backing the Feed the Future campaign and I would encourage all businesses to get involved and support in any way they can.”

**Anna Taylor, Executive Director of the Food Foundation**, said: “Across England, hundreds of thousands of children are turning up to school hungry or without access to a substantial, nutritious meal at lunchtime. As the cost-of-living crisis takes hold, this situation will only get worse over the winter. This is an urgent situation and one that requires immediate attention from our government. It’s brilliant that Iceland has backed the Feed the Future campaign and we hope that other businesses will follow and call on Government to extend Free School Meals to all children living in households receiving Universal Credit.”

Iceland has continued to prioritise initiatives that support families as part of their [‘Doing it right: right now’](#) response to the increase in cost of living. Throughout the summer holidays, Iceland ran an initiative that enabled families with children eligible for free school meals to use their vouchers – worth £15 per child per week - in Iceland and Food Warehouse stores.

In partnership with charity-owned lender Fair for You, Iceland also launched the Iceland Food Club – offering a lifeline to customers across the UK with an interest free, affordable,

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flexible credit solution that enables them to avoid food poverty particularly over school holiday periods when expenses for many families rise.

To find out more about the Food Foundation's Feed the Future campaign, please visit: <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/news/feed-future-campaign>

**Ends**

## **ABOUT ICELAND:**

Iceland is recognised as the UK's leader in frozen food and operates nearly 1,000 stores across the country, together with a multi-award-winning online shopping service. It represents 2.5% of the UK grocery market. It prides itself on being a convenient and friendly place to do the family's weekly shop, as well as meet everyone's daily top-up shopping needs for fresh, chilled, frozen food and groceries. For more than 20 years Iceland has also offered a unique, free home delivery service for in-store purchases.

Iceland has won multiple awards for the quality of its food and service. Recent honours including being named Best Online Retailer and Best Frozen Food Retailer at the Retail Industry Awards 2018, Community Retailer of the Year at the Retail Week Awards 2018, Online Retailer of the Year at the IGD Awards 2017, and Online Supermarket of the Year at the Grocer Gold Awards 2017. Iceland's online shopping service was also named the UK's best in the 2016, 2017 and 2018 Which? supermarket surveys. Iceland has ranked as one of the UK's Best Big Companies to Work For in each of the last 12 years and was number one in both 2012 and 2014. Iceland was also named best UK supermarket for customer service in the 2018 and 2019 UK Customer Satisfaction Index.

Since 1970, Iceland has been proudly demonstrating to shoppers just how the Power of Frozen can deliver an extensive choice of high quality, great-tasting food from fine sources around the world at great value prices, while naturally generating low levels of food waste.

Always committed to doing the right thing for customers, communities and the environment, Iceland was a pioneer in removing artificial colours, flavours and nonessential preservatives from its own label food in the 1980s, and in banning genetically modified ingredients in the 1990s. In 2018 it committed to becoming the first major retailer, globally, to eliminate plastic packaging from all of its own label



## **ABOUT FEED THE FUTURE**

The Government must extend Free School Meals to more children in England.

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800,000 children living in poverty are currently not eligible for Free School Meals<sup>1</sup>. Expanding eligibility to all children in households on Universal Credit would be an effective way to support families struggling with a huge rise in the cost of living. The Feed the Future campaign is calling on Government to act urgently. We have more detail in our policy briefing [here](#).

This extension to eligibility is an urgent first step towards a long-term goal for the Government to provide universal, comprehensively funded, nutritious school food for all schoolchildren.

## **WHO WE ARE**

The group leading this campaign to extend Free School Meal provision is a coalition including The Food Foundation, School Food Matters, Sustain, Bite Back 2030, Child Poverty Action Group, Impact on Urban Health, Jamie Oliver Ltd and Chefs in Schools

It is backed by celebrity chefs Jamie Oliver, Tom Kerridge and Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall.

We also represent the School Food Review Working Group which is part of a wider coalition of 36 organisations including charities, unions, catering companies, educational organisations and academics.

## **ABOUT THE FOOD FOUNDATION**

The Food Foundation's mission is changing food policy and business practice to ensure everyone, across the UK nations, can afford and access a healthy diet. They are policy entrepreneurs and use surprising and inventive ideas to catalyse and deliver fundamental change in the food system by building and synthesising strong evidence, shaping powerful coalitions, harnessing citizens' voices and driving progress with impactful communications. In 2000, UK-wide legislation first defined a person living in fuel poverty as "a member of a household living on a lower income in a home which cannot be kept warm at reasonable cost". Whilst an understanding of fuel poverty is still broadly consistent across the four nations of the UK, it is now measured in different ways in some UK nations. NEA bases its projections on the 10% of a household's income as the definition of fuel poverty as it gives a realistic picture of the scale of fuel poverty in periods of more volatile energy prices. For more information visit: <https://www.nea.org.uk/energy-crisis>. The Food Foundation defines food insecurity (sometimes referred to as food poverty) as the state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.