



The Educational  
Institute of Scotland

Ms Nicola Sturgeon  
First Minister of Scotland

Ref: AB/LM  
07 September 2022  
abradley@eis.org.uk

[firstminister@gov.scot](mailto:firstminister@gov.scot)

Via email only

Dear Ms Sturgeon

I write on behalf of the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), Scotland's largest teacher trade union, to urge the Scottish Government once more to make urgent provision for all children and young people's guaranteed access to food during the school day and holiday periods.

That the Scottish Government is preparing a budgetary response to the current cost of living emergency, which we know is driving hundreds of thousands more families into poverty, underscores the indisputable need for swift action to ensure that every child and young person attending school can be provided daily with at least one school meal, or with the means to buy one should the current school meal infrastructure demand an alternative means of mustering an emergency response.

Amidst the current crisis and with the arrival of yet another Prime Minister who appears more than comfortable that millions of families and their children are likely to be the collateral damage of their political agenda, putting profit well above people, Scotland must adopt an exemplary people-first approach that recognises and upholds the humanity and dignity of all.

You have rightly pointed to the very real risk that lives will be lost over the course of this winter unless appropriate and sufficient action is taken by government to intervene as families wrestle with the dilemma of heating or eating.

The EIS recognises and welcomes the range of measures that the Scottish Government has already taken in seeking to mitigate the impact of poverty on children and young people, and commends the announcement yesterday to increase the rate of the Child Payment to £25.

But we are all the more convinced that more must be done- and much faster- if we are to prevent the catastrophe that looms heavily before us, the collective and individual trauma of which would last for years beyond this winter if not averted.

Whilst it is understood that the Scottish Government had planned a phased approach to the expansion of universal free school meals for Primary-aged pupils and the trialling of such provision in Secondary, the EIS is of the view, now more than ever, that stigma-free access to food during the school day and holiday periods, for all children and young people, including those from P6 to S6, has to be one of the emergency measures that Scotland takes.

Knowing that their children have eaten at school will ease some of the financial and stress burden on the hundreds of thousands of parents facing the brutal dilemma - keep my children warm or keep my children fed.

At this crisis juncture, there is no need to revisit the arguments relating to the profoundly negative impact of hunger and stigma on young people's participation at school, and on their outcomes. We know that the Scottish Government is live to the risks.

Scotland can and must be a beacon of human decency in the midst of this cost of living emergency and in the face of a newly configured Westminster government which seems to care nothing for ordinary people or their children, least of all those in Scotland.

The EIS implores the Scottish Government to find a way to accelerate access to food during the school day and over holiday periods, for all children and young people as part of the crisis response to the current cost of living emergency.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Bradley". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter of each word being capitalized and larger than the others.

Andrea Bradley  
EIS General Secretary