

Jane Hunt MP



House of Commons

16 June 2020

Dear local residents,

Thank you to those who have contacted me about free school meals over the summer holidays.

I recognise that it is a particularly difficult time for parents locally and it is right that the Government has introduced the free school meal (FSM) voucher scheme to ensure that those normally eligible for FSM still receive them even if they are not attending school.

As you will be aware, provision for free school meals is ordinarily term time only, being aimed at providing healthy meals for children in school. However, during the Easter and half term holidays, the Department for Education met the costs of the national voucher scheme to provide free school meals for eligible pupils. I very much welcome that, in recognition of the unprecedented situation facing parents and children this summer, a new £120 million COVID Summer Food Fund has been announced. This Fund will provide a one-off six-week voucher to eligible families at the end of term which they can use in supermarkets.

Significant wider support has also been made available for children and families. On 10 June, the Prime Minister confirmed that an additional £63 million would be distributed to local authorities in England to help those who are struggling to afford food and other essentials due to COVID-19. In addition, as part of an injection of over £6.5 billion into the welfare system, Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit have been uplifted by around £1,000 a year for the next 12 months. The Department for Education's Holiday Activities and Food programme will also be running this summer, which will benefit thousands of disadvantaged children.

I hope that this information is reassuring. If I can be of further assistance, please do let me know.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jane'.

Jane Hunt MP