



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Ms Emma Alexander
Managing Director
Derbyshire County Council
County Hall
Matlock
Derbyshire
DE4 3AG

4 August 2023

Our Ref: MT29118/KS

Re: Derbyshire School Meals Cost

Dear Emma

I am writing on behalf of my constituents regarding the increase in the cost of school meals in Derbyshire.

Parents and carers in my Erewash constituency tell me they are very concerned about the significant rise in the cost of school meals and the impact it will have on their children. The 41 per cent increase will cost working parents hundreds of pounds per year per child more than last year at a time when global events are already putting strain on people's finances.

According to the recent English Indices of Deprivation, Hopewell Farm located in the Erewash District Ward of Cotmanhay, remains the most deprived Lower-layer Super Output Area (LSOA) in Derbyshire, ranking 227 out of the 32,844 LSOA areas in England.

In total, Erewash contains four out of the 22 LSOAs in Derbyshire that fall within the 10 per cent most deprived areas in England and 11 out of the 64 LSOAs in Derbyshire that fall within the 20 per cent most deprived areas in England, second only to Chesterfield.

Over 38 per cent of the Erewash population work in routine and manual occupations, which is over 10 per cent higher than the national average.

Whilst I understand that the school meals price increase will not affect households who qualify for free school meals, there are many children in Erewash whose carers are on lower incomes yet do not meet the criteria for free school meals.

Good nutrition has been linked to better education results. There is a risk that many parents will now choose to send their children to school with packed lunches made up of cheaper, less healthy, over-processed ingredients.

Obesity and related conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, are the most prominent health impacts of poor diets, which are driven by high consumption of products that are highly processed and contain unhealthy levels of fat, salt and sugar, as many products marketed for the 'lunchbox' contain.

I would be grateful therefore if Derbyshire County Council would consider not only the financial difficulties caused by this increase but also the health impact on those children who will be most

acutely affected, and align the cost of school meals to more closely reflect the economic situation of our region and surrounding Authorities.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Maggie Throup', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Maggie Throup MP
Member of Parliament for Erewash

cc Cllr Alex Dale