

NOTICE OF MOTION**LABOUR & CO-OPERATIVE GROUP****SUPPORT FREE SCHOOL MEALS FOR ALL CHILDREN IN POVERTY**

“For many pupils, the free school meal is the only hot meal they will eat all day. Without a proper breakfast, a hot lunch at school aids pupil concentration, boosts energy levels and increases ability to learn.

Nationally fewer than half of children in low income households receive a free school meal. 1.2 million children classified as living in poverty are not eligible for one.

Over six thousand children in poverty in Brighton and Hove are missing out on a free school meal; 1,400 in Brighton Pavilion Constituency, 1,600 in Hove and Portslade and 3,100 in Brighton Kemptown.

Under the rules as they stand, any household working more than 16 hours per week loses all entitlement to free school meals and the government has indicated that a similar situation will exist after the introduction of Universal Credit.

As well as the obvious nutritional and educational benefits, free school meals are an important household budget consideration for low income families, especially at a time of high food and fuel costs and changes to welfare. Facing the loss of these meals creates further barriers for families seeking to move into work or take on more hours. This situation runs counter to the government’s stated intention of Universal Credit making work pay.

Therefore this council:

- Pledges its support for the Children’s Society Campaign: ‘Fair and Square’ that calls on the government to ensure that all children in families receiving Universal Credit are eligible for free school meals.
- Requests that the Chief Executive writes to the Work and Pensions Minister calling on him to make free school meals available to the children of families in receipt of Universal Credit as plans for its introduction are finalized and as part of the government’s expected review of free school meals.”

Proposed by: Cllr Anne Pissaridou

Seconded by: Cllr Gilbey

Supported by: Cllrs Mitchell, Morgan, Fitch, Hamilton, Carden, Marsh, Meadows, Lepper, Robins, Farrow and Wilson.