

Dear [Name of MP],

I'm asking you to pledge your support for the instalment of a Right to Food in UK domestic law. We urgently need a rights-based approach to transform our food system to make it work for everyone. The Right to Food in international law is part of the Right to an adequate standard of living, first laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 25 and crucially, it is a right that successive UK Governments have ratified on an international stage but have yet to fully bring home.

What do I mean by the Right to Food?

The Right to Food movement seeks to enshrine into law people's right to feed themselves with dignity. By dignity I mean that people should have the ability to buy and eat good, healthy, ecologically produced and culturally appropriate food. Crucially this means that people need to be paid a fair, living wage so that their spending capacity can cover the cost of living (renting, cost of travel, fuel) while still being able to afford and access fresh, nutritious, culturally appropriate food.

Enshrining the Right to Food in domestic UK law would provide the legal basis to address all aspects of our food chain - from farm to fork - and this includes improving the rights, livelihoods and social protection of those people working in food production, particularly precarious, seasonal and undeclared workers. By valuing our food as a fundamental right we will show that we value those that work to put that food on our plates, and honour their contribution to society. We can value their contribution by improving their social protection, working and housing conditions and health and safety at work, as well as ensuring workers receive a living wage.

Food banks do not allow people to have dignity that the Right to Food requires. While food banks are a temporary emergency response in the here and now they should not be entrenched as the solution to food insecurity. Much of the food that is donated to food banks is highly processed, unhealthy food from the industrial food system while lack of options, as well as other barriers, prevents people having the dignity of choice. Many food banks receive 'donations' in the form of food surplus or non-purchased food from large supermarkets. What is deemed unfit for consumption by one demographic should not be offered as a solution to the hunger and food insecurity of another.

Legal recognition of our Right to Food provides leverage to transform our food system to one that values health, environmentally friendly methods of production and social justice; a shift from a market-based approach to a rights-based approach to food. It has the potential to instigate fundamental system-wide changes, which includes improving access to land, a safe and secure food supply, and sustainable production that protects biodiversity, natural resources and a secure livelihood for producers.

While I understand that a legal Right to Food may take some time to achieve, policies that can support people's right to food in the meantime include:

- A bigger budget for nature-friendly farming across all four nations to meet the scale of need, deliver a reconfigured SFI in England (with a cap on payments) and an interim support scheme for small farms
- The implementation of a National Food Strategy for England which includes ambitious public procurement targets, localised food production, and prioritises healthy nutritious food and nature and close collaboration with the Ministry of Health - including more support for urban and peri-urban farms so that underserved urban communities can better access fresh fruit and veg and universal free school meals so that no child goes hungry.
- Measures to guarantee a fair and secure income for farmers and farmworkers, such as a pilot of a basic income for farm workers scheme, protection for British farmers in trade deals, eliminating the risk of labour abuses and exploitation including those seen through the Seasonal Worker Scheme, and a redistribution of corporate profits in the food system.
- Substantial measures to improve access to land for new entrants, including training and support, to support first time farmers into farming and land work, particularly from marginalised groups.

Please respond to my letter to confirm that you are committed to ensuring that everyone's Right to Food is properly protected and supported.