May 2024

Dear [candidate name]

As you are running as a parliamentary candidate in X (your constituency), I am hoping you will be able to meet with me to discuss your commitments and plans to reduce and eliminate poverty in this area and beyond.

[*Add in any relevant local statistics. It’s vital to remember that food bank use represents only a fraction of wider severe food insecurity which has soared in recent years. Recent Department for Work and Pensions data from the Family Resources Survey found that 14% of UK households unable to afford food or skipping meals used a food bank[[1]](#footnote-1).]*

No one should have to turn to charity to be able to eat. Yet, over the last 14 years, increasing numbers of people have been pushed to the doors of independent food banks and other charitable food aid providers because of lack of money to buy food.

As the UK poverty crisis has escalated, the charitable food aid sector has been pushed past breaking point. Recent data from the Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) has consistently found that food bank teams are being overstretched and overwhelmed by rising demand. Not only have food banks faced falling food donations and dwindling surplus supplies, but volunteers are exhausted and burnt out.

Food banks and other food aid providers are being asked to do the impossible by supporting too large a number of people unable to afford food. These include both people in work whose wages are not enough to cover the cost of living as well as people who are already receiving all their social security entitlements but are still not able to make ends meet.

IFAN is calling on the next government to take immediate actions to address food insecurity through a cash first or income-focused approach including

* adopting an Essentials Guarantee as a first step towards providing a Living Income for all
* removing the two-child limit as well as the benefit cap
* abolishing sanctions
* ending the five-week wait for Universal Credit alongside removing benefit deductions
* removing No Recourse to Public Funds status
* the permanent provision of funding for local crisis support schemes to enable every UK local authority to distribute help via cash payments
* ensuring employers pay a real Living Wage and provide job security
* investment in local advice services

I would be keen to arrange a mutually convenient time and location to meet with you in person or online. I am eager to understand the commitments you can make to reduce poverty both locally and nationally.

I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.

Thank you very much indeed.

Yours sincerely,

[Name/Email/Any other contact details]

1. Family Resources Survey, Department of Work and Pensions, 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)