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HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Sharon Hodgson MP

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12 February 2019

Dear Sean,

On 23 February 2015 you wrote to me, as Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on School Food, to highlight the changes Ofsted was making to give wellbeing, health and healthy eating a more prominent place in inspection. I was delighted to hear that Ofsted was to include a judgement on personal development, behaviour and welfare and that inspectors would look at the extent to which schools supported pupils to gain 'knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy, including through exercising and healthy eating.'

You went on to describe how inspectors would look for evidence of a culture or ethos of exercise and healthy eating throughout their entire inspection and members of the APPG were delighted when the new framework came into effect in September 2015. This change to the framework clearly showed Ofsted's commitment to school food and healthy eating and reflected the important work of the School Food Plan.

It was therefore with great regret that I read the draft inspection framework and handbooks when they were published on 16 January. With no mention whatsoever of healthy eating, school food or food education I wonder what has happened to Ofsted's stated commitment to school food and healthy eating?

The need for a sharp focus on school food and healthy eating hasn't gone away. Data on Childhood Obesity from the National Child Measurement Programme makes grim reading with 1 in 3 Y6 children overweight or obese. Ofsted's own thematic review, published in July 2018 showed that:

- schools delegate the responsibility of compliance with school food standards to contractors without asking for evidence.
- "quite a few packed lunches had a biscuit, a chocolate bar or a piece of cake." and that packed lunches were most likely to include a packet of crisps.
- inspectors found that health initiatives in schools were having an impact, with parents reporting changes in children's choices at home as a result of healthy school activities, including children eating more fruit and vegetables.

(Continued overleaf)



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Amanda Spielman has said "We must recognise that schools cannot provide a silver bullet for all societal ills ... Families, government, industry, and other parts of the public sector all have a role to play in making food and drink healthier, and supporting children to make better choices." We agree. Obesity is everyone's problem but, with children spending 190 days at school, surely this provides a unique environment to positively influence children's choices around food and health? We must seize this opportunity and Ofsted must play its part by restoring the judgement and helping schools to focus on what they can do to help children lead happy and healthy lives.

Therefore, on behalf of the APPG on school food I am asking that Ofsted:

- reinstate the judgement on personal development, behaviour and welfare seen in the 2015 framework
- work with Department for Education as they develop the proposed healthy rating scheme for schools
- use the scheme, as intended, as a source of evidence about the steps taken by schools to promote healthy eating and physical activity.

I look forward to your reply, which I will share with the APPG at our next meeting in July. If you are able to, or would like to, attend and present at a future meeting please do get in touch with my office.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Hodgson".

Mrs Sharon Hodgson MP

Member of Parliament for Washington & Sunderland West Constituency
Chair, APPG for School Food
Shadow Minister for Public Health