

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

20 JANUARY 2021

QUESTION 1 in accordance with Standing Order No.36

Councillor White to ask the Chair of the Committee:

Weekly Food Hamper for School Children

Chartwells is one of the providers supplying weekly food hampers to parents and guardians during lockdown if their children qualify. Some hampers being distributed around the country are woefully inadequate. Can the Lead Councillor confirm what work has been undertaken by the Council and Brighter Futures for Children to ensure that the food hampers being distributed in Reading are adequate ?

REPLY by the Chair of the Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee:

I invite Councillor Pearce, the Lead Councillor for Education to make the response on my behalf.

REPLY by Councillor Pearce, Lead Councillor for Education:

Thank you for this question. The Council and Brighter Futures for Children remain committed to providing high quality meals to our most vulnerable children. All hampers supplied should meet the Local Authorities Caterers Association requirements for nutritional value. Chartwells has advised Brighter Futures for Children-that every Unit Manager will need to take photos of the produce going into a hamper and a photo of a completed hamper box for the Area Management to approve as ready for pick-up. In the event that schools and families feel the hampers did not meet the requirement, we will be seeking a refund of the costs.

With our commitment to tackling food poverty, we have worked to secure that the National School Voucher scheme will be rolled out from 18 January 2021. This will enable families to provide for their children in a way which meets their needs rather than rely on food hampers. We will, of course, contribute to any national inquiry into the quality of school meals if asked to do so.