

Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
4th floor, Seacole Building,
2 Marsham Street,
London,
SW1P 4DF

8th January 2020

Dear Ms Villiers,

Commit to supporting safe, sustainable and healthy nutrition for all

On behalf of the British Dietetic Association, my congratulations on your recent election success. We look forward to working with you in the coming months and years.

I wrote to your colleagues at the Department of Health and Social Care during the election campaign to highlight a number of key actions that are essential if we are to ensure that the nation's diet and food system is sustainable, healthy and affordable. Many of these actions are also relevant to your department and its work to improve our food system. I hope you can commit to take action in all these areas, and would be pleased to meet you to discuss how the British Dietetic Association and our expert members could support you.

- **Develop a comprehensive food strategy for the UK that delivers safe, affordable and sustainable food for all.** Our food system impacts on every person in the UK, employs 1 in 8 people in work and has the potential to improve or, alternatively, significantly limit people's health and wellbeing. Our food system has to produce food that is good for us, and good for the planet. The independent food review currently being led by Henry Dimbleby needs to be ambitious and evidence-based, and your government needs to implement its proposals as a matter of priority.
- **Ensure that Brexit does not impact on the provision of specialist nutrition products, the price of food or our world-leading food and public health standards.** Leaving the EU in 2020 must not lead to negative outcomes for the many people reliant on specialist nutrition products, many of which are manufactured in other EU countries. Your government must mitigate any impact on food prices or availability that would hit the poorest most significantly, but also have an impact on the wider economy, and ensure that our high standards of public health and food safety are at least maintained if not improved after Brexit.
- **Take urgent action to tackle food insecurity and malnutrition** by enshrining a "Right to Food" in law to ensure that nobody is unable to access sufficient food due to poverty, the welfare system or a lack of care and support. Over eight million people in the UK suffer food insecurity and over three million people suffer disease related malnutrition.

The Conservative Party has promised to “Unleash Britain’s Potential”. We welcome this ambitious promise but a poorly nourished nation will not meet its potential. Our food system will only reach its potential, especially post Brexit, with strong and ambitious leadership from central government. We have already proven that we can be world leading in food, public health and environmental standards, and have the potential to go even further. Our NHS will only achieve its potential with investment and a strong and growing dietetic workforce to ensure that its patients eat and drink well and according to their needs.

The British Dietetic Association will gladly work with you to help deliver on all these proposals and other key policies. I look forward to meet you or your colleagues to discuss these important issues further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caroline Bovey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Caroline Bovey BEM
Chair, British Dietetic Association