



julian.bell@ealing.gov.uk
Johnsony1@ealing.gov.uk

Danny Judge
Schools Convenor
Ealing Unison
judget@ealing.gov.uk

5 May 2021

Dear Danny,

We wanted to write to update you on progress towards paying the London Living Wage for school meals staff in Ealing. We're very pleased to be able to say that, as a result of the Council's negotiations with the 55 members of the Ealing School Catering Consortium (ESCC), an agreement has now been reached for all staff to be paid at least the London Living Wage (LLW) from the start of the new ISS contract on 1 August 2021.

As you know, the council negotiates the school catering contract on behalf of the ESCC, with the schools providing the funding and therefore setting the financial limits of the negotiation. The ability of schools to fund wage increases at the pace we would like to see has been severely constrained in recent years by the miserly increases in funding for universal free school meals provided by the Tory government. The most recent increase, in September 2020, of just 4p per meal, fell well short of covering the cost pressures from both the increasing minimum wage and rising costs of food.

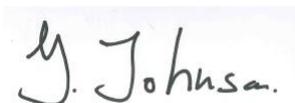
Ealing Council, however, agrees with the school meals staff and Unison that progress towards paying catering staff the living wage they deserve has been too slow. Given this, therefore, we're delighted that we have been able to assist schools in identifying funding that will permit all tiers of catering staff currently paid below the LLW to receive an uplift to meet it from day one of the new contract.

Ealing's school meals staff have worked tirelessly, in difficult conditions, throughout the pandemic to ensure the continued provision of vital meals for the borough's children. They deserve a decent, living wage that reflects that commitment. This of course applies to all contracted workers, and we are currently reviewing all contracts awarded by the council to identify any other instances of the LLW not being paid. We have had productive conversations with the Living Wage Foundation and will continue to work closely with them, in line with our commitments as a Living Wage employer.

With kind regards,



Cllr Julian Bell
Leader, Ealing Council



Cllr Yvonne Johnson
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for
Schools and Children's Services