



Lord Agnew Kt DL

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21st March 2019

Dear Bishop,

Thank you for your question around families with three or more children at the Oral Parliamentary Questions session on Thursday 21st February 2019.

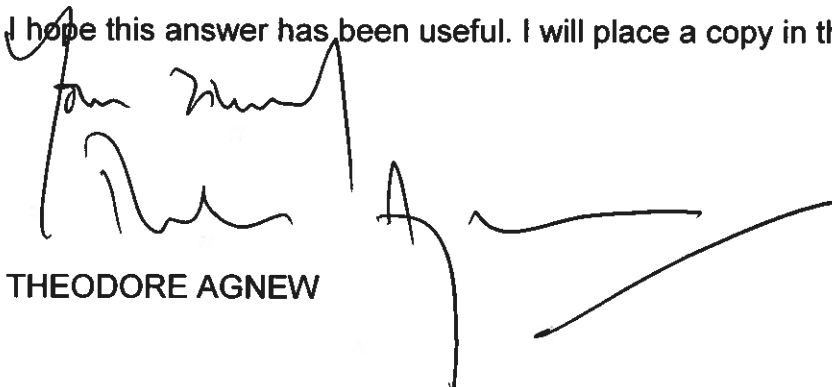
There is no link between the policy to provide support for a maximum of two children, and access to free school meals. Families who are in receipt of one of the eligible benefits will receive a free school meal for all their children that they submit a claim for, saving them around £400 per year per child.

Further to this, the transitional protections that we introduced will ensure that no child loses eligibility for a free school meal during the Universal Credit roll out. Any child who was eligible on 1 April 2018, or at any point during the roll out, will continue to receive a free meal. This is regardless of any change in their family circumstances, such as the family increasing their income and moving off Universal Credit.

These protections were put in place on an individual child basis, not on a family basis. This means younger children will not become entitled to free school meals simply because their older sibling is in receipt via the transitional protections if their family circumstances have changed.

This Government is absolutely committed to deliver a country that works for all. Worklessness is one of the most important drivers of child poverty; children in workless families are three times more likely to be in a relative low income household. Universal Credit is designed to strengthen incentives for parents to move into and progress in work.

I hope this answer has been useful. I will place a copy in the House libraries.



THEODORE AGNEW