

Dear Caterer

**Hotober : LACA’s initiative to encourage schools to allow**

**the return to hot meals ASAP**

We understand the return to school hasn’t been without issues when it comes to providing meals at lunchtime. Some schools are still choosing packed lunches and we know retailers are promoting the voucher scheme to parents.

As the colder months approach, we want to help you to return to serving hot cooked meals. As key workers throughout the pandemic, we all know school catering teams are best placed to deliver hot meals safely. We know the benefits to children’s attainment and development that eating a balanced diet can make, so it’s paramount they return as soon as possible.

A new initiative - **‘Hotober’ -** has been created as a pre event to National School Meals Week 2020. It aims to encourage conversations between caterers, schools, on site staff, parents and the like to allow the return of hot meals as soon as everyone feels it safe to do so – Rather than leave the date open ended, LACA have selected a date to emphasise the urgency – but of course this may not be realistic in all schools.

**Hotober** commences on 1st October - a date which also ties in with census day when we know many schools will want to encourage uptake – it may make the conversations that bit easier.

**Hotober** resources are available and can be downloaded for free at [www.thegreatschoollunch.co.uk/resources](http://www.thegreatschoollunch.co.uk/resources). We have created everything you need to return to serving meal to as many children as it is safe to do so.

* Letter to your local MP
* Banners
* Stickers

Resources include

* Editable posters
* Healthy eating posters
* Letter to head teachers
* Letter to catering managers

This initiative has been warmly received by MP’s and other stakeholders, with many being happy to have a school meal within their constituencies to show their support and to demonstrate they are a safe option for children.

Good Luck

**Continue promoting school meals with National School Meals Week 2020**

NSMW 2020, will allow you to keep promoting school meals and encourage uptake as children return to school after half term. This year the event will run from 9th – 13th November and has 5 simple themes to promote the benefits of a hot meal and get children excited about school lunches once more.

Thank you for your ongoing support

**LACA’s NSMW Team**