**[Add your name here] calls on the Government to give employees a ‘real meal deal’**

**For immediate release**

**[Add your name here]** has called on the Government to back a new scheme to help millions of Brits pay for food during the working day.

The ‘meal card’ scheme, based on a successful model already operating in 35 countries around the world, would give all employees working for participating employers a meal card loaded with up to £220 each month (£10 per working day). This meal card could then be used to purchase food and non-alcoholic beverages at local restaurants and food providers that opt-in to the scheme.

The scheme would be paid for by extending an existing tax relief for employees that is currently only open to employees who purchase food at on-site canteens. Neither employers nor employees would pay tax on the allowance. The meal card itself would be offered either as a physical or digital card that people could keep on their phones.

The scheme would support millions of employees across the country and **cut food bills for the lowest-income households by as much as 50%.** The scheme is particularly relevant given the increasing cost pressures being felt by employees. From 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, the Trussell Trust’s network provided more than 2.1 million parcels to people facing financial hardship across the country. According to the Trussell Trust, around 14% of people accessing food banks are in work.

**[Add your name here]** said: *[Add a short quote here — here’s an example: “Employees in my constituency are struggling with the rising cost of food. This is a benefit that could make a real difference to people’s lives, and would be a quick win for the Treasury as it seeks practical solutions to the cost of living crisis]*

**Johann Vaucanson of the Real Meal Deal Campaign said***: “As millions of hard-working Brits struggle with rising costs, a tax-relief funded meal card scheme would offer a lifeline to many, cutting monthly food bills in half for the lowest paid households. Critically, meal cards would be completely self-financing, with increased demand in the struggling hospitality sector boosting tax receipts for the Treasury.*

*In line with the new Prime Minister’s commitment to job creation, economic growth, and tax cuts, meal cards would create 300,000 jobs across Britain, add more than £6 billion to the economy, and provide an oven-ready mechanism for reducing the tax burden on ordinary working people and small businesses.*

*There’s already a wealth of data showing how similar schemes have delivered huge benefits to employees, employers, hospitality businesses and local economies around the world. Our analysis shows that at least four million employees across Britain would take up the scheme if given the opportunity”.*

Economic analysis commissioned by the Real Meal Deal Campaign shows that as well as benefitting employees, the scheme would also provide a major boost to the economy, creating 300,000 new jobs and adding £6.4bn in GVA to the UK economy.

Meal cards are proven to be highly successful, and similar schemes operate in 35 countries around the world, benefiting over 50 million people.

By boosting people’s spending power, the scheme would drive an average 18% uplift in turnover for restaurants and food providers, unlocking additional tax revenue for the Treasury offsetting the scheme’s costs and creating £2.5bn in net-benefits for the public purse.

**Notes to editors:**

* The Real Meal Deal Campaign launched in September 2022. It is being supported by a range of employers, restaurants groups and other organisations, and is being coordinated by Edenred, the UK’s leading payments provider.
* More information on the campaign is available at [realmealdeal.co.uk](http://realmealdeal.co.uk)
* Additional information on the economic impact figures quoted above is available in the full economic analysis report conducted by Ignite Economics available at [realmealdeal.co.uk](http://realmealdeal.co.uk).

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* For further information about the campaign for a Real Meal Deal, contact Emeka Forbes at [emekaforbes@wacommunications.co.uk](mailto:emekaforbes@wacommunications.co.uk).