

Talking points for your letter

Main points to get across

- An adequate diet is essential for a healthy and productive life, but too many children around the world suffer the lasting effects of malnutrition.
- Nearly half of all deaths in children under 5 are related to undernutrition, children under 5 with severe acute malnutrition are 9 times more likely to die from preventable diseases.
- Malnutrition can also permanently affect children's physical and mental development, harming their ability to learn and to be economically productive later in life.
- Since the first 'Nutrition for Growth' (N4G) summit in 2013, there has been a reduction of 12 million stunted children. The summit mobilised around £17 billion to combat malnutrition, of which the UK contributed £1.25 billion.
- Investing in nutrition programmes is extremely cost-effective and has significant economic returns.
- The UK should aim to reach 50 million women and children with nutrition-related programmes by 2025.
- Sufficient resources need to be committed to enable this to happen, but this is made very much harder to achieve by the recent cuts to UK aid.
- The quality as well as quantity of nutrition spending matters. The UK Government should ensure that all its programmes have the maximum impact on nutrition. The 'OECD Policy Marker for Nutrition', which the UK has already signed up to, should be used to do this from the start when development programmes are designed.

Who to send your letter to

Rt. Hon. [Wendy Morton MP](#), parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Foreign, Development and Commonwealth Office, King Charles Street, London SW1A 2AH

fcdo.correspondence@fcdo.gov.uk

[@morton_wendy](#)

Wendy Morton is the Minister responsible for the Government's global health work, including nutrition.

Nutrition basics

Talking about nutrition can sometimes get quite technical, so we've put together these definitions of some of the main terms used.

Acute malnutrition is a sudden, severe period of inadequate nutrition.

Anaemia is caused by a number of factors, most commonly iron deficiency from not eating enough nutritious iron-rich food.

Breastfeeding provides young infants with the nutrients they need for healthy development.

Chronic malnutrition is sustained, inadequate nutrition over a long period of time.

Global Nutrition Summit – a summit to be hosted by the Government of Japan in December 2021, where additional commitments to tackle malnutrition are to be agreed by international donors.

Malnutrition includes undernutrition, over-nutrition and micronutrient deficiencies.

Micronutrient deficiencies result from low intake and/or absorption of adequate vitamins and minerals from a well-balanced diet.

Nutrition is the process of consuming essential food in adequate quantities to support proper growth and good health.

Nutrition for Growth (N4G) is a process that brings together business leaders, scientists, governments and civil society organisations to make financial and political commitments to tackle malnutrition. The first N4G Summit was co-hosted by the UK and Brazil in 2013.

Nutrition-sensitive programmes address some of the underlying reasons for malnutrition, such as agriculture or education.

Nutrition-specific programmes directly tackle the immediate causes of malnutrition, such as inadequate food intake, by providing food or nutrient supplements.

Obesity is when a person is too heavy for their height and is a form of malnutrition. Although someone may have enough food, these are not necessarily the right foods.

Overnutrition refers to the over-consumption of food, which can cause obesity.

Stunting is where a child is too short for its age, often the result of chronic or frequent undernutrition.

Undernutrition is caused by an inadequate diet and includes stunting, wasting and micronutrient deficiencies.

Wasting is where a child is too thin for its age. This usually indicates recent weight loss, caused by not having enough food to eat or an infectious disease, such as diarrhoea, that has caused weight loss.

You can find more basic information about malnutrition on this [WHO Fact Sheet](#).