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## Royal Garden Party invitation recognises services to education

**A Northumbria University professor attended the first Royal Garden Party of a celebratory Jubilee summer, following a special nomination from the Department of Education.**

[Greta Defeyter](#), a Professor of Developmental Psychology was nominated to attend the Buckingham Palace Garden Party in recognition of her services to education and children services.

Greta is Director of Northumbria University's [Healthy Living Lab](#), one of the

UK's leading research centres into issues around the provision of child feeding programmes and holiday hunger and has spent 20 years researching food insecurity, social injustice, school feeding programmes and holiday hunger programmes in the UK.

Research from the team in the Healthy Living Lab has been instrumental in ensuring children have access to healthy meals at school, during both term time and holidays and in the development and expansion of the Department of Education's [Holiday Activities and Food programme](#) in England.

Greta was delighted to attend the Royal Garden Party on behalf of the Lab, along with her partner Simon Smith, who also works at Northumbria in the new NMC Competence Test Centre.

She said: "It was an honour to be nominated by the Department of Education to attend the Royal Garden Party. We had a fabulous time at Buckingham Palace, despite the wet weather. It was lovely to meet members of the Royal Family and all the other people who were in attendance, as well as seeing the palace gardens – the rain definitely didn't dampen our spirits."

She added: "My nomination was not only recognition of my research, but recognition of everyone at the Healthy Living Lab and all the local authorities, organisations, staff and volunteers who run holiday programmes, after school clubs and school breakfast clubs..

"Everyone working in this field is aware of the emotional and physical impact of child poverty, not only from what we see on daily basis but how it affects us outside of work. Many of these services are provided by volunteers or by staff working additional hours, and they, in my opinion, are the unsung heroes who deserve recognition too."

Dr Joanne Atkinson, Head of the Department of Social Work, Education and Community Wellbeing, said: "We are delighted that the Department of Education has recognised the outstanding impact of research led by Greta and the team in the Healthy Living Lab with this nomination.

"Their important work has had a significant impact on millions of families across the UK and has helped us to be ranked third in the UK for research power in social policy in a recent assessment of research excellence across all universities."

Professor Defeyter's research has led to changes in government policy, and she has provided evidence on food insecurity, holiday provision and school breakfast clubs to a number of Select Committees and Parliamentary Inquiries.

She is an associate editor for Frontiers in Public Health and Paediatrics, a member of the All Party Parliamentary Group on School Food, the School Food Review Group, an executive member of North East Child Poverty Commission, and Chair of Feeding Britain's Academic Advisory Group. In her spare time she is trustee of Family Gateway and the Great North Air Ambulance Service.

In 2017, she won a Food Heroes Award from Sustain for her research on school breakfast clubs and holiday hunger programmes and in 2020 she was recognised, by the Big Issue, as one of the top 100 change makers for her research and policy impact on childhood food poverty in the UK.

The Northumbria University Healthy Living Lab researches public health interventions including school and community breakfast clubs, holiday hunger, nutrition and food insecurity within schools and the associations between nutrition, cognition and physical activity.

The University is also one of the founding members of the [Holiday Activities and Food \(HAF\) Alliance](#), which pools expertise of some of the UK's leading not-for-profit organisations who have years of experience working in communities to alleviate food poverty and physical inactivity and is a member of the School Meals Coalition led by founding members states and UN World Food Programme.

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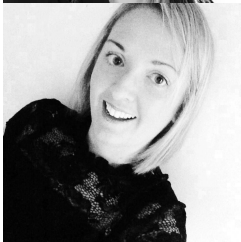


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