



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref ATISN 15267

5 July 2021

Dear

ATISN 15267 - Food Strategy

Information requested

Thank you for your request which I received on 23 June 2021. You asked for:

1. The House of Commons, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, COVID-19 and the issues of security in food supply: Government Response to the Committee's Seventh Report of Session 2019–21, mentions the 'right to food'. It is suggested in this report that it could be implemented in England as part of its White Paper following the publication of the National Food Strategy. Are Wales held to the National Food Strategy? And if not, what is the alternative?
2. Will there be a follow on to the 'Food for Wales, food from Wales 2010–2020' Report?
3. Are there any current policies in place in Wales which aim to tackle food poverty/food access?
4. Wellbeing goals - is there a standardised approach for public bodies to report back to Welsh Government on their contribution to the goals? The website states 'The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.' Are public bodies therefore held accountable for contributing or not contributing to the goals?

Our response

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

1. Food is a devolved matter. The National Food Strategy is an England only initiative, and the Welsh Government is not held to its recommendations or to any White Paper published by Defra following the publication of the National Food Strategy.

In Wales, the Welsh Government is in the process of developing a new strategy for the food & drink industry in Wales. As part of this process, in February 2021, the Welsh Government published a Vision and Mission for the food & drink industry in Wales which can be found on the Business Wales website at the following link:

[Strategic Vision | Business Wales - Food and drink \(gov.wales\)](#)

2. The Welsh Government is in the process of developing a new strategy for the food & drink industry in Wales. This will be a successor to 'Food for Wales, food from Wales 2010–2020', and the resultant Action Plan, 'Towards Sustainable Growth: An Action Plan for the Food and Drink Industry 2014-2020'. Publication has been delayed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is anticipated that the final document will be published on the Welsh Government website later this year.

The recently published Programme for Government (<https://gov.wales/programme-government>) states that the Welsh Government to develop a Community Food Strategy during the life of this government. Food connects communities in many beneficial ways which advance the Future Generations Wales well-being goals. The Welsh Government will be engaging with stakeholders as these proposals are developed further.

3. The Welsh Government has a number of initiatives to address food poverty or food access. The Welsh Government has secured a further £2m *European Transition Funding: Tackling Food Poverty and Addressing Food Insecurity* for 2021-22. Officials are working with stakeholders to finalise the criteria and distribution of the funding.

The overall aims of the funding are:

- to **support organisations**, including local authorities and third sector organisations to work in collaboration in the here and now to tackle food poverty and addressing food insecurity in Wales
- **to support communities** to invest in initiatives that help tackle the root causes of food poverty and food insecurity and develop healthy, sustainable solutions which involve the communities that are affected.
- To support an increased number of **people** facing food poverty by strengthening existing community food initiatives across each local authority including a focus on activity that helps to address the root causes of food poverty.
- To encourage applications from organisations that want to work **collaboratively**, across county boundaries, to help maximise the impact of the funding. Local authorities are expected to work with local experts, including the third sector, who are already addressing food poverty and insecurity.

Free School Meals

The Welsh Government continues to make funding available to local authorities so that they can make free school meal provision to eligible learners who are not required to attend school premises because they are self-isolating as a result of COVID-19.

Throughout the pandemic, we have made it a key priority to ensure that free school meals have been available to eligible learners who have not been able to attend school because of Covid 19. During the 2020-21 financial year, more than £60m in additional funding has been made available for free school meal provision. Wales has led the way in ensuring that those who rely on free school meals have still been able to receive them during the school holidays. We were the first of the UK nations to confirm that free school meal provision would be made available during the summer holidays and the first to announce that provision would continue throughout the school holidays until Easter 2021 and have now confirmed that £23.3m additional funding will be available for free school meal provision during school holidays throughout the 2021-22 financial year.

In April 2019, in response to the UK Government's continued rollout of Universal Credit, a net annualised earnings threshold of £7,400 was introduced for families in receipt of Universal Credit who want to claim free school meals. The Welsh Government has made a commitment to rapidly review this earnings threshold when new data becomes available later in the summer.

Free Breakfasts in Primary Schools

The Welsh Government introduced a free breakfast initiative in primary schools in September 2004, initially funded by a specific grant which afforded a mechanism to monitor take-up and the costs involved. Following the successful establishment of the initiative, it was considered appropriate to protect free breakfast provision via legislation and transfer the grant funding to the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) which local authorities receive from the Welsh Government as part of the Local Government Settlement.

Section 88 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 places a duty on a local authority to provide free breakfast on each school day for learners at a primary school it maintains.

Breakfasts provided by local authorities must be:

- provided free of charge
- available on the school's premises
- available before the start of the school day.

Local authorities have the flexibility to decide the form of the breakfast content subject to compliance with the Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013 which regulate food and drink provided in maintained schools.

The Welsh Government has published for local authorities and governing bodies, of interest (<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/free-breakfast-in-primary-schools-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities-and-governing-bodies.pdf>).

Additional Breakfast Allowance for Year 7 Pupils who are Eligible for Free School Meals

There is increasing evidence of young people using the allowance made to them for their free school lunch to buy food at breakfast time or during morning break because they are arriving at school hungry without having eaten a proper breakfast. Initially, starting in January 2021, the Welsh Government has made an additional allowance available to year 7 learners who are in receipt of free school meals which will enable them to purchase breakfast or a mid-morning snack without having to use part of their allowance for lunch.

The impact of this allowance will need to be evaluated before a decision is made regarding its roll-out to learners eligible for free school meals in other school years.

Big Bocs Bwyd

The Bocs Bwyd Project builds on the award-winning start made at two Barry primary schools in partnership with Fareshare. £100,000 funding from the Valleys Taskforce has established a further five Bocs Bwyd projects in schools in the South Wales Valleys, working in partnership with the Valleys Regional Park:-

- Cyfarthfa Park Primary, Merthyr;
- St Margaret's RC Primary, Aberdare;
- Cwmfelin Primary, Maesteg;
- Garth Primary, Maesteg;
- 3 Joint, co-located Ammanford Schools: Cylch Meithrin Rhydaman, Ysgol Bro Banw, Rhydaman Primary.

The project helps to measurably reduce food waste at a commercial, community and household level, using platforms including OLIO to share food at a family level.

4. The information you have requested is available on the Welsh Government website, and I attach links below

[Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015: the essentials](#)

[Well-being of future generations: statutory guidance | GOV.WALES](#)

[Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

In summary, the Well-being of Future Generations Act places a duty that the public bodies will be expected to carry out. A duty means they have to do this by law. The well-being duty states that each public body must carry out sustainable development. The action a public body takes in carrying out sustainable development must include:

1. setting and publishing objectives ("well-being objectives") that are designed to maximise its contribution to achieving each of the well-being goals, and
2. taking all reasonable steps (in exercising its functions) to meet those objectives.

This means that each public body listed in the act must work to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. To do this they must set and publish well-being objectives. These objectives will show how each public body will work to achieve the vision for Wales set out in the well-being goals. Public bodies must then take action to make sure they meet the objectives they set.

In the Act Part 2 Improving Well-being section 13, sets out the responsibilities of Public Bodies to produce annual reports of progress made in meeting its well-being objectives.

There is no requirement for Public bodies to report to Welsh Government on well-being objectives.

Accountability for the delivery of the shared purpose and requirements of the Act rests with those public bodies subject to the Act. In addition, the Act strengthens accountability through new arrangements and changes to existing methods of review or scrutiny. The accountability arrangements ensure that there will be consequences for non-compliance by public bodies

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely,