



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Food Matters: Wales

Food policy at the heart of
our lives, our communities,
and our nation.

www.gov.wales



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FIRST MINISTER OF
WALES



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CABINET SECRETARY
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Foreword

Food is at the heart of our lives, our communities, and our nation. The Welsh Government is focussed on food matters across the development and delivery of the Programme for Government. Whether headline new policies or lower profile activities, we continue to advance food related policies across portfolios.

This publication delivers our commitment to the Senedd to publish a document for stakeholders summarising our wide range of food-related policies across portfolios. It illustrates how our policies come together around the Welsh Government's ten Well-being Objectives, which in turn maximise our contribution to Wales' seven long-term Well-being Goals under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Food matters are diverse and complex. We welcome the focus on food in the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales' strategy [Cymru Can](#). Success requires long-term and joined up policy and action. We must keep up this focus as we emerge from the highest food price inflation in over four decades. Challenging geopolitics and Covid 19, have caused unexpected supply chain disruption. The UK's departure from the European Union continues to add complexity and cost. There is urgency to meet climate targets and to reverse the long term decline of biodiversity. These realities are reminders of the intricate web which connects food to our way of life.

We must cultivate a more self-sufficient Wales, where we champion sustainability, and we foster a robust local element to the food system and supply chains. This will start to mitigate some of the risk to external factors and climate change. We all need nutritious food alongside the knowledge and help to make healthier choices. Food policy must work with agri-food supply chains deeply intertwined with major commercial interests integrated into the UK food system — a system where international trade plays a pivotal role. This system, while efficient in its production and distribution, has shortcomings. From environmental degradation to health concerns stemming from the consumption of nutritionally deficient products, it's undeniable that challenges remain.

As we embark on transformative policies for farmland management, public health improvement and Universal Primary Free School Meals, maintain steadfast support for food and drink manufacturing businesses, and develop a Wales Community Food Strategy, our focus must remain unwavering to create a Wales where food nourishes our bodies and enriches our communities, economy, and environment. This journey is not one we undertake alone. We work with many partners – local authorities, health boards, business, and multiple community interests – and we do so in diverse ways. Every policy, every initiative, and every decision are connected to another.

Together, let's build a Wales which is sustainable, healthy, and prosperous for all.



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Introduction

Food Matters: Wales is a short, simple overview of Welsh Government’s food related policies and activities. It includes policies which directly support the agri-food industry and natural resource management, and wider food related policies across the span of our work for health, education, sustainability, communities and the economy.

The purpose of Food Matters: Wales is to provide a short guide for stakeholders and social partners, so they are aware of the context and fuller picture of Welsh Government’s food related work. We hope this facilitates food related discussions and engagements taking place. All named policies and activities are hyperlinked to further information, so you can dive deeper.

Food Matters: Wales illustrates how food related policies are developed and delivered in response to the Welsh Government’s strategic agenda which is primarily framed by the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) (hereafter the “WFG Act”) and the [Programme for Government 2021-26](#) (the PFG). Collectively, food related policies make up a “strategic agenda” for food.

We are committed to keeping stakeholders informed about food related policies and will update Food Matters: Wales to keep it current. We welcome your feedback about Food Matters: Wales and any suggestions about additional matters to include. Feedback should be titled “Food Matters: Wales” and addressed to:

FoodDivisionalBusiness@gov.wales



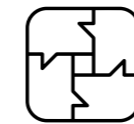
How we work

A Welsh Government cross-portfolio food policy forum has developed Food Matters: Wales. Every food related policy is developed and delivered in accordance with the sustainable development principle and the five ways of working.



Long term

Our food related policies recognise current and future challenges facing Wales including the climate and nature emergency, the impact of four decades of deindustrialisation and the consequences of leaving the EU. They draw on analysis of Welsh, UK and global factors, and local considerations, which are likely to impact on Wales in the longer term. Our policies and associated plans and activities set appropriate, long term actions to address strategic challenges Wales faces now and in the future. Our policies and delivery are monitored and adjusted in the light of experience, and adapt as challenges change, to keep them relevant and impactful for now and the long term.



Integration

Policies relate to each other and form an integrated strategic agenda. They are co-designed across Welsh Government portfolios and with stakeholders, with attention to how they reinforce each other. Policies collectively build progress through their delivery towards the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, in sustainable ways. We continuously evaluate progress informing the decisions which maintain and deepen integration. Policies are collectively owned by the First Minister and Cabinet ensuring opportunities to achieve more are identified early and acted upon.



Prevention

Policies are designed to prevent problems from occurring or getting worse. They focus on acting quickly to identify challenges early, while maintaining a focus on and direction towards achieving longer term, strategic outcomes. We work with partners to develop and deliver policies by building shared understanding, breaking down barriers, effective interventions and services, and understanding the changing needs of people through their lives, wherever and however they live.



Involvement

Policies are developed with stakeholder input, with the people of Wales having their say through consultations and focus groups. Good policy design and delivery recognises the benefit of early and continuous involvement of stakeholders and the public. Involving our social partners, stakeholders and the public in the policies and services which affect them is the best way to take a sustainable, needs-led approach to policy making and delivery.



Collaboration

Maximising the impact of food related policies means working closely with delivery partners and others, with this operating principle firmly embedded in policy design and delivery. We use multiple mechanisms to engage, collaborate and succeed with others – working with stakeholders, progressive networks and diverse voices across Wales. Cooperation and collaboration rather than competition and division underpin food related policies, meaning we can deliver effectively at pace.

A strategic agenda for food matters

Food related policies are developed and delivered to advance the WFG Act and the PfG. Collectively, food related policies make up a strategic agenda for food.

The PfG sets ten well-being objectives for 2021-2026 which we use to maximise our contribution to Wales' seven long-term well-being goals set by the WFG Act. The objectives outline the steps we are taking to deliver them with the accompanying [Well-being Statement](#) setting out how our well-being objectives match our statutory duty under the WFG Act (shown in **figure 1**).



Figure 1
How our strategic well-being objectives contribute to the WFG Act's well-being goals.

Well-being objective

+ Direct contribution ● Opportunity for broader contribution

Well-being objective	A prosperous Wales	A resilient Wales	A healthier Wales	A more equal Wales	A Wales of cohesive communities	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A globally responsible Wales
Provide effective, high quality and sustainable healthcare	+	●	+	+	+	●	●
Protect, re-build and develop our services for vulnerable people	+	●	+	+	+	●	●
Build an economy based on the principles of fair work, sustainability and the industries and services of the future	+	+	●	+	+	+	+
Build a stronger, greener economy as we make maximum progress towards decarbonisation	+	+	●	+	●	+	+
Embed our response to the climate and nature emergency in everything we do	+	+	+	●	+	●	+
Continue our long-term programme of education reform, and ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise	+	●	●	+	+	+	+
Celebrate diversity and move to eliminate inequality in all of its forms	+	●	+	+	+	+	+
Push towards a million Welsh speakers, and enable our tourism, sports and arts industries to thrive	+	+	●	●	+	+	●
Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work	+	+	+	+	+	+	●
Lead Wales in a national civic conversation about our constitutional future, and give our country the strongest possible presence on the world stage	+	●	●	●	+	+	+

Food related policies are included within the well-being objectives. Key achievements and actions for high profile or significant policies are reported in our [annual PfG report](#). Many policies and food related policy delivery activities are at a subsidiary level and are not reported in this way every year. The fuller detail is shown by **Figure 2** which shows the connections between these more detailed policies and activities and the well-being objectives. **Figure 2** shows both direct contributions and opportunities for broader contributions.

In combination, **Figures 1 and 2** show a direct connection between the WFG Act and policies. They show how food related policies are developed and delivered within a legislative framework and ways of working to form a strategic agenda. Developing and delivering policies in this way means they are better aligned and are mutually reinforcing which, in turn, maximises their impact.

Progress towards the WFG Act well-being goals is measured by [National Well-Being Indicators](#), with the pace of change measured by National Milestones. Food is not currently referred to explicitly in the National Indicators, although there are indicators relevant to food consumption and production, such as on poverty, healthy lifestyles and the natural environment. We will consider the case for food in the National Indicators when they are next revised. In the meantime, we will consider with stakeholders whether there is good quality statistical information already available on food which can be included as contextual information in the annual [Well-being of Wales reports](#).



Figure 2
How our food-related policies contribute to Welsh Government's well-being objectives.

+ Direct contribution ● Opportunity for broader contribution

Policy / activity	Provide effective, high quality and sustainable healthcare	Protect, re-build and develop our services for vulnerable people	Build an economy based on the principles of fair work, sustainability and the industries and services of the future	Build a stronger, greener economy as we make maximum progress towards decarbonisation	Embed our response to the climate and nature emergency in everything we do	Continue our long-term programme of education reform, and ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise	Celebrate diversity and move to eliminate inequality in all of its forms	Push towards a million Welsh speakers, and enable our tourism, sports and arts industries to thrive	Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work	Lead Wales in a national civic conversation about our constitutional future, and give our country the strongest possible presence on the world stage
Strategic Vision for the Food and Drink Industry*	●	●	+	+	●	+	●	●	●	+
Agriculture Policy & Support			+	+	+			●	●	
Agriculture Wales Act 2023 & Sustainable Farming Scheme			●	+	+			●		
UK Joint Fisheries Statement and Framework			●	●	●				●	
Community Food Strategy	●	●	+	+	+	+	+	●	+	●
Local Food Partnerships		●	●	+	●		●		●	
Allotments Policy & Support		●		●	●		●	●	+	
Community Assets Commission	●	●	●	+	+	+	●		+	●
Local Places for Nature			●	+	+		●	●	+	

*This policy includes SMART actions and/or targets

Figure 2 - How our food-related policies contribute to Welsh Government's well-being objectives, continued

	Provide effective, high quality and sustainable healthcare	Protect, re-build and develop our services for vulnerable people	Build an economy based on the principles of fair work, sustainability and the industries and services of the future	Build a stronger, greener economy as we make maximum progress towards decarbonisation	Embed our response to the climate and nature emergency in everything we do	Continue our long-term programme of education reform, and ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise	Celebrate diversity and move to eliminate inequality in all of its forms	Push towards a million Welsh speakers, and enable our tourism, sports and arts industries to thrive	Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work	Lead Wales in a national civic conversation about our constitutional future, and give our country the strongest possible presence on the world stage
Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales*	+						●		+	
Universal Primary Free School Meals and Milk*, Eligible Free School Meals and primary breakfasts.		●	●	●	●	+	●			
Child Poverty Strategy	●	+	●			●	+		●	
Planning Policy Wales			+	+	+		+	+	+	●
Economic Mission - Priorities for a Stronger Economy, & the Foundational Economy*	●	●	+	+	●	●	●	●	●	
Wales Procurement Policy Statement & the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Wales Act 2023	●	●	+	●	●		●	●	●	
Policies for the Visitor Economy*			+	+	+		+	+	+	●
Circular Economy, Waste Reduction and Prevention Policies*	●	●	+	+	+	●	●		+	
Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2	●		●	+	+					
Eco-Schools Wales					●	+	●		+	
Curriculum for Wales (food-related learning)					●	+				

*This policy includes SMART actions and/or targets



Overview of our main policies and activities

Our food related policies aim to create prosperity, healthier lives, and responsible resource use, which in turn improves equality, generates resilience and supports cohesive communities. We want a globally responsible Wales where our impact has a reduced global footprint. Our policies interact with numerous stakeholders and social partners. The local well-being plans and work of public bodies individually and collectively through vehicles like [Public Services Boards](#) and also [Regional Partnership Boards](#), can bring added focus, holistic co-ordination and value to food matters. Our policies and activities can be loosely grouped, each group as important as the other, with multiple connections within them and between them.

Economic well-being

The [Strategic Vision](#) is our focus for the food and drink manufacturing and processing industry. It sets a vision and mission for economic success supporting businesses to succeed in Welsh, UK and export markets, with strong promotion of local and Welsh branded products. Success simultaneously benefits businesses, people and society, and promotes Wales positively here, in the UK and overseas.

The Strategic Vision outlines ten action areas including building business and supply chain networks, the development of Welsh and UK market opportunities through the promotion of selected markets, and building a 'food and drink Wales' brand domestically and in export markets.

Our Strategic Vision includes having an industry with amongst the most environmentally and socially responsible supply chains in the world, providing benefits for citizens, communities, and contributing to our global responsibility. Support to the food and drink manufacturing and processing industry is not solely focussed on economic prosperity but seeks broad benefits for citizens and society. It is increasingly conditional on businesses signing an ["Economic Contract"](#) committing to putting fair work, and development of the green economy into practice (eg low carbon, low waste, sustainable use of natural resources). How this is achieved is context specific for the business and the support we offer.

A range of food industry business support programmes are in operation which promote sustainable economic development, with emphasis and support for stronger supply chain connections, strong local business networks, added value, waste reduction and more environmentally sustainable practices. They include grants and technical advice; innovation support ([Food Innovation Wales / Project Helix](#)), commercial support ([Cywain](#), [Export Support programmes](#)), training ([Food and Drink Skills Wales](#)), [Market Insight](#) and market focussed support and [business networking and clustering](#). Programmes assist individual businesses and develop supply chains. Promotional trade events (eg [Blas Cymru](#)) and the [Trade Development Programme](#) open significant sales opportunities for businesses and promote Wales to the world.

The Strategic Vision is connected to the wider Welsh Government economic development strategy. Food is within the scope of the socially responsible procurement duty under the [Social Partnership and Public Procurement \(Wales\) Act 2023](#) and the [Wales Procurement Policy Statement Principles](#). Public sector procurement can play an enormously important role in re-localising food supply chains. Developing local supply chain opportunities to meet public sector and other demand can add value to Welsh products and retain value within Wales in ways which promote sustainable, long term economic and social development within communities. These are key aims of a [Foundational Economy](#) approach and support the four national priority areas set out in the [Economic mission: priorities for a stronger economy](#) to promote a more prosperous, greener and a fairer Wales. Diverse mapping, research, and pilot projects (which have focussed on strengthening vegetable and meat supply to schools and hospitals) have

helped build knowledge and experience of local supply chains, creating opportunities to add value and increase supply for local and public procurement needs. We have established a new Capability Network for [Backing Local Firms Fund food projects](#) to develop solutions to challenges and replicate successes. We have co-developed [Buying Food Fit for the Future](#) with stakeholders to encourage focus on value creation, and wider benefits rather than lowest cost. Within the NHS, Shared Services Partnerships manage food provision. Aspects of the [Trade Development Programme](#) are being developed in pursuit of increasing the opportunities to supply Welsh food and drink to meet the needs of the [Universal Primary Free School Meals](#) policy.



Strong, resilient communities

At a local level, we are developing a [Community Food Strategy](#) (CFS) for publication in 2024 which will seek to encourage the production and supply of locally sourced food. The CFS will aim to bring coherence, capacity and empowerment to community embedded food initiatives. There are widespread and vibrant food related activities taking place across Wales and we want to empower them. Focussing on food-centric opportunities can invigorate the local economy and have potential to transform towns into gastronomic destinations drawing both residents and visitors. Welsh food and drink is integral to our tourism offer, set out in [Welcome to Wales](#), creating a sense of place and visitor experience. Our [Food Tourism Toolkit](#) supports businesses. On a broader front, [Ystadau Cymru](#) is establishing a Community Assets Commission to explore ways to identify how more publicly and privately owned assets can come into community ownership or control and be made available for various uses including food activities in communities, notably horticulture and community food cultivation.

[Planning Policy Wales](#) ensures new developments resonate with local community needs, emphasising sustainability, environmental stewardship, and cultural values. Through the integration of food, asset use and planning, we aim to foster sustainable, dynamic communities. We support community growing and allotments through [grants, guidance](#) and the [Community Land Advisory Service](#). Support for small scale growing in communities also features in elements of schemes operated¹ under a Local Places for Nature approach.

Food impacts life chances. We are focussed on improving individual food security, tackling food poverty and preventing malnutrition, whilst also preventing food waste. Support for community food organisations is providing a safety net against food poverty. We have strengthened local co-ordinated action through pump-priming [Food Sense Wales](#) and [Local Food Partnerships](#), with local food co-ordinators who can stimulate and connect disparate grass-roots projects and spread the [Sustainable Food Places](#) model.

Healthy lives

We aim to encourage better diets and reduce food related illness with a shift towards the [Eatwell Guide](#). [Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales](#) is a comprehensive long-term strategy to reduce and prevent obesity. This includes creating a healthy food environment in which healthy food is more visible, available and affordable. It also includes objectives for healthy people such as giving people the knowledge and skills to eat a healthy diet, including weight management services that target those at risk of developing obesity-related chronic diseases.

Integrating economic and health policies, Food Innovation Wales aims to support businesses to develop and reformulate to healthier products.

The [Healthy Eating in Schools Regulations](#) and accompanying [statutory guidance](#) set out what local authorities or schools can and cannot provide as part of food provided at school. We are committed to a review of the regulations to consider the latest scientific research and recommendations. We are also committed to review the National Nutrition and Hydration Standards in nursing settings.

Our Programme for Government commits us to maintaining the free primary school breakfast offer as well as continuing to meet the rise in demand for free school meals and review the eligibility criteria, extending entitlement as far as resources allow. Our immediate focus is to extend entitlement through the roll-out of [Universal Primary Free School Meals](#) to all primary school children by September 2024. In doing so we are learning important lessons that will inform any future changes to eligibility criteria for free school meals. Complementing this school focus, the [NHS Healthy Start](#) programme seeks to improve access to healthy food for all eligible pregnant women and parents of children under the age of 4. Information about nutrition and good food choices is shared through initiatives such as [Big Bocs Bwyd](#). These policies collectively form part of a range of cross-government commitments to prevent and tackle the impact of child poverty which are set out in our [Child Poverty Strategy](#).



¹ [Local Places for Nature - Keep Wales Tidy](#);
[Local Nature Partnerships Cymru - Home \(lnp.cymru\)](#);
[Local Places for Nature - WCVA](#);

[Coastal Capacity Building Fund - WCVA](#);
[Local Places for Nature - Breaking Barriers | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#); [Local Places for Nature Capital Fund | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)

Learning

Education about food related matters is essential. The new [Curriculum for Wales](#) includes mandatory learning for all about food's contribution to physical and mental health and well-being and sustainability. Welsh Government has two environmental education programmes, [Eco Schools Wales](#) and [Size of Wales](#), both inspire and empower young people to drive positive environmental change. These school-based initiatives often include educating children and young people on where our food comes from and provide opportunities to grow their own food in a sustainable way. Outside the classroom, pupils' experience of better food and diet through roll-out of the Universal Primary Free School Meals policy and improved regulatory standards will lead to life changing habits. In the food industry, comprehensive employee training is available through Food & Drink Skills Wales. Additionally, Food Innovation Wales through Project Helix provides knowledge

transfers and training with funding support for a range of technical courses and educational qualifications, with over a thousand workers benefitting in the last year². In agriculture, [Farming Connect](#) provides advice, knowledge transfer and upskilling support and the [Farm Liaison Service](#) provides advice about a range of grants and administrative matters.

Land and seas

We provide capital support for investment in farm businesses through a range of schemes, including the [Small Grants Efficiency Scheme](#) and focussed support for horticulture through the [Horticulture Start Up](#) and [Horticulture Development](#) schemes.

We are developing major land management reforms through the passing of the [Agriculture \(Wales\) Act 2023](#) and the development of the supporting [Sustainable Farming Scheme](#). Together these create and will provide support for sustainable land management objectives

including the production of food in a sustainable manner, lowering carbon footprints and delivering for nature. They aim to reduce the environmental impact of food production and to support ways to sustain, enhance and restore the natural environment in conjunction with food production. For fishing, we are partners to the [UK Joint Fisheries Statement and Fisheries Framework](#) which includes production and marketing of seafood products and their traceability.

Sustainable resource use

With the growing sustainability focus on our support for agriculture, fishing, food manufacturing and processing businesses, and supporting local, community-based food activities through developing a CFS, our policies are collectively developing resilience and climate change mitigation into the food system, as well as addressing our own environmental footprint.

[The Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#) recognises nature, land, water and air as our ultimate resources and charts an integrated approach to managing our natural resources for long-term sustainability. [Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales](#) drives sector emission pathway planning across all sectors, including manufacturing and land based industries, to reduce carbon footprints and waste. Our policies must make urgent progress to meet climate change targets to adapt and mitigate, and to restore biodiversity.



2 Project HELIX Overview June 2016 – June 2023 - Food Innovation Wales

Policies and proposals, guided by advice from the independent [Climate Change Committee](#), have been recorded in the [Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2](#) plan. We are developing policies for the next Net Zero Wales plan, including a third carbon budget (CB3), planned for publication in 2026.

We are focused on reducing and preventing waste across the food system. Our [Beyond Recycling Strategy](#) (BRS) is working to make the circular economy in Wales a reality and commits to eradicate all avoidable food waste by working with food producers and processors across the whole supply chain, to limit food waste in all settings. BRS sets a target to halve avoidable food waste by 2025, and by 60% by 2030. [The Wales Food Waste Routemap](#) identifies actions to help achieve the target. Recognising our place within the UK wide food system, we are an active partner of [The Courtauld Commitment 2030](#) which is a voluntary agreement that enables collaborative action across the entire UK food chain to deliver farm-to-fork reductions in food waste, greenhouse gas emissions and water stress.

Within the Welsh food and drink industry, practical support to achieve this change is provided through technical support offered by Food Innovation Wales / Project Helix, with financial support targeting innovation and improved processes. In agriculture, Farming Connect provides support to improve business practice. Support from [Business Wales](#) and [WRAP Cymru](#) is available. BRS is also focused on reducing packaging waste and commits to consulting on a requirement for businesses to report food waste quantities and for major retailers to redistribute surplus edible food. The [Workplace Recycling Regulations](#) came into force in April 2024, and require non-domestic premises to separate food waste for recycling – we are raising awareness and have [published guidance](#) and a [Code of Practice](#).

The [Environmental Protection \(Single Use Plastic products\) Wales Act 2023](#) has banned the use of commonly littered or difficult to recycle single-use food service products.

[Climate Action Wales](#) provides citizens with advice on how to make positive food choices. Since 2015 [FareShare Cymru](#) has reduced food waste and has helped provide a safety net for food poverty. We fund the [Love Food Hate Waste](#) campaign which provides public advice to prevent edible food from being wasted. The [Be Mighty](#) campaign aims to educate people to use the edible food they buy and recycle any inedible food via the universal food waste collection.

Next steps

Food Matters: Wales is a brief overview of our current and planned food related policies. It aims to inform and to be a tool for our work with stakeholders. It outlines how we work, how policies are developed and implemented. Success lies in policies reinforcing each other in complementary ways, which we ensure by careful cross-portfolio working, and collective responsibility as a government. The growing global challenges posed by food supply chain security, diet related illness, and the urgent need to act on climate change and to restore the natural environment, deepen and focus the need for strong cross-portfolio collaboration and to use the five ways of working and WFG Act architecture to full effect.

We commit to updating Food Matters: Wales periodically.

To build on our commitment to working in partnership with others, we look forward to your comments and suggestions.



