



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru  
The National Assembly for Wales**

**Y Pwyllgor ar y Mesur Arfaethedig ynghylch  
Bwyta'n Iach Mewn Ysgolion  
The Proposed Healthy Eating in Schools Measure  
Committee**

**Cyfnod 1  
Stage 1**

**Dydd Mawrth, 10 Mehefin 2008  
Tuesday, 10 June 2008**

**Cynnwys**  
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Proposed Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measure 2008—Stage 1, Evidence  
Session 3

Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal,  
cynhwysir cyfieithiad Saesneg o gyfraniadau yn y Gymraeg.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.  
In addition, an English translation of Welsh speeches is included.

**Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol**  
**Committee members in attendance**

Angela Burns	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Jeff Cuthbert	Llafur Labour
Michael German	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru (yn dirprwyo ar ran Kirsty Williams) Welsh Liberal Democrats (substitute for Kirsty Williams)
Irene James	Llafur Labour
David Lloyd	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales

**Eraill yn bresennol**  
**Others in attendance**

Teresa Filliponi	Cydlynnydd Bwyd mewn Ysgolion, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Food in Schools Coordinator, Welsh Local Government Association
Judith John	Rheolwr Gwasanaethau Deietegol Cymunedol a Chadeirydd Deietegwyr Cymunedol Cymru (CDiW), Cymdeithas Ddeieteg Prydain Community Dietetic Services Manager and Chair of Community Dieticians in Wales (CDiW), British Dietetic Association
Dr Chris Llewelyn	Cyfarwyddwr Dysgu Gydol Oes, Hamdden a Gwybodaeth, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Director Lifelong Learning, Leisure and Information, Welsh Local Government Association
Nicola Morris	Cymdeithas Ddeieteg Prydain British Dietetic Association
Nia Rees Williams	Cydlynnydd Prosiect Deietegol Cymunedol (Ysgolion), Cymdeithas Ddeieteg Prydain Community Dietetic Project Coordinator (Schools), British Dietetic Association
Daisy Seabourne	Swyddog Polisi, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Policy Officer, Welsh Local Government Association

**Swyddogion Gwasanaeth Seneddol y Cynulliad yn bresennol**  
**Assembly Parliamentary Service officials in attendance**

David Blair	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil yr Aelodau Members Research Service
Ruth Hatton	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Joanest Jackson	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol y Pwyllgor Legal Adviser to the Committee
Siân Wilkins	Clerc Clerk
Liz Wilkinson	Clerc Clerk

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.30 a.m.  
The meeting began at 9.30 a.m.*

### **Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions**

[1] **Ms Wilkinson:** Good morning, everyone. Welcome to today's meeting of the Proposed Healthy Eating in Schools Measure 2008 Committee. As Members are aware, Kirsty Williams, the committee Chair, is unable to attend this morning's meeting, therefore, under Standing Order No. 10.19, I call for nominations for temporary chair.

[2] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I nominate Dai Lloyd.

[3] **Ms Wilkinson:** Thank you. Are there any other nominations? I see that there are not. I therefore declare that Dai Lloyd has been duly elected as the temporary chair of the committee.

*Penodwyd David Lloyd yn gadeirydd dros dro.  
David Lloyd was appointed temporary chair.*

[4] **David Lloyd:** Thank you, everyone, for that overwhelming vote of confidence. I welcome everyone to the latest Proposed Healthy Eating in Schools Measure 2008 Committee meeting. I remind you all that the committee operates bilingually, and that you can use the headsets to get a translation of the Welsh contributions or as an induction loop to hear all the proceedings more clearly and loudly. The verbatim broadcast is on channel 0 on the headsets, and the translation is on channel 1. I remind everyone, especially Assembly Members, to turn off their mobile phones, pagers or any other electronic devices that they have on their persons, as they interfere with the broadcast and translation systems. If there is a fire alarm, the ushers will escort everyone in the appropriate direction. I remind everyone not to touch the microphones as they will operate automatically, and if you do touch them, the system will be disabled. Apologies for absence have been received from Alun Cairns AM and Kirsty Williams AM, as has already been explained, and Angela Burns AM and Mike German AM, respectively, will be substituting for them.

9.33 a.m.

### **Mesur Arfaethedig Bwyta'n Iach mewn Ysgolion (Cymru) 2008—Cyfnod 1, Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 3 Proposed Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measure 2008—Stage 1, Evidence Session 3**

[5] **David Lloyd:** The purpose of this meeting is to take oral evidence in connection with the proposed Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measure 2008. This morning's meeting will be divided into two separate sessions. The first session will comprise questions to the British Dietetic Association, and the second session will comprise questions to the Welsh Local Government Association. Before us are witnesses from the British Dietetic Association, and I extend a warm welcome to them. They are Nicola Morris, Nia Rees Williams and Judith John. For the purposes of the record, I ask the witnesses to introduce themselves and their designation, and then we will move into questions.

[6] **Ms Rees Williams:** Good morning. My name is Nia Rees Williams, I am a dietician and I have been working in public health for 20 years. For the last four years, I have been

working closely with schools in Cardiff.

[7] **Ms Morris:** I am Nicola Morris, and I am the British Dietetic Association policy officer.

[8] **Ms John:** I am Judith John, I am the community dietetic services manager, and I am chair of Community Dietitians in Wales.

[9] **David Lloyd:** Thank you. I also thank you for your written submission, which was very comprehensive. Based on that, we have a series of questions to probe matters a little further, but there will be nothing too threatening, I can assure you. Jeff Cuthbert has the first batch of questions.

[10] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I add my thanks to the temporary chair's for the written submission, which was extremely helpful. My first question relates to the beginning of your written submission, where you say that you feel that the proposed Measure may be a little too narrow. Can you expand on that?

[11] **Ms Morris:** One of the things that we feel in particular is that the Measure should include the wider school community and all of the partnership organisations that work with schools. They need to be involved. We feel that it would be a backward step if all the partnership organisations that need to be involved are not involved. We feel that the focus is around local authority education, and that it needs to encompass a wide range of people, particularly those in the field of health. The health, social care and wellbeing strategies are about the need to work in partnership, and the Measure would need to cover this.

[12] One other point is that there are existing initiatives and policies, such as Appetite for Life, and the Measure needs to build on what is already in place and make all the necessary links to existing policy strategies on school meals. We also feel that it is important that it encompasses all food—not just school food, but also food that might be available outside the school gate. Perhaps we could look at some kind of closed gate policy, where children are not allowed to leave school at lunch times. It may be that other premises that schoolchildren use also need to be included in the Measure. Aspects of mealtimes in schools, for example, the dining room environment, the length of time allowed for meals, and the queuing also need to be considered. The Measure needs to encompass all of that, including work incorporated within the curriculum. I do not know whether anyone wants to add anything.

[13] **Ms John:** The time allowed for lunch in schools is one of the biggest issues, if you talk to school caterers and heads. We do not work in schools—that is not where we are employed—but we work with them, and whatever anyone tries to do around changing school meals, the biggest barrier is the reduction in time for lunch in schools and the reduced emphasis on lunch as being an important part of the school day in a social sense. You cannot sit down and eat a cooked meal made from fresh ingredients if the cooks have just half an hour to prepare 1,000 meals. Any Measure will just fall flat on its face unless those basic points are taken into consideration.

[14] **David Lloyd:** Before we move on, Irene has a short supplementary question on this point.

[15] **Irene James:** You mentioned the wider school community—can I just ask you to expand on who you mean by that?

[16] **Ms Rees Williams:** That would include school governors and parents too. We find that it is a two-way process, with pupils influencing their parents. For example, in terms of smoking, young people can have quite an influence on their parents. There is also the fact that

parents often want to be involved but are not invited. So, I think we should involve parents and school governors. I have worked closely with out-of-hours learning and adult education, and those people want to be involved with schools, so it is about breaking down the barriers—or perhaps not breaking down barriers as such, but opening gates and allowing people to work together. Fortunately, in Cardiff we have had a good structure, and we have had the opportunity to pilot work in two secondary schools, in Ely and Caerau, and we cascaded that. We did it for three years and then took it to schools across Cardiff. We have schools queuing up to work on setting up school nutrition action groups. That is one example of where you could be working in partnership with out-of-hours learning, school catering, school governors and parents, as well as youth. So, there is a whole range of existing services that are waiting to work together, and it is about allowing people to make time to put food nutrition on the agenda. It is not just about the food issue but other elements too—the food-related issues that Judith mentioned about making time for food, not just in terms of the school lunch time, but also in the school curriculum.

[17] **Irene James:** I will just come back on that, if I may. You referred to all food in schools. This LCO does not cover what children bring into schools. Do you think that if it did cover that, and all agencies were involved, it would have a knock-on effect on what children bring into schools?

9.40 a.m.

[18] **Ms Rees Williams:** Certainly. You cannot look at either food or schools in isolation; you have to look at the whole picture. Again, from my experience of working with secondary school children in particular, I know that they are easily influenced by external agencies, and in a school environment, that is everybody's responsibility. Food is a subject that everybody talks about, but do they take ownership of it and make it a life skill? As a dietician and a parent, I feel that it should be compulsory, almost, to address the availability of healthy food in school, and to look at the food that is brought into school.

[19] **Irene James:** So, basically, you are saying that one goes hand in hand with the other.

[20] **Ms Rees Williams:** Yes.

[21] **David Lloyd:** Jeff, do you want to carry on with your questions? I know that some of them have been covered.

[22] **Jeff Cuthbert:** That is fine; I will carry on, as my questions follow on logically from that.

[23] You may well feel that you have already dealt with these questions to a degree. You just talked about some of the partners that could be involved, so this is an opportunity to add to that. If you think that there are other parties that could become partners in this, would you like to say who they might be? If you feel that you have covered all the key ones, then that is fine.

[24] **Ms John:** The only other one would be Age Concern, because a lot of work is being done on intergenerational themes, linking older people in the community with schools. Cooking is a good way of doing that.

[25] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Thank you. In terms of the partnerships, clearly, you have reservations about how they are seen in this proposed Measure. What changes would you like to see made to this Measure so that the other partners are better embraced? Do you think that a statutory duty ought to be placed on the various partners to work with schools in this regard?

[26] **Ms Rees Williams:** As the concept is a new one, it is about looking at the evidence really. If you make it statutory, will it work? Our experience in Cardiff and other parts of Wales shows that it is about commitment. You could make it statutory, but you want people to be committed and see the issue as important, really. We have a slight problem around whether this should be made statutory and whether that will make a difference, or whether it is more about introducing it in such a way that people will feel that they will benefit through the partnerships. It is about gain, ultimately. It is about what people will gain through being involved and the networking of ideas and successes.

[27] **Ms John:** Obviously, there are partner organisations, but some of the partners are parents and pupils, and it is more difficult to place a statutory duty on them.

[28] **Ms Morris:** Also, one rule does not fit all, so it is about having some flexibility so that a particular school can have what best suits it.

[29] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Okay, I can follow all of that. The first part of my question was about the fact that you clearly feel that the issue of partnership working is not adequately addressed at the moment in this Measure. What changes would you like to see?

[30] **Ms Rees Williams:** It is about ensuring that food and nutrition are on the agenda, for example, in the school environment, in the health improvement programme or the school improvement programme, so that schools know that it is almost essential for them to work in partnership with people. It is about the incentives as well, and what people will gain.

[31] **Ms John:** I think that we have come a long way in working together across education and health, but we still have a long way to go. Certainly, nutrition is not on every education agenda in the way that it is in other areas. There is a lot of work to be done on developing the partnerships to address the agenda, because if you just enforce the agenda, you do not always take people on board.

[32] **Jeff Cuthbert:** So it is more about a joined-up, holistic approach from your point of view—please correct me if I am not saying what you think—and encouraging and winning the commitment of this wide variety of partners.

[33] **Ms John:** It is also about using the expertise of the different partners, because not everybody has the skill to work with this.

[34] **David Lloyd:** On the back of that, I would like to try to tease out whether you actually support the aims of this Measure, in other words, making this a statutory duty, or whether you feel that the necessary changes in improved partnership working and all the rest will do it without the need for a piece of legislation, which is what we are discussing here.

[35] **Ms Rees Williams:** It is about how people operate and perceive a statutory duty as opposed to feeling committed to doing something. From my experience, when we started the project, we could have enforced it on people, but we did not; we made it an attractive model, whereby you could work with schools and bring partners in. We looked at the benefits and what we were going to achieve and we found that people's objectives were similar and that they all wanted the same outcomes, but they were not sure how to achieve those outcomes. So, now, if you were to enforce a statutory duty in some areas of Wales, people would not see it as a problem. However, there has to be consistency. There may be an advantage to making it a statutory duty, but we have to anticipate what the outcomes might be if it were in terms of everyone committing to it. You cannot just enforce a statutory duty—you have to put things in place to make it possible. So, I am probably saying that you need to ensure that we have considered how to achieve it so that it goes well and so that we have anticipated the downfalls and things that might not go to plan.

[36] **David Lloyd:** So, getting all the partnerships in place could happen without there being a statutory duty? Is that what you are saying?

[37] **Ms John:** There is certainly a commitment in ‘Appetite for Life’ to doing that, but perhaps it has not gone as far as it could to make some things mandatory, for example, policies. It is not mandatory for everyone to have a policy; it is advised that they should. So, we are perhaps in the middle between what ‘Appetite for Life’ currently says and what the statutory duty would say. It needs to be a bit more, but perhaps not as much as a statutory duty.

[38] **Ms Rees Williams:** The consultation document for ‘Appetite for Life’ had 41 recommendations, which were all SMART. They were workable, but almost mandatory in terms of what they suggested. The new version of ‘Appetite for Life’ is less enforceable. The consultation document would perhaps have been a better option than the current one. The current one is a good document, which gives people an insight and a guideline as to what is expected, but the consultation document was so detailed that perhaps it would have been more appropriate.

[39] **Irene James:** I am a little confused. Are you saying that ‘Appetite for Life’ is broader than this Measure would be?

[40] **Ms Rees Williams:** ‘Appetite for Life’ covers the provision of food in schools and it makes recommendations for the curriculum, but it does not elaborate. The consultation document was quite detailed, but again it needed elaboration. I think that the Measure elaborates more on what needs to be done.

[41] **Irene James:** So, basically, you are saying that we need a combination of both.

[42] **Ms Rees Williams:** Yes.

[43] **Irene James:** Fine.

[44] **Jeff Cuthbert:** This next section is about the duty to promote healthy living. In your written evidence, you say that dieticians translate public health and scientific research into practical guidance to enable people to make lifestyle and food choices. A feature of this Measure is that local authorities must have regard to relevant and reputable scientific advice and then apply that. So, do you foresee any problems with how LEAs and other authorities might interpret scientific advice? Could there be problems with consistency across Wales?

[45] **Ms John:** Yes, I think that problems may arise because of a lack of resource. It is about good communication and good links with the appropriate people such as dieticians and public health professionals. Again, through health, social care and wellbeing, there is a lot of joined-up working and there is access to that expertise, but it is severely lacking in many areas. Certainly, specialist public health nutrition and dietetic expertise is core-funded hardly anywhere in Wales, so the ability to respond regularly to local authorities is limited. We believe that there is not currently enough resource to provide that expertise to local authorities across Wales.

[46] **Michael German:** I am trying to marry your answer to the previous question with the answer that you have just given. If local authorities do not have the resource or if some do not use the resource—some do, of course—would making this mandatory almost place an obligation on them to find that resource? There is also a funding issue, obviously. Would that be an improvement, because all local authorities would then be required to have that level of resource to be able to support the work that is being done?



9.50 a.m.

[47] **Ms John:** Yes, but the resource would have to be there.

[48] **Michael German:** You would have to fund it—I understand that—but would that be better than the current regime of support within local authorities?

[49] **Ms John:** The support from local authorities at the moment depends on partnership working, good communication and the ability of the resource to give its time to the local authority agenda.

[50] **Michael German:** Sorry, but you have just said that it is very patchy.

[51] **Ms John:** It is very patchy.

[52] **Michael German:** The question that I was trying to ask was whether making this mandatory would also make it a mandatory requirement for local authorities to find the support.

[53] **Ms Rees Williams:** I think that, as Judith said, most of the support is short term, because most dieticians who work with schools in particular, and education and local authorities, are on two to three year contracts, with a limited budget. There is a concern then about whether projects continue after you have left or not. Having that sustainability and security so that there is someone in place to advise would be a good thing.

[54] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I have a question on a different issue now. In your written evidence you refer to the value of school nutrition action groups and say who should be members of those groups. How do you think that such groups would function in practice? Do you think that there would be value—I presume that the answer would be ‘yes’—in a proposal on such groups being included in this Measure?

[55] **Ms Rees Williams:** School nutrition action groups operate not unlike school councils, but they are not school councils; their members are elected by the pupils themselves. The action groups, as you know, involve school governors, school caterers, parents, teachers and, most importantly, students. I have had experience of delivering action groups for four years in Cardiff, and they have been adopted elsewhere in Wales. Through the groups, students have the opportunity to address the issue of food in schools and to express their concerns about it. They then advise on how to implement changes. For example, students have cooked in school kitchens with school cooks and have prepared new dishes that they have researched and would like to market among their peers. We have found that the school menus in the seven schools that we have worked with in Cardiff have changed in response to pupil pressure. The pupils have been preparing food and giving it out to pupils to taste. If a dish is successful, it is introduced onto the school menu. We have also had students looking at school vending machines and creating an awareness about healthy eating. The feedback that we have had is that this has created a buzz about healthy eating in schools. Interestingly, there are schools now queuing up wanting to introduce school nutrition action groups. So, we are changing the attitude of young people towards food and health, while allowing them to work in partnership with other personnel within schools to instigate change. It seems to be working in Cardiff and has been adopted in other parts of Wales, such as Wrexham. If it were mandatory—I am sure that other schools would take this on.

[56] **Jeff Cuthbert:** This is my final question, you will be pleased to hear. In terms of the bureaucratic burden on headteachers and others in authority in schools, you make the point that you do not think that it has been properly thought through—you did not actually say that,

but you used words to that effect. Would you like to expand on why you felt it necessary to make that point?

[57] **Ms John:** We obviously cannot speak for headteachers, but we have often been in situations where perhaps health has been represented but education has not. So, we often feel that we need to support our colleagues who are working in education. For a new initiative to work, you have to have support from the top, not just from headteachers but from directors of education. That again is variable across Wales. In some areas, there is a very strong partnership and there is support from the top. For example, in Pembrokeshire it is on every agenda. If something is coming from the director of education, then most of the headteachers will take it on board. It can be perceived as a burden by headteachers if it is not already on their agenda and they do not already have a positive attitude towards this sort of thing. Any change that involves new ways of inspection, recording or approving will involve some administration. Again, that needs to be looked at carefully in terms of what it entails and how it will impact on the school. The school-meal-time thing comes in there as well, in that it will be a burden if some schools are already shortening lunch hours; anything to try to change those types of things could be perceived as a burden, if the support is not there to look at school meals as an important part of the day.

[58] **Jeff Cuthbert:** With any change, there is always extra work to do, unless it is balanced somewhere else. So, you feel that the balance here is on the negative side in terms of creating extra work without necessarily seeing a positive value in that. Would that be a fair statement?

[59] **Ms John:** I think that, later on, it will be very important to look at what is going to be measured and how it is going to be measured; it could be seen as just an extra administrative burden unless benefits are seen.

[60] **Ms Morris:** I think that this comes back to the partnership approach as well. It is about all the partners being involved and not placing the burden on the headteacher alone.

[61] **David Lloyd:** Before we completely lose sight of school nutrition action groups, may I tease out the points about them being mandatory? You say in your paper that you feel that the current duty to consult with school councils needs to be strengthened. How would you see that duty being strengthened? Is it the mandatory route in such a Measure that you would see as the way forward to making school nutrition action groups effective?

[62] **Ms Rees Williams:** I think that it is about sharing good practice and, again, showing schools the advantage of having a school nutrition action group. Most schools recognise the advantage of having a school council and some think that they could act as a school nutrition action group. However, although the action group need not necessarily stand alone, I think that it should be a sub-branch of the council. Schools should take it seriously because there are very positive benefits of having a school nutrition action group and I think that schools should really take them on board.

[63] **David Lloyd:** In your paper, you state that the duty under section 1(3)(c) is not strong enough. How would you suggest that we strengthen the duty to get school nutrition action groups up and running, and effective?

[64] **Ms Morris:** I think that it was about consulting with young people from time to time—I think that that was the wording.

[65] **Ms Rees Williams:** It needs to be more explicit.

[66] **Ms Morris:** The difficulty that we have in terms of putting a duty on it lies in understanding what that means from a legislation point of view—whether we incorporate

SNAGs into a duty and whether we incorporate working in partnership into a duty. What we are having a little bit of difficulty in understanding is, if it is made a duty, whether there is any flexibility in the way that people then do it? That is where we might be a little bit unsure. Obviously, one rule does not fit everybody. Some of these things need to be in place, but they also need flexibility so that they can be done according to what is best for the school or the partners involved, if that makes sense.

[67] **Ms Rees Williams:** It is not just about ticking a box and answering 'yes' to the question, 'Do you have a school nutrition action group?'. It is about evidence; it is about being proactive. It must happen right through the school calendar, not just meetings every quarter. It is about being proactive.

[68] **Ms John:** It is that balance again. If the Measure is too simplistic and it is about ticking boxes, what is it going to achieve?

[69] **David Lloyd:** Irene has the next set of questions.

[70] **Irene James:** In your evidence, you state that the definition of the words 'healthy eating' should include balanced, affordable, nutritious and sustainably produced food. You suggest in your evidence that healthy eating should include something that is actually affordable. Can you expand on that? Do you believe that pricing is an issue?

[71] **Ms Rees Williams:** There seems to be a myth about healthy eating being expensive. Although you probably could not translate the word 'affordable' into 'manageable', if you put 'affordable' in, it just gives that impression that it is possible for young people as well as families to consider eating healthily. Also, children are concerned about the costs of certain foods and, again, that is where the school nutrition action groups come in, in actually introducing healthy options that are cheaper and making them competitive with other foods that are not so healthy. It is about the cost of food in schools, but also—

[72] **Ms John:** Within the work that we do on food and health strategies now, we very much talk about the wider aspect of food: we talk about affordable and sustainable food and we talk about a balanced diet. We do not really talk about healthy eating policies any more; we talk about access to a balanced diet that is affordable and accessible and moving towards being sustainable.

10.00 a.m.

[73] **Irene James:** You have answered part of what was going to be my second question. You mentioned sustainably produced food, and I was going to ask you to explain that further. However, you have just said that it is on its way but not quite there.

[74] **Ms John:** There are a lot of issues, as you know. The quality of food strategy action plan is not out yet, and that will be something to consider in conjunction with this Measure as to what will be put in the final action plan and to ensure that there is consistency. Most food and health strategies across health and local authority areas not only look at local production, but also local supply, because you cannot always have local produce. They are really looking at ecological and environmental issues around food.

[75] **Irene James:** Children are quick to pick up on ecological issues. It is about pushing it further with their parents.

[76] **Ms John:** They are into fair trade and so on, because it is fashionable, but it needs to be more than that.

[77] **Irene James:** You stated that,

[78] ‘there is some uncertainty in relation to the inclusion of artificial additives’.

[79] As someone who has heard a lot about E numbers and so on, and whether or not you should give your children food containing E numbers, I wonder whether you wanted to expand on this issue of artificial additives.

[80] **Ms Rees Williams:** Our priority is nutrition and making sure that they have a healthy, balanced diet. If we do that, it is more likely that children will eat fewer foods that are high in fat and sugar, which tend to be full of E numbers, to make them palatable. Having said that, not every E number is unacceptable; vitamin C has an E number as well. It is also about misconceptions about additives. Some additives have a role and a purpose in food, but others are added unnecessarily, just to add colour, taste and flavour, and, as I said, foods that contain a lot of them tend to be high in fat and sugar. If we move more towards a balanced diet, looking at food groups and ensuring that children get nutrients, there will be less preoccupation with the additives that they are taking in. It is about moving away from talking too much about additives, and looking at getting them to eat healthy, nutritious food that they enjoy, and that they see the value of doing that, relating it not just to health but to sport. We find that young people look at both nutrition and sport, and anything that will improve their performance, provided that it is a healthy, balanced diet and not extreme, is of importance to them.

[81] **Irene James:** You also note that the term ‘healthy eating’ can have negative connotations. Can you explain that further? I know what I think that it means, but I would like to hear your explanation.

[82] **Ms John:** In the work that we do with communities, young people, parents and so on, we often start by talking about what people perceive as being healthy eating. It still comes up as being brown rice, salad, lentils and foods like that. So, that perception of healthy eating still exists. It is about using the approach that Nia mentioned earlier, in terms of balance and using the food-group approach—we have a national food guide, the eatwell plate, which explains food groups, balance and eating more of certain foods—rather than using the term ‘healthy eating’.

[83] **Angela Burns:** You have talked an awful lot about the importance of consultation with a wide range of bodies, but, without a doubt, the most important consultees after the children must be their parents. If their parents are not on board, this is all pretty much a waste of time. How would you expect parents to be consulted in a timely manner, without putting too much onus on them? How would you like to see that detailed in the Measure to ensure that the proper parental consultation occurs?

[84] **Ms Rees Williams:** Schools communicate through annual reports about what is happening, but also parents could be involved through parent teacher associations. We have run parents and children cooking sessions, where we bring parents in to do training. As dieticians, we are able to deliver an accredited open college network nutrition skills course, which fortunately has been funded by the Welsh Assembly Government for the last three years. Across Wales, dieticians have been delivering courses on food and health and taking the applied nutritional health messages to parents. What we have found is that it is not just children who are changing the way that they eat, but also the rest of the family. Over the last four years, I have delivered a project in Cardiff called ‘Food Matters—Bwyd o Bwys’; Professor Kevin Morgan has evaluated the project and conducted focus groups with parents as well as the students, and we found that there was a trend in that they were changing what they ate. That was not because they felt that it was a duty, but because they enjoyed preparing the food. So, there are lots of ways in which we, as dieticians, could help, but it is also about

getting schools to realise that there are lots of resources and opportunities within the school environment to make nutrition a subject that is discussed between parent and child, and between parents and the school.

[85] **Ms John:** It can also be done indirectly with parents—not necessarily through schools. We do a lot of work with people who work in the community—people who are parents themselves, and who care for children. They might be play workers, youth workers or nursery nurses. We aim to work with all these people to incorporate nutrition in their work. Three years ago, we were not allowed to train play workers—we were told that it was a health issue. This year, we have trained every play worker. It has taken three years of partnership working and improving resources, and we are there now, and those people are influencing parents. So, it is not just about the school influencing parents—it is the wider community as well. Whether you can put that in a Measure, I do not know.

[86] **Angela Burns:** I am sure that it is not just my constituency where there are areas where parents are not engaged in the school life of their children. In fact, they are not engaged in their children's lives at all. These measures sound warm and comforting, and are jolly easy to talk about, but I would like to push you in order to get at the way you believe the school or the state could engage in a positive, non-judgmental way with parents in order to bring them on board.

[87] **Ms John:** The Flying Start programme obviously aims to meet many of those needs. In Cardiff, public health and nutrition is part of the Flying Start programme, which I think is unique in Wales.

[88] **Ms Rees Williams:** We also need to support dieticians to deliver the accredited training. Once we have delivered it to key workers, they are able to deliver level 1 training, so again, that is a way of cascading information. It has been cost-effective given the resources available—not only delivering training, but equipping other people with skills to deliver training. It is at a lower level, but still sufficient to get people thinking about what they eat. So, there is evidence of that in the feedback that we gave to the Welsh Assembly Government from across Wales, through the increased dietetic capacity funds.

[89] **David Lloyd:** Irene has another short point before we move on.

[90] **Irene James:** You mentioned the courses that you run, and that you were involving parents, but may I ask how many parents were involved? Was it specific to a particular year group, or did it go right the way through the school? To go back to the first part, how many parents were involved?

[91] **Ms Rees Williams:** I cannot give you the exact numbers now, although we could provide that information for you. The courses run for 10 weeks, so again, it is about commitment. There is no charge in delivering other than the accreditation fee, which is dealt with. However, it is about ensuring that people complete the course so that they gain from it. For example, recently we ran a course for school cooks, who came in their own time—again, they were often parents—on a Thursday evening for 10 weeks. Of the 21 who put their names forward, 18 completed the course. They all said that, not only did they gain from doing the course in terms of their working life, but they also gained in terms of their life as parents. It changed the way that they fed their children, and we have plenty of evidence and feedback on that, because we are committed—

[92] **David Lloyd:** Excellent—it would be useful to see that.

[93] **Irene James:** I was going to say that I would like to see that, because that is 18 parents out of, say, 250 in the school.

[94] **Ms Rees Williams:** We have also offered the course to year 12 students. We deliver the same course, but it is tailored to suit the needs of the group. We offered it to year 12 students at one secondary school in Cardiff, and 75 per cent wanted to do the training, but we were only able to offer it to 16.

[95] **Ms John:** What is important is that, in the future, what we have been doing is piloting and looking at how these courses can be effective. We have found that they have been effective, but there is no way that we will be able to reach the sorts of numbers that we are thinking about.

10.10 a.m.

[96] **Irene James:** The sorts of numbers that need to be reached.

[97] **Ms John:** Exactly, but that is where it comes back to the curriculum and putting things back into the curriculum.

[98] **Ms Rees Williams:** As well as a commitment to training. At one point later on, it talks about technology teachers feeling ill equipped to deliver some of the messages. There are very capable technology teachers who could do this. We found, from feedback and experiences, that teachers have done the courses with the students, which they enjoyed and had accreditation at level 2. Two teachers in Cardiff will now be delivering level 1, so that will be a sustainable measure. This is about showing the way and sustaining that through getting other people involved.

[99] **Angela Burns:** May I ask—[*Inaudible.*]

[100] **David Lloyd:** Yes, I think that we have agreed that.

[101] **Angela Burns:** Continuing with the theme of consultation, you have talked about consulting with governing bodies and you stated in your report that the method of reporting how the increases in healthy eating will be measured needs to be clear. Do you have any views on how the actual measurement should be done? The current proposal is for the Minister to tell governing bodies how to report back through regulations, but should that be statutory and included in the Measure itself?

[102] **Ms Rees Williams:** Measuring the outcomes is almost like having a checklist. Do the schools have a food and fitness policy? If they do, how do they deliver it? It is not just about having a policy and allowing it to gather dust; it is about showing that it is implemented through the school curriculum, taking a whole-school approach. It is also about looking at whether schools have a school nutrition action group and how proactive they are. Therefore, it is about installing measurable objectives in schools so that they can report back on the objective set. Perhaps that would be—

[103] **Angela Burns:** Would you like that to be put on a statutory footing? Would you like to see that in the Measure or not? Are you happy to leave that to the Minister?

[104] **Ms Rees Williams:** I think that that would be a good thing, so that people have something to work towards. The feasibility of that is another question because you need resources to enable schools to achieve the outcomes of their objectives. Again, the issue is about ensuring that sufficient resources are in place to support schools and provide guidance.

[105] **Angela Burns:** You also state in your evidence that the Measure is solely for food that is currently on the school's premises. You talked a little earlier about how you control

external influences. Do you think that the proposed Measure should seek to address the practice of pupils going off-site to buy awful food, or of bringing in food that their parents, who have a duty of care for their children, packed for them?

[106] **Ms Rees Williams:** For children to stay in school, the environment has to be one that they enjoy, and the food available needs to be suitable so that they feel that they want to stay in school. So, it is about addressing the provision of healthy food that is attractive to young people in school, so that they do not end up leaving the school. We may also need to be a bit more forceful and say that pupils cannot leave the school. However, it is a question of how far you take it. If you force something on young people, as we know, they do not always want to honour that. However, this is about ensuring that the alternative available is suitable and attractive and is marketed by the pupils themselves, which is what school nutrition action groups do. They involve young people.

[107] **Ms John:** We know that no-chip days and banning certain foods do not work, and that involving young people in decision-making about their food choices does. So, if a Measure imposes something on a school without young people having had the time to develop those relationships, partnerships and a sense of ownership and so on, the kids will vote with their feet and will go outside.

[108] **Angela Burns:** Would you put packed lunches in the same category?

[109] **Ms John:** That is a difficult area. You may well get a negative response from caterers who will say that they will lose business if there is no support to have pupils stay in school to eat their meals. People will then bring their own food in because there is nothing preventing them from doing so.

[110] **Angela Burns:** Would you like to see the Measure include a provision that says to parents that they must not put certain foods in their child's packed lunch?

[111] **Ms John:** I think that it is too early to do that. You would just get a backlash and accusations of this being a nanny state.

[112] **Ms Rees Williams:** The guidance should be on what should be included, on a positive note, rather than banning what should not be included, which is not constructive. If we tell people what should be included—going back to the eatwell plate and how we deliver messages—people will feel responsible for themselves. We must give guidance as to what can be done, rather than what should not happen.

[113] **Ms Morris:** It is about educating parents about what they should put in their packed lunches and about healthy eating, and then hoping that that is what they do put in packed lunches.

[114] **David Lloyd:** We will now move to the last batch of questions.

[115] **Michael German:** May I pick up on the point about local authorities? Earlier, you talked about the mixed bag of support that is available from local authorities. If this were to become a statutory Measure and local authorities had to implement it, what level of extra support would they need, from whom would they need it, and do we have enough?

[116] **Ms Rees Williams:** Fortunately, through 'Appetite for Life', new posts are now being developed across Wales—'Appetite for Life' strategy facilitators. In fact, I applied for one in north Wales and I will be starting next Monday. It is about having people in post who will be in a position to deliver guidance and direction to the local authority. It is about bringing school catering and schools together and getting that partnership set up. However, you need

somebody to facilitate that.

[117] **Michael German:** How big a step change will that be from where we are now on the level of support available for local authorities, from dieticians and others, to where we would have to be if everybody had to comply with it?

[118] **Ms John:** I think that it would be quite a big step in a lot of Wales.

[119] **Michael German:** In a lot of Wales? Is that in the majority of local authorities?

[120] **Ms John:** Yes, I would say.

[121] **Michael German:** So, the majority of local authorities are not doing a great deal on this at the moment, are they?

[122] **Ms John:** They do not have a great deal of support to do it; they are trying their best with their limited resources. There have been pockets of development, as Nia said, with posts coming out now with the 'Appetite for Life' money. Public health is quite poorly resourced and there are very few specialist nutrition posts within public health/dietetics to support that agenda.

[123] **Ms Rees Williams:** Not all 'Appetite for Life' facilitator posts ask for dieticians. In fact, a lot of them do not even ask for a background in nutrition, either. So, it is just a case of, 'If you happen to be a dietician, apply for the post as it would probably be a good thing', but it is not a required qualification.

[124] **Michael German:** You would say that every local authority needs a dietician.

[125] **Ms Rees Williams:** Yes.

[126] **Michael German:** How unexpected. [*Laughter.*]

[127] **David Lloyd:** We need to move on, Mike, because time is pressing.

[128] **Michael German:** Okay. I will turn to the guidance and what we should make statutory. You can make the headlines in your Measures—although there is obviously a difficulty in how high the headlines ought to be set—and then you can leave the detail to guidance, which comes later. I want to talk about the environment of the school, which is very important. For all the projects that I know of, the environment of the school has had to alter as well, such as the lunch hours, the table cloths and all the usual things. Do you want to see such things put in the Measure or would you be happy to see the detail being put in the guidance afterwards?

[129] **Ms John:** Yes, the guidance—[*Inaudible.*]—people can do and where they are at already.

[130] **Michael German:** You talked about flexibility earlier. Would guidance provide flexibility? Where would you draw the line? Does it need to have a headline saying that the environment of the school needs to be conducive to ensuring that children can eat in an appropriate manner, or something like that?

[131] **Ms Morris:** I think that that is it. The Measure should have the headlines, with the detail in the guidance.

[132] **Ms John:** Things like the space available can actually have an impact on the choice of



foods, because of the options to display food in chilled cabinets and so on and having a salad counter. All that needs space and refrigeration. Displaying jacket potatoes is always a problem and so they are always hidden under the counter. It is about having an environment that offers healthy choices and is conducive to attracting young people to those choices.

[133] **Michael German:** However, you would not want to see that put in the Measure, would you?

[134] **Ms John:** I do not think so.

[135] **Ms Morris:** I think that it would be difficult to do that. With some things, having the detail in the Measure could be quite difficult. It needs to have those headline bits of information so that schools know what they need to do, but then some flexibility in how they actually do it.

10.20 a.m.

[136] **Ms Rees Williams:** In an ideal world, we would like to have the right kind of environment that makes it easier for young people to eat healthily. However, from working in those environments, we know that sometimes the funding is not there. If we are to talk too much about that, other things will suffer. So, in a way, it is about investing more in that and making it possible for schools to address it.

[137] **David Lloyd:** I see that there are no further questions from Members. Thank you very much indeed for your written evidence and for the thoroughness of your answers. Diolch yn fawr. A transcript of today's proceedings will be sent to you by the clerk in due course for you to agree the fine points of detail. Thank you very much indeed for your attendance.

[138] As the British Dietetic Association departs, I welcome to the table the Welsh Local Government Association, which is also representing the Association of Directors of Education in Wales, as the excellent written evidence before us makes clear. I welcome to the table Dr Chris Llewelyn, Daisy Seabourne and Teresa Filliponi. For the purposes of the Record, I ask you to introduce yourselves in turn. We will then ask a series of prepared questions that are based on your written evidence.

[139] **Dr Llewelyn:** My name is Chris Llewelyn. I am the director of lifelong learning at the Welsh Local Government Association.

[140] **Ms Seabourne:** I am Daisy Seabourne, policy officer for lifelong learning at the Welsh Local Government Association.

[141] **Ms Filliponi:** My name is Teresa Filliponi, and I am the food in schools co-ordinator, based in the WLGA.

[142] **David Lloyd:** Thank you very much indeed. We have a series of questions that are loosely—or perhaps quite intimately—based on your written evidence. Jeff Cuthbert will kick off.

[143] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I thank you for your written evidence, which was most helpful. I want to start with some of the basics, if I may. You state quite clearly in your written evidence that you have reservations about the proposals for a statutory approach. Do you think that there is a need for legislation in this area, either in the form of this proposed Measure or at some later stage? Perhaps you could also give us some details about why you have such reservations about the statutory approach. Finally, bearing in mind that we will have the outcome of the pilot scheme under 'Appetite for Life' in due course, what type of evidence might cause you

to change your mind about the need for a statutory approach?

[144] **Dr Llewelyn:** I will start and then perhaps Teresa can come in with more detail about the way in which ‘Appetite for Life’ is progressing. We are also representing the Association of Directors of Education in Wales, although we have no directors with us this morning.

[145] On the first part of your question, as we state in the evidence, we support the principles behind the Measure, but, at this stage, our view is that the approach adopted by ‘Appetite for Life’ is likely to be a more productive way forward. As you heard in the earlier evidence session, our view is that much of this debate is about winning hearts and minds; that is, getting people to do the right thing because they want to and not because they need to do it. As ‘Appetite for Life’ progresses, there seems to be a consensus around that approach. We have been very involved with the work. We were part of the working group that developed the strategy and the action plan. Teresa is responsible for co-ordinating the approach. It is our view that an incremental approach is more likely to win over hearts and minds and is more likely to be successful in the longer term than a rigorous and prescriptive legislative approach.

[146] We also think that, once we get to 2010, there will be an opportunity to reflect on the success of the approach adopted in ‘Appetite for Life’. If, at that point, it is felt that there need to be changes and that a more robust legislative approach is appropriate, there would be an opportunity to do that at that stage. The approach in ‘Appetite for Life’, which is an incremental one and is about developing consensus and winning hearts and minds, is based on a considerable amount of consultation and research and looking at what happens elsewhere—what succeeds, what works, what does not work, learning lessons and so on. So, we believe that it is the best way forward, while keeping an open mind with regard to any changes that may be required in future.

[147] **Jeff Cuthbert:** That is fine. I understand that absolutely. Do you have any idea at this stage of the sorts of issues that might be produced when the outcomes of ‘Appetite for Life’ are reviewed—the types of things that may cause you to think that we might need a statutory approach, at least in this area?

[148] **Ms Filliponi:** I am looking at nutrient and food standards. I will give you an example. I was talking with a dietician working with the School Food Trust in England to implement the nutrient and food standards, which are very similar to those in Wales. Interestingly, she said that, there, the current standards had not really been looked at. For example, meals must contain 5.4 mg, I think, of iron to comply with the nutrient standards, but the people who set that did not know where the standards were coming from. If you are coming from an iron content of 0.5 mg or 1.5 mg, there is a big gap between that and 5.4 mg. So, she had to work with some of the pilot schemes in England to reduce that gap, without really knowing what the initial data was. That is just a small element of the nutrient standard. If you know where you are coming from, you will know whether the target of getting 5 mg of iron into a meal is too high and whether, to reach that standard, you may lose a lot of students—and I am talking about secondary schools now. It will be easier to implement these standards in primary schools; it is more complicated with secondary schools.

[149] If the big changes in the recipes that are required, such as adding pulses to curries or including more nuts and seeds, are made too quickly, it could result in students and clients being lost. That is the big fear at the moment, namely that providing school meals will not be feasible in many schools because of the major changes. I am talking about the nutrient standard but there are other elements. It is just an example. Hopefully, if we understand where we are coming from, we can see whether the standards are too high as a starting point. If so, perhaps we can work towards reaching a halfway point and then reach the top standard that we want to reach by putting the time in and educating the students and by taking a whole-school approach to these new types of recipe and the food that we want them to eat.

[150] **Jeff Cuthbert:** So, you are saying that, in many respects, we have insufficient information for a uniform baseline; we are not sure where we are at the moment.

[151] **Ms Filliponi:** That is one element. There is another element that is linked. In order to provide certain meals, you need to have staff that are trained to prepare them and kitchens that are equipped to produce that food. This, hopefully, in two years' time, will be fed into the research project so that we can see how much is needed—not just in terms of funding, which is an important element, as you can imagine, but in terms of timing and the type of approach taken. When we are talking about providing food, the—the name of them escapes me—people working in the canteen and who oversee children—

[152] **Michael German:** Supervisors.

[153] **Ms Filliponi:** Thank you. I should know that; it is my job. [*Laughter.*]

[154] The supervisors should be trained because they have a big impact. So, it is not just about the nutrient and food standards, but how best to implement those, looking at what is already there and what needs to be done to reach the standards.

[155] **Dr Llewelyn:** It is not that we do not know where people are but that they are starting from different points and are coming at it from different directions. Teresa mentioned examples in England, but there have been examples in Wales too, where authorities have seen a drop in take-up when they have changed their menus, which is why we come back to this idea that it needs to be done incrementally rather than with a short, sharp shock, as it were.

10.30 a.m.

[156] **Ms Seabourne:** What the pilot projects will do is give local authorities, Teresa and the Welsh Assembly Government the time to look at how much these things cost to implement and what best approaches work in different areas, and then make a reassessment of where we need to be further down the line after the two-year projects from 'Appetite for Life' have come to an end.

[157] **Ms Filliponi:** I listened to the dieticians and to what they were saying about the network that is needed to support the whole-school strategy, which includes the caterers, the school as a whole, the parents and the pupils. So, I hope that, in those two years, there will be a stronger network that will support these changes.

[158] **Jeff Cuthbert:** To let my colleagues know, I am going to jump forward to question 5 and then come back, because I think that this question is relevant to what you are talking about. The Measure refers to relevant authorities giving regard to

[159] 'any relevant reputable scientific advice'

[160] and how that is applied. Do you see any practical issues in local education authorities, schools and any other relevant bodies being able to interpret scientific advice consistently and to apply it consistently across Wales? Following on from the points that you have just been making about the inadequate baseline, do you think that that will become a practical problem?

[161] **Ms Filliponi:** No, I do not think that it will become a practical problem. It is about creating that network for sharing information and building on what other people are doing. Sometimes, when you are in isolation, you can interpret wrongly what is happening. So, it is about that kind of liaising where everyone is working towards the same standards and communicating with each other to reach those standards.

[162] **Dr Llewelyn:** That is happening in the pilot projects, is it not? In a sense, we are creating a network of good practice, and although authorities or schools may not be part of the pilot projects, they can gain from lessons that they learn and the information that is gathered through that work.

[163] **Ms Filliponi:** The other important aspect is to make the advice practicable. Translating the theory into practicality is important, because, sometimes, in theory, something works well, but when you transform it into practicality, it does not work as well. So, you need to have something that works well theoretically and practically, because, otherwise, you will have a big negative outcome, which we do not want.

[164] **Jeff Cuthbert:** This section is really about the duties to promote healthy eating. How do you feel that the new duty described in the proposed Measure differs from the existing position within 'Appetite for Life'? If the proposed Measure becomes a Measure, will it create an additional burden for LEAs, Welsh Ministers and those key decision makers in schools?

[165] **Dr Llewelyn:** Our concern is that there is the potential to create an additional burden, and, ideally, we want to avoid that. Again, the approach embraced by 'Appetite for Life' is an all-inclusive approach, which tries to win the support of all school stakeholders—children and young people, teachers, governors, parents, and so on—and we think that that type of approach is more likely to be successful in the longer term than something that is onerous in terms of reporting burdens and that bureaucratic dimension. The lighter the touch in that respect and the more focus there is on a shared sense of ownership, the more likely it is to be successful.

[166] **Jeff Cuthbert:** Do you feel that there is anything more that the relevant bodies, LEAs, schools and Welsh Ministers should be doing now to fulfil a duty to promote healthy eating?

[167] **Ms Seabourne:** There are a number of initiatives that are already under way to promote healthy eating in local authority areas, and you heard the dieticians mentioning the nutritional groups this morning. There is also the healthy network of schools as well as eco-schools, which look at healthy lifestyles rather than healthy eating specifically. There is actually quite a lot of work already going on. As Teresa has mentioned, with 'Appetite for Life', we are trying to bring local authorities together to share best practice, and that is going on quite strongly at the moment. I do not know whether Teresa wants to give a couple of examples.

[168] **Ms Filliponi:** In terms of 'Appetite for Life', the approach is to create a catering network, which includes people from the nutrition network and the physical activity network. The idea of this network is very much to share good practice, because we felt that, although a lot of work was happening within local authorities, the communication was sometimes not as good as we wanted it to be. One of the initial positive outcomes of 'Appetite for Life' is not so much the nutrient food standard, which is very important, but the important aspect of sharing good practice. We are building a database of ingredients and recipes that all local authorities can access. They can learn from each other and find out which recipes work well on their menus.

[169] In terms of marketing healthy eating, they can share good ideas regarding what they are doing locally. Schools from all over Wales can break down those barriers to help communication. This is an initial outcome that it is to be hoped will lead to improved nutrition and food standards. I am talking about primary schools. It is much more complicated in terms of secondary schools because of how they serve food. Some local authorities, such as Pembrokeshire, Caerphilly and Torfaen, are already there in terms of meeting the standards,

and some, including Pembrokeshire, are using the analysis system that we are using. However, there are some elements to be looked at, such as how they can teach others about what they have done, build up communication and share good practices.

[170] **Ms Seabourne:** The key is to allow ‘Appetite for Life’ to carry on that good work. The kind of good work that Teresa has mentioned has happened relatively quickly. We need to allow ‘Appetite for Life’ to run for the next two years at least to see how we can develop that further.

[171] **Jeff Cuthbert:** I think that you have just answered my next question, which is: is your main message to allow ‘Appetite for Life’ to run and to review the outcomes?

[172] **Ms Seabourne:** Yes.

[173] **Michael German:** On that point, what is there in the proposed Measure, and not in what you might think might come from the Measure in terms of regulations, that actually stops what you are doing and makes it inappropriate?

[174] **Dr Llewelyn:** There is a range of elements there. There are some concerns about the costs in terms of issues such as the Estyn inspections, the implementation of nutritional standards and promoting the uptake of free school meals. There are elements on which we would need more information to be satisfied about the cost implications. ‘Appetite for Life’ is about taking an incremental approach to developing networks of good practice, building on what works and moving that forward in an incremental but constructive way. There are elements in the Measure, because of the enforcement that would be involved, that seem to us, at this stage, to be too rigorous and to potentially put at risk the progress that is been made gradually through ‘Appetite for Life’.

10.40 a.m.

[175] **Michael German:** If it is about having a duty to promote healthy living in schools in Wales, the manner in which you do it could be described in regulations and directions from the Ministers, which could be more or less incremental. Apart from the element of cost—and I fully understand the cost issue, because there will clearly be a cost if we are moving towards making sure that everyone does it—I do not see how the Measure would stop the work that is going on at the moment. You have not given me a clear indication of that.

[176] **Ms Filliponi:** There is a risk that if the Measure brings about a drastic change that could create a negative reaction. There is a fear that we will again see parents start passing chips and burgers through the school gates to their children, which is what happened in other parts of Britain. The other risk is that unless students are engaged in the process they might start to buy food from the corner shop instead of from the school and then you will have lost the battle completely, because the caterers will have lost clients and you will have lost the students, who instead of buying food from the school, will be buying food from other premises. So, the risk is that if it is done too drastically and quickly that could create a negative reaction.

[177] **Michael German:** What in the Measure at the moment does not provide for the holistic approach that you have said that you want?

[178] **Dr Llewelyn:** We agree in principle with what is contained in the Measure, but we are concerned that it could potentially disrupt the approach that is currently in place. As we said, after 2010, we might look back and think that the approach suggested in the Measure is the way forward but, at this stage, if the Measure does not change anything there is a question over what value it adds. There is also the slight risk that it may have the potential to damage

the process, as Teresa alluded to, which we have seen happen elsewhere. We have been alerted to concerns arising from what has happened in England.

[179] **Michael German:** What is in the Measure that would give you that potential risk? What are the words that give that potential risk?

[180] **Dr Llewelyn:** As I said, there are some issues regarding the cost and reporting mechanisms, and some of the bureaucratic burdens seem slightly intense. However, if the Measure does not change what is happening at the moment, then there is the issue of what value it adds. Why amend something that seems to be working reasonably well at the moment?

[181] **David Lloyd:** Would you be reassured, in terms of the detail of the Measure, that the changes would be introduced incrementally? We take the cost issues on board, but if something is on a statutory footing, as is the case with this Measure, the funding would follow. Do you not accept that argument?

[182] **Dr Llewelyn:** In principle, the notion that the funding would follow is acceptable, but experience suggests that that is not always the case. Within local government, there is the often-cited Essex-Jones agreement, which means that local government does not take on any new burdens or responsibilities without them being fully funded. There is a feeling within local government that that is not always the case, so there would be a concern that the progress that is currently being made is being jeopardised by the promise of funding that may or may not follow. At the moment, local government does not have confidence about funding.

[183] **Irene James:** You seem to be saying that you would prefer to see evidence coming in from 'Appetite for Life' before any other changes take place, is that right?

[184] **Dr Llewelyn:** Yes.

[185] **Irene James:** That was very simple and short. Thank you.

[186] **Angela Burns:** I read your report with interest. While welcoming the Measure, you have a whole load of 'buts'. Do you not think that one thing that the Measure might be able to do is bring up to speed the councils that are not taking on 'Appetite for Life' as well as you would wish them to? You have some excellent councils, such as Pembrokeshire, which are really going at it, but there will be other councils that might just be putting it in the 'too difficult to do' pile, and therefore children will lose out in terms of nutrition for another three or four years.

[187] **Dr Llewelyn:** Teresa can come back on the detail, but our view is that authorities are doing the best that they can within the resources that are available to them. We would like to see the evidence that has been gathered from the work that has been conducted through 'Appetite for Life' inform the way that other authorities take the work forward. As Teresa has indicated, we are aware that there are various networks of good practice in place at the moment, and we would feel happier to see that progress take place at a perhaps slightly slower pace but in a sustainable and consolidated way, rather than move forward at a greater pace without being certain as to how effective and how sustainable that progress is.

[188] **David Lloyd:** We will move on to the next batch of questions, which are from Irene.

[189] **Irene James:** Section 3 mentions the definition of healthy eating. Do you think that the definition of healthy eating in section 3 is appropriate? If so, can you explain why? If you do not think so, can you also explain why?

[190] **Dr Llewelyn:** There is a technical issue in terms of the definition, and the support for the committee needs to look at the definitions within existing legislation to see whether there is any conflict on that point. I do not know whether Teresa has a view on it.

[191] **Ms Filliponi:** I will tell you a story about one of the meetings with the caterers that we are working very closely with at the moment. One of the caterers said that children do not like the words 'healthy eating' to be used, and that it is not very good for marketing. We listened to officials talk about a 'balanced diet'—I am not talking about legislation, but what happened with caterers—and the caterers would prefer not to use the words 'healthy eating', but instead refer to a balanced, varied or fit diet. We were looking at a balanced diet, and the different nutrients, as well as looking at the eatwell plate, as used by the British Dietetic Association, with the all the different nutrients balanced in a meal.

[192] **Irene James:** So, as with many other things, it is down to marketing?

[193] **Ms Filliponi:** It has a lot to do with marketing, especially when your clients are younger people.

[194] **Irene James:** They look at the word 'healthy', and they think, 'Ugh'.

[195] **Ms Filliponi:** When we look at other measures we have to draw a distinction between primary school children and secondary school children. Primary school children are going to secondary school expecting a certain type of food—they are used to salad bars and to having fruit. They would choose fruit, but in the secondary school they are young adults, so when you impose something the reaction is, 'I do not want that, I want to do it my way', so you have to find the best approach to engage with them. With Nia, who was here earlier, whom I know because we have done some work together, we hope to use an approach in Wrexham, which is one of the local authorities that has been chosen if everything goes ahead, which is an action research project. It is about engaging young adults in making choices in saying what they want and do not want. It is about marketing in choosing the right wording in the right way whereby they feel that they are heard, and that they have a voice.

[196] **Irene James:** The definition of healthy eating in the Measure was intended to be very broad, and 3(c) refers to the environment, as well as it being about the general health of the population. Do you foresee that there will be practical difficulties in having regard to this provision?

[197] **Ms Filliponi:** The dieticians who were here would have given you a full and complete answer to that, and they are the right people to question about this, because of the definition that they use for their job every day on healthy eating and a balanced diet. They are the best people to be questioned about this.

[198] **Dr Llewelyn:** I think that we would welcome the focus on sustainability within the definition. We think that that is useful.

[199] **David Lloyd:** Angela has the next batch of questions.

10.50 a.m.

[200] **Angela Burns:** To return to your concerns about implementing or accepting this Measure going forward, what onuses do you believe the proposed reporting might place on local authorities, in particular, but, indeed, on any of the other consultation bodies? Is that part of your reluctance to support this Measure?

[201] **Dr Llewelyn:** I believe that I mentioned at the outset that we have concerns about the

reporting elements in the Measure. Anything that adds to the bureaucratic burden placed on local authorities, schools, headteachers, and other stakeholders, is a concern; again, in this instance, there is the question of what value the proposed reporting arrangements have, and whether they have a detrimental impact. Teresa's last point was that, if this range of initiatives is to be successful, then people have to make the choices because they think that they are appropriate, rather than being forced into them. Again, we feel that what is proposed is too prescriptive within this context, and a gentler approach may be more appropriate and would be more likely to be successful in the longer term. However, we can maybe come back to that at a later stage.

[202] **Angela Burns:** Leading on from that, whether it is through this Measure or through 'Appetite for Life', what measures would you envisage being used to determine whether the promotion of healthy eating has been successful in a school, or with a particular set of children?

[203] **Ms Filliponi:** First is the educational element, to see what pupils and students will choose—having more and more pupils choosing fresh fruit and vegetables and wholemeal bread. When I say 'healthy', I mean choosing fruit instead of a snack. We also have the nutrient and food standards. Although those standards are not statutory, we are still working towards them. Therefore, although that is not in legislation, within the consortium—the four catering networks—we have just completed the training phase, so that, by the summer, all local authorities will be able to analyse the menus. That will help to ensure that the food that is offered, initially in primary schools, and then in secondary schools, is analysed and will reach the nutrient and food standards listed in 'Appetite for Life'.

[204] Therefore, that is one element. Although the standards are not statutory, it will be mandatory for the four action research projects. However, all the other local authorities are not waiting around with their arms crossed. Some are more proactive, as you said, and do more work; others need more support. Therefore, working together, we will, hopefully, help the ones that are left behind. We are working towards those standards. The outcome can be seen when you have students in schools choosing certain items on the menu more than others.

[205] It is easier in primary schools; the issue is in secondary schools, where we need to do more work—it is going to be more dramatic. As you start removing the items that students would usually go for, you might have a reaction, and students might not want to use the canteen. Therefore, when you are engaging and educating them, and making them a part of this process, you can see the outcome in the fact that students are eating in schools, so the number taking school meals does not decrease as result. It is about gently removing some items, but not having a negative effect on the uptake of school meals in providing different meals.

[206] **David Lloyd:** I want to tease out the issue of the bureaucratic burden a little more. We take this issue seriously, in terms of monitoring and reporting processes, and you mentioned the additional bureaucratic burden. There is, presumably, a bureaucratic burden on local authorities now, in reporting on 'Appetite for Life'. If there is not, why is that the case, because there should be? Presumably, you see a step change between the bureaucratic burden of reporting and monitoring for 'Appetite for Life' and this Measure. If there is such a step change, what is it?

[207] **Ms Filliponi:** The initial standards that were set in the first document, 'Appetite for Life', which has 41 recommendations, and which went out for consultation, used the legislative approach for the nutrient food standards and what was available at different sites. When the action plan was launched back in November, the Minister decided not to take that approach, but to use the four action research projects and to follow them closely to learn from the outcomes, and then to use them for a national approach. Those four local authorities will



have to follow the legislative approach of those standards to reach those criteria—I am talking about the nutrient food standards and what is available. The other local authorities would be invited to use the standards, but as part of a partnership and communication approach. Have I answered your question? I do not know if I have missed anything.

[208] **Ms Seabourne:** In terms of the incremental approach that you mentioned of bringing in different nutrient standards, the same goes for the bureaucratic burden. What we want to look at from the four pilot schemes that Teresa has talked about is what works in terms of reporting mechanisms, reporting back and monitoring. So, there is also a kind of incremental approach in terms of the burden.

[209] **Dr Llewelyn:** The issue is how sensitive that is. Should you have Estyn inspecting this, and how sensitive would it be to the differing circumstances? Although all authorities are trying to get to the same destination, they are coming from different directions and starting points and they are travelling at a different speed. It is difficult to conceive of an inspection regime that would be sensitive enough to accommodate those differences and, at the same time, what is happening in the pilot schemes.

[210] **Angela Burns:** I have a final point on that. I was interested in the number of references that you made to the whole-school approach; from the way that you talked about it in the report and have talked about it here, you obviously feel that this is a unique methodology that is proving to be successful. Do you want to add anything more to that or give a little more description of what you mean by a whole-school approach, particularly how much of that includes parents as well as the children?

[211] **Dr Llewelyn:** I will respond, and maybe Teresa can provide some detail. It is not something that is unique to this work; if you look at other education initiatives and programmes that deliver effectively, there is increasing evidence, not just in Wales or the UK, that they are most successful when they have the support or the buy-in of the community as a whole. So, that is when it is not just the school, the teachers or the heads providing leadership, but when parents, governors and the community as a whole, and the children and young people, buy in to whatever the initiative is. The WLGA has done quite a bit of work on a project called Narrowing the Gap, which looks at schools that outperform their socioeconomic context in terms of attainment. In each instance where that happens, a range of characteristics prevail. One of the features is always the wraparound element, namely the involvement of the community as a whole, and not just the education community, but the wider community as well. As I said, this is repeated in a range of educational initiatives elsewhere and it is the phenomenon that is being identified here.

[212] **Ms Filliponi:** We have seen that the best outcome is when the whole-school approach actively involves the different key partners that Chris listed. We cannot forget that children will accept whatever food is in the house, so when they go to school, and they do not recognise the food that they see there, there is no gain. However, if you engage the parents in producing that type of food, you will have a long-lasting, positive outcome, and we want to promote that as much as we can.

11.00 a.m.

[213] **Michael German:** I would like to focus more on the bureaucratic burden and the cost burden, about which you talked earlier. The explanatory memorandum describes nutritional standards being ratcheted up over a number of years. In other words, it is an incremental approach, which I presume that you would welcome. What do you think would be the practical implications for the way in which you deliver nutritional standards if the Measure is passed with this incremental approach to reducing the maximum levels of salt, sugar and additives in food?

[214] **Ms Filliponi:** The time element is very important. We are learning a great deal from England, where they are implementing legislation from this September in primary schools. I have been in this position for a year, and, last year, I was lucky enough to be invited by the Local Authority Caterers Association to the national conference in Birmingham. To be honest, I was really shocked by the response, not only of the local authority caterers but of some of the dieticians and nutritionists there. I would have expected those people to have supported such standards, but the School Food Trust, which is behind the Government's approach, was very negative. The timing with regard to implementing the standards is very important—not so much for primary schools, but very much for secondary schools. If you do it too quickly, you will lose all your customers.

[215] **Michael German:** With regard to how long the increments are and how often the standards are ratcheted up, I understand that the speed of travel is a matter of concern. However, I wish to look more at the practical implications. For example, if you reduce the levels of salt, sugar and artificial additives in food, practically, what does that mean in terms of the extra demands on schools?

[216] **Ms Filliponi:** I would say that the cost of some of the food items would increase.

[217] **Michael German:** So, do foods with lower salt levels cost more?

[218] **Ms Filliponi:** In order to produce some of the food that is brought into schools, the food industry has to invest money. There are two elements, one of which is the cost of basic ingredients. If you buy raw ingredients, the cost is higher. The second element is the labour cost. The caterers will give you much more detail on the cost implications. You will need more people to work more hours and people who are trained to make those meals. There has been a big improvement in the way that food is produced in schools, but there is a history behind some of the changes to the way in which food is produced in schools going back to the 1980s.

[219] **Michael German:** Presumably, you agree that there should be lower levels of salt, sugar and artificial additives in the food that is served in schools.

[220] **Ms Filliponi:** Yes. Without doubt, the standards should require that.

[221] **Michael German:** So, you are saying that manufacturers of processed food charge more for food with lower levels of salt, sugar and artificial additives.

[222] **Ms Filliponi:** No, I did not say that they charge more. I said that, because the food industry has been requested to improve the food provided to schools—and not just in Wales, because it is a United Kingdom approach—the costs of some items brought in by local authorities have increased. The other element is that, if you want to use more raw basic ingredients there is a higher cost because of the transformation process of making the food.

[223] **Michael German:** Yes, you will need to install kitchens and so on. However, I was just wondering about the whole area of procurement. If the food industry is told by the substantial market for food in schools—and you are now describing this as being England as well as Wales—

[224] **Ms Filliponi:** It is also Scotland.

[225] **Michael German:** If the food industry is being told that schools want food with lower salt, sugar levels and fewer artificial additives, surely that will drive down the price.

[226] **Ms Filliponi:** Someone from the food industry would be better placed to answer that question. I can tell you what I have been told in discussions with caterers, which is that that is not the case. The cost has increased, not only because of the current crisis, but because the rest of the cost was placed upon the item.

[227] **Dr Llewelyn:** There are three elements to the nutritional standards. There is the risk of take-up decreasing, a risk of the cost of producing the meals increasing, because you are using fewer processed products and more raw materials, which in turn incurs a labour cost, and there is an increase in the cost of purchasing those materials. Those are the three elements that Teresa is referring to.

[228] **Ms Seabourne:** There are also capital costs to consider. Due to historical reasons over the last 20 years or so, to which Teresa referred, some schools may not necessarily have the facilities to produce the kind of food that we are talking about.

[229] **Michael German:** Most primary school kitchens have been ripped out, along with the rumpers and the food preparation areas. There is a capital cost and a skills cost, but I was worried about the raw ingredients. There seems to be a national demand for a lower salt intake, a lower sugar intake and, presumably, a lower fat intake. Local government across England, Wales and Scotland has not yet been able to use its procurement procedures to manage the prices downward by means of bulk buying.

[230] **Ms Seabourne:** As Teresa mentioned, the cost of food is generally increasing, as is reported on the news every day, and that has a knock on—

[231] **Michael German:** I am talking about the fact that the relative cost of foods that are lower in salt, sugar and fat is not changing, despite the fact that you have enormous bulk buying power.

[232] **David Lloyd:** Do you have any other questions, Mike?

[233] **Michael German:** The final point also relates to cost. In capital cost terms, where you have a school that does not have food preparation areas—you have regional centres, which are still part of the Welsh education system, where meals are prepared to be taken elsewhere—have you assessed the additional costs of a food preparation system that uses raw ingredients, taking into account that such a system might operate in the regional centres?

[234] **Dr Llewelyn:** That information is not contained in the capital asset management plans that authorities have in place. That said, in terms of capital investment in school buildings, our recent research indicates that we need an investment of £1.6 billion to bring them up to the notional fit-for-purpose target.

[235] **Michael German:** Did you say ‘million’ or ‘billion’? I missed that.

[236] **Dr Llewelyn:** I said ‘£1.6 billion’.

[237] **Michael German:** This is about the whole school building, is it?

[238] **Dr Llewelyn:** Yes, but the issue of kitchens needs to be seen in that context. An audit is being undertaken, but I am not certain where we are on that.

[239] **Ms Filliponi:** There is an issue with quantity, and not just for the kitchens, but for the eating areas as well. An important factor is that some schools, although part of their local authorities, have decided to opt out of local authority catering service provision. So, loads of work is needed there. It is not just a matter of improving whatever needs to be improved in

terms of equipment or eating areas; work needs to be done to bring these schools back and to engage them in the discussion process. For them to become fully involved in this process will take time, and time is a very important issue. It is not just about giving money and telling them what to do with it; you have to create a network that brings those schools back into the discussion. I am talking about nutritional standards, kitchens and eating areas.

[240] **David Lloyd:** Moving on to the last batch of questions, which are on the promotion of school meals, section 9(1)(b) of the proposed Measure requires that a local authority must

[241] 'encourage pupils... to consume school meals'.

11.10 a.m.

[242] If education authorities are indeed successful in their efforts to promote the uptake of school meals, do you envisage schools having difficulties in coping with the increased demands? Conversely, what do you consider to be the main threats, if any, to the school meals service if pupils choose not to engage with any initiative supporting healthy eating in schools?

[243] **Ms Filliponi:** There is a big difference between primary and secondary schools—I am sorry if I have underlined that before, but I need to reinforce that point. The reality is that primary and secondary schools need a different approach. For some secondary schools, one of the big problems is the eating areas. Sometimes, they do not have enough spaces to feed all of the students in the school and so there are sometimes long queuing times before being served. So, if school meals take-up increases, some schools will not be able to cope. On the other hand, if there is a negative reaction and more students decline to choose school meals, it will become financially unviable for schools. So, you have two extremes.

[244] **Ms Seabourne:** We have already mentioned that that has been seen in some places in England and Wales, where there has been a downturn in the number of pupils choosing school meals.

[245] **David Lloyd:** Following on from that, do you think that it would be advisable to include guidance in any Measure on the school environment, such as the need to have building structures for the provision of school meals?

[246] **Ms Filliponi:** We need baseline data to see where we are and what the reality is. Each school is a reality in itself, so it is difficult to generalise, because you will have some schools that have already reached that point and are doing lots of work. Marketing is an important element when we talk about school meals. For example, Jamie Oliver launched his campaign, which has done good things, but, unfortunately, particularly for the Welsh local authorities, it has not had a positive response, because many local authorities were already implementing healthy eating measures, such as changing the menus, providing more fruit and vegetables, and so on. So, when the Jamie Oliver campaign started, he had dinner ladies writing to him and asking angrily, 'Come to see my school', as they were really annoyed. So, that is the perception that we are left with: parents and citizens think that school meals are bad, without knowing what is offered in schools. That is an important element that needs to be taken into consideration when we look at school meals.

[247] **Dr Llewelyn:** That reinforces the focus on an incremental approach, of having networks of good practice, learning lessons and looking at the pilot schemes to see what works and what does not, and moving things forward in a consensual and gradual way.

[248] **David Lloyd:** Thank you. Are there any questions from colleagues? I see that there are none.

[249] I thank the witnesses, Teresa Filliponi, Dr Chris Llewelyn and Daisy Seabourne for their contributions this morning. A transcript of today's proceedings will be sent to you by the clerk for correction. I doubt whether there will be any corrections to be made following the work of our marvellous clerking team, but should you feel that some overriding issue has been missed out or misrepresented, please feel free to correct it when the transcript arrives. Thank you. Diolch yn fawr.

[250] Before declaring the meeting closed, I inform Members that the next meeting will be on Tuesday, 17 June, when we hope to take evidence from the National Association of Headteachers, Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru, and Governors Wales. I declare the meeting closed. Diolch yn fawr.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 11.14 a.m.*  
*The meeting ended at 11.14 a.m.*