

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)

CYPE SP 108

Ymateb gan: Katie Palmer, Rheolwr Rhaglen Food Sense Cymru a Chyd-sylfaenydd ac ysgrifenydd Cynghrair Polisi Bwyd Cymru

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Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education

Covid 19 has simultaneously demonstrated the vulnerability in our food supply chain and the crucial role schools have to play in ensuring adequate nutrition for our school age children. Despite large rises in the number of FSM-eligible children in Wales, we continue to see [more children in poverty missing out on free school meals than in any other UK nation](#). Additional safety nets Government put in place to ensure families eligible for free school meals were supported during the pandemic and the adaptations schools made to operate a safe meal service, have been vital. However, with many school meal services still constrained by operating safely in a Covid context, combined with increasing challenges in the food supply chain due to Brexit and the pandemic, the committee should consider how Government can ensure a secure and resilient school meal service that is delivering sustainable and nutritious meals to all children whilst benefiting the wider local supply chain.

1. A review of the role of food in the school day.

- To include a review of the social return on investment of integrating policy thinking and legislation across Government priorities such as developing the Foundational economy, Agriculture Bill and Community Food Strategy,



progressing the Social Partnerships and Public Procurement Bill and reducing educational inequalities through increasing eligibility of and ensuring access to free school meals (lunches and breakfasts) that are sourced locally and sustainably produced.

- To include aligning the forthcoming review of the Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measure 2009 with developing the Food Foundational economy, accreditation and ensuring all school lunches contain a minimum of 2 portions of veg.
- To include a review on the free school breakfast scheme and its ability to reach those children most in need.
- To consider how to protect children's food security in future pandemics or emergencies
- To consider how the school meal service can be effectively monitored
- To consider how the proposed review of the structure of the school day and school year could optimise dining experiences for children

2. A review of holiday provision including how the School Holiday Enrichment Programme can be optimised to help meet government's ambition of reducing inequalities. Considerations could include:

- How SHEP could be funded and administered moving forward to eliminate the constraints on programme development of single year funding commitments
- Whether SHEP should become a statutory function of Local Authorities as seen as part of their Socio-economic duty to ensure all children that need the provision can access a scheme
- How the programme could be expanded (increased reach, eligibility and to cover all holidays) to ensure all children that would benefit from the programme could be offered a place. This should include a review of how the programme can support vulnerable children.
- The role of SHEP in supporting the development of Welsh Government's community school programme.
- Whether Government should support other types of holiday provisions and review the impact of providing free school meal provision over all holidays during the pandemic.

3. Explore how food can be used in the new curriculum to ensure that every child in Wales is food literate and equipped to become good food citizens

There are some great examples of how schools are using food to support the curriculum – from growing and cooking food to budgeting and learning about the sugar content of junk food or animal welfare issues. However schools need the appropriate training and resources to support deliver consistently across Wales. There are many potential resources that could be built upon including Council Education catering departments and Dietetic teams. A few are listed here:



- Nutrition Skills for Life Programme – Including the School Holiday Enrichment Programme where teaching assistants are trained and resources are mapped to the curriculum for literacy and numeracy
- Veg Power - <https://vegpower.org.uk/ways-to-use-eat-them-to-defeat-them-in-schools/>
- Cardiff's **Healthy Schools team** have produced a Power Up Your Pupils with Veg resource pack for teachers and a Peas Please Parent Pack, to engage primary school children with veg
- For a case study on how education catering, schools, suppliers and dietitians worked together in Wales during SHEP see pg 23 of the Peas Please [Feeding our Future](#) report
- Organisations such as Social Farms & Gardens, through their [School Farms Network](#) (these are education settings that hold livestock and do much more than just have food growing areas), have worked tirelessly for years to bring 'food education' higher up the curriculum agenda and the network now boasts over 120 school farm members

N.B it is recommended that the committee take note of the recommendations made in [Feeding our Future](#) (pg 36) also of relevance to Theme 3.

Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education

Consider how to build the capacity of further and higher Education to deliver the agro-ecological supply chain training needed to support the development of a resilient Food System

We need to ensure that food education in all its forms in further and higher education is attuned to a rapidly changing context. The most obvious example is in farming where the institutions need to set the pace in offering training that is appropriate to the kind of sustainable and regenerative farming we need to see in the future and that underpins WG policy objectives on climate change and biodiversity. To equip the next generation of farmers and growers with the skills they need for agroecological farming, a combination of on farm practical training and theoretical classroom learning is needed

Wales has a long and rich history in Wales of providing practical and class room support to our young farmers – mostly through further education settings and there are a number of colleges across Wales that deliver this blended learning which are a real stepping stone in to farming. However, Horticultural training at this level is very



limited across Wales and is only available at a very small number of sites. One of these is the Neath Port Talbot Group of colleges and in particular their Newtown College Campus which is now offering a Level 2 Horticulture course. They are using the community gardens adjacent for some of the practical learning environment whilst also equipping our future growers with 21st century skills by linking to the Controlled Environment Agriculture pilot site and utilising this technology and infrastructure as part of the course. They are also in the enviable position of having the ability to directly link horticulture with their catering training college, their own on-site catering and their publicly available restaurant.

Tyfu Cymru, Landworkers' Alliance and Cardiff University are currently piloting a Wales wide agroecological horticulture traineeship network, as part of the [Resilient Green Spaces](#) partnership hosted by Social Farms & Gardens. Trainees are placed with agroecological veg farms across Wales, where they receive practical training and experience. This is complemented by theoretical training from multiple different farmers & trainers both online and at the farms, enabling trainees to get a broad understanding of growing in different environments and business models. **We encourage the Committee to review the learnings from this pilot after the project ends in September 2023**

There could be more emphasis on healthy and sustainable secondary food production to foster the kind of skills that add value to our agricultural produce and strengthen local economic activity and supply chains. Meanwhile catering and hospitality education (currently under review by Qualifications Wales) needs a complete overhaul to offer a more rounded curriculum, closely tied to farming and food craft and that recognises that the nature of eating out has become more informal, and more diverse in character. Enterprise and business understanding needs to be woven into the fabric of all these courses

Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)

One in four of reception age children are overweight or obese (PHW 2021) and those from poorer backgrounds are more likely to be an unhealthy weight. The Peas Please report, [Feeding our Future](#) and the accompanying report [The State of the Nation Wales](#) highlights that children's veg intake remains well below the recommended intake.



1. Consider how to optimize the Healthy start scheme in Wales

Around 40% of beneficiaries are not taking up their entitlement in Wales. The committee could consider how public bodies are monitoring and supporting the uptake of healthy start vouchers locally and nationally consider what impact the scheme is having on providing nutritional support to low-income families.

2. Food environment / advertising

Welsh Government is due to consult on the food environment as part of Healthy Weight Healthy Wales. Priorities of the HWHW delivery plan for 2021–2025 include working with stakeholders to promote positive marketing and restrict advertising of unhealthy food and drink, and consulting on mandatory calorie information for the out of home sector. Additionally, they intend to work with the UK Government on how to improve marketing and labelling on infant food and drink – something the UK Government committed to consult on in 2019 but has not actioned. They have also re-committed to launch a detailed consultation on takeaways located near schools (previously delayed due to Covid).

Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people

Ensuring Children's Right to Food is upheld

In conjunction with the Equality and Social Justice Committee the committee should consider how Children's Rights Legislation and the Socio-economic duty can be deployed to ensure every child in Wales receives their Right to Food, eradicating children's food insecurity in line with the Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger by 2030. For example should there be accountability at a local authority level to measure, monitor and report on food insecurity and ensure strategies are in place to mitigate against it, as part of their socio-economic duty? The committee may like to take account of the evidence generated through the Welsh Government commissioned research on [strengthening and advancing equality and Human Rights in Wales](#)

The review of eligibility of Free School Meals is key to ensuring every child in Wales receives this right and the committee may like to consider research produced by the [Bevan Foundation and Antipoverty Coalition](#) and research from Sweden published in



June of this year which shows that children that received free school lunches during their entire primary school period [went on to have higher lifetime incomes](#).

The Committee may also like to note the work of Children's Right 2 Food and their report – [A Year of Children's Food](#) – which includes work from Wales' Young Food Ambassadors and charts the progress in all four Nations of the UK in ensuring Children's Right to Food

