

P-05-865 Guarantee fully plant-based options on every public sector menu to protect the rights of vegans and for our health, the environment and animals

This petition was submitted by Louise Davies having collected 1,109 signatures.

Text of Petition

More people of all ages are making the decision to live vegan, with the number in the UK doubling twice in the last 4 years. More people are also choosing plant-based food for health, environmental and ethical reasons.

Vegans have the same legal protections as people with religious beliefs, because our moral conviction that it is wrong to use and kill non-human animals unnecessarily is protected under law. Service providers have an obligation to provide for vegans and to avoid any discrimination on the grounds of veganism. Sadly, despite this, provision for vegans in the public sector is often lacking, with hospital patients, prisoners and school children often going hungry. The Welsh Government is responsible for ensuring that the Welsh public sector provides for vegans and the proposed legislation would assist in fulfilling that obligation.

Plant-based food can be enjoyed by everyone. The British Dietetic Association recognises that well-planned totally plant-based diets are suitable for every age and life stage. A substantial body of research has linked plant-based diets with lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol, lower rates of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some types of cancer.

Plant-based diets are better for the environment and can reduce our food related carbon emissions by up to 50%. The UN has urged a global move towards a meat and dairy free diet for the benefit of our planet, and Wales has the opportunity to lead the way.

We would like to see all Welsh public sector institutions providing at least one plant-based food option on every daily menu to ensure vegans' rights are met and to maximise the ethical, environmental and health benefits of vegan diets.

Additional Information

Veganism is defined as a way of living which seeks to exclude, as far as is possible and practicable, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose.

The Vegan Society's 'Catering For Everyone' campaign has been encouraging public sector institutions (schools, hospitals, councils and prisons), to increase their plant-based options.

The campaign has been well received with many public sector institutions recognising that improvements can be made and agreeing to increase their provision for vegans.

An English county council, universities in Manchester and London, and a Welsh health board are among the many public sector institutions making positive changes to their menus due to this campaign.

Both the British Dietetic Association and the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recognise that totally plant-based diets are suitable for every age and life stage.

To get the most out of a plant-based diet, it should include plenty of whole grains, fruit, nuts, seeds and vegetables, which are packed full of beneficial fibre, vitamins and minerals.

It's easy to produce tasty options that include these foods, which are rich in fibre and low in saturated fat. The Vegan Society have lots of resources and recipes on their website, which can help organisations ensure they are offering healthy, balanced and tasty plant-based food.

<https://www.vegansociety.com/resources/nutrition-and-health>

Portugal have introduced legislation compelling all public sector canteens to provide a strict vegetarian (vegan) option on their daily menus. This followed a campaign and petition promoted by the Portuguese Vegetarian Society, see: <https://www.vegansociety.com/whats-new/news/new-law-makes-vegan-option-compulsory-portuguese-public-canteens-%E2%80%93-britain-next>

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Brecon and Radnorshire
- Mid and West Wales