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Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education

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Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-865
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/05655/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair - Petitions committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
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4 April 2019

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter regarding Petition 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. As this is a matter which cuts across both the education and health and social services portfolios, this is a joint response.

The *Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2013*¹ ("the Regulations") came into force on 2 September 2013 and apply throughout Wales. The Regulations are accompanied by statutory guidance² which carries legal weight.

The purpose of the Regulations is to ensure that children in Welsh schools are offered nutritionally balanced meals. Although the Regulations cater for the majority, who eat an omnivorous diet, vegetarian and vegan children are not excluded.

The statutory guidance makes it clear that for vegan pupils schools should ensure that soya, oat or rice drinks are provided as an alternative to milk (although rice milk is not recommended for pupils under five years old). Furthermore, milk alternatives made from oats or nuts may be requested for children and brought in by parents or carers, although these should be unsweetened and fortified with calcium.

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Rydym yn croesawu cael gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

The statutory guidance states that local authorities must have clear and justifiable reasons for departing from it by not providing alternative options for vegans. The circumstances of each case would need to justify a good enough reason for the local authority to depart from the statutory guidance.

The regulations have now been in place for more than 5 years and the Welsh Government has already made a commitment to update them. We will be considering the latest research and information concerning nutritional standards when undertaking this task. In the meantime we will continue to work with Health officials in Welsh Government, the WLGA, local authorities and school catering managers to ensure food and drink provided in our schools continues to make an important healthy contribution to the diet of our children and young people.

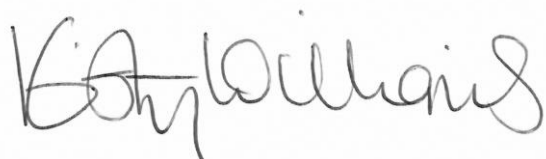
With reference to NHS Wales hospitals, the all-Wales Nutrition and Catering Standards (2011) specify the nutrient content needed to provide for the diverse needs of the hospital population. To support the implementation of these standards, caterers and dieticians across Wales worked together to produce the All Wales Hospital Menu Framework, which was launched at the end of January 2013. The framework consists of a database of 150 standardised, nutritionally assessed recipes and sample menus. The supporting Menu Framework website is populated with the ingredients, product specifications and allergen coding to ensure accessible accurate information. The menus include vegetarian and vegan foods.

A scoping exercise is currently being undertaken to identify the areas of the All Wales Nutrition and catering Standards for hospital inpatients that need to be updated.

With regards to care home services (including both nursing homes and children's homes), *the Regulated Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2017* ("the 2017 Regulations"), place requirements on service providers and responsible individuals of these services including requirements which relate to an individual's dietary preference. These requirements apply to all services, regardless of whether they are operated by the public, voluntary or independent sectors. Specifically, the 2017 Regulations emphasise the need for staff to listen to what matters to individuals and to plan their care in a way which takes into account their views, wishes and feelings. This would include consideration of an individual's dietary preferences.

We hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,



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1. www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2013/1984/contents/made

2: <https://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/160226-healthy-eating-maintained-schools-en-v2.pdf>