



**Gweithio dros Gaerdydd, gweithio gyda'n gilydd  
Working for Cardiff, working together**





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# Education Catering

- New schools
- Business retention
- Cashless catering
- SHEP/Food and Fun



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**School Meal Debt**  
**Judith Gregory**  
**LACA Wales Regional Chair**

# Wales Overview

- Highest rates of child poverty (30%) in the UK
- No Universal Infant Free School Meals
- No Academies
- Estyn/Ofsted
- WG Breakfast Scheme
- WG School Holiday Enrichment Programme
- WG Healthy Eating in Schools(Nutritional Standards and Requirements) Wales 2013
- Pupil Development Grant/Pupil Premium
- Consultation on UC and FSM
- Consultation on Healthy Weight:Healthy Wales

# Collection of School Meal Payments

- Income collected by school on behalf of LA
- Income collection delegated to school – LA invoice schools for meals served
- Contract caterer collects income directly from parents
- Cashless catering systems, online payments, accurately recording meals taken, income collected

# How debt is managed

Consideration should always be given to pupil needs

- Schools contact parents, immediate payment, provide packed lunch, take child home for lunch
- Zero tolerance, no payment, no meal
- Allow one 'lend'
- Give child a sandwich and water
- Allow child to have full meal

# Current challenges

- Recognition that debt is not the pupils fault, (often school lunch will be their only 'hot meal' of the day)
- Families just about managing
- Responsibility for public money
- Can result in negative publicity for school/LA
- Minority will prioritise other lifestyle choices over school meals
- Schools know pupils individual circumstances
- Education Welfare Officers, Social Services



# Points to consider

- Should we be allowing families to build up debt?
- Parents with more than one child can build up substantial debt over a short period of time
- Parents ignore contact from school
- Local Authorities: Debt Recovery Policy
- Accurate data, cashless catering systems
- Trying to get parents to clear debt affects meal uptake
- Support for those that can't pay?
- Discretion to award FSM to those in need?

# Final thoughts



- Raise awareness of impact on all concerned
- Is there research on this issue available
- It is a UK problem that anecdotally is escalating
- Important that the dignity and education of children is not detrimentally affected



# Children's Future Food Inquiry

- First attempt to directly and systematically seek the views of children and young people living in poverty across Wales and the rest of the UK
- 12 months spent investigating children's food insecurity
- Final report pulls together direct input from hundreds of young people, frontline staff, academics and experts

# What is means for Wales?

- Priority issue for young people in Wales is FSM and urgent action is needed by WG to reform school food policy
- Instead of ensuring that children in families on low income received a nutritious meal, in Wales, the reality is that many children living poverty are not actually eligible
- 55,000 children living in poverty are missing out on FSM



## THE BROKEN PLATE

Unhealthy foods are **three times** cheaper than healthy foods

- Healthy
- Unhealthy





# CHARTER



1

## THE HEALTHY LUNCH GUARANTEE

All children need a healthy lunch to grow and thrive, whether in nursery or school, term time or holidays and especially if times are tough at home.

**THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED BY:**

- Providing free nursery meals to children who are entitled to free childcare – as promised in Scotland.
- Increasing the offer of free school meals to a wider group of children throughout age bands (as in Northern Ireland)
- Expanding the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme so all school children can benefit (primary and secondary)
- Including migrant and undocumented children without recourse to public funds in free school meals
- Introducing mandatory food standards in all nurseries as in Northern Ireland
- Expanding holiday provision programmes that are educational, fun and provide access to healthy food as a right to all young people
- Introducing Universal Infant Free School meals in Wales and Northern Ireland.



2

## THE HEALTHY FOOD MINIMUM

It's right that our parents and carers are supported to put healthy food on the table.

**THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED BY:**

- Expanding the Healthy Start voucher scheme by increasing the voucher value and increasing the number of children who benefit. This should build on Scotland's creation of 'Best Start Foods'
- Introducing financial holiday allowances for school holiday periods for lower income families
- When considering changes to support or wages for families, make laws that take food costs into account, and unlock the constraints of poverty on what we can eat.

### PLEASE NOTE

The recommendations in this report cover areas of policy which have varying levels of devolution across the four UK nations. They are addressed to all four governments, local authorities, schools and businesses, according to their powers.



3

## THE CHILDREN'S FOOD WATCHDOG

It's right that we have a say in what we eat. We think there needs to be a new, independent Children's Food Watchdog, with young people involved in the leadership, to monitor and improve our food.

**THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED BY:**

- Monitoring and inspection of school and nursery meals
- Development of guidance for schools for food education including learning about UK food poverty, how it can be solved and the right to food in our curriculum
- Development of a national menu and best eating environments for secondary school students designed by young people that meets school food standards
- Stimulating learning on the best approaches to improving children's food across all four nations.



4

## HEALTH BEFORE PROFITS

It's right that children's health come before the profits of big business.

**THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED BY:**

- Stopping marketing aimed at children on packaging. Ending promotions of unhealthy foods and replacing these with health warnings similar to those featured on cigarette packets
- Tackling marketing of junk food on TV, near schools, online and on social media
- Increasing business rates for fast food shops near schools and using the funding to support food education and extended school day projects.



5

## STOP THE STIGMA

We shouldn't be made to feel ashamed. In a decent society no-one should be struggling to put decent food on the table.

**THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED BY:**

- Renaming free school meals as the "school meal allowance"
- Increasing the meal allowance for secondary school to a minimum of £4 per day, and allowing it to be used at any time of day and carried over between days
- Banning water being sold in schools and making it freely available for everyone throughout the school day
- "Poverty proofing" our schools to ensure that no one is left out of activities like cookery and ensuring those on free school meals are kept anonymous.

# Next stage

- Establishing a Children's Food Watchdog
- Conduct an economic costing of the full range of measures proposed in the report by the young people
- Measures tackle the differences in policy and provision across the UK with the aim to achieve minimum equitable standards



# Food poverty and school food

- Food Poverty in South Wales: A call to Action
- A Charter for Change: Protecting Welsh Children from the impact of poverty
- Kids on the breadline: solutions to holiday hunger
- Just change campaign: Citizens UK
- UC and FSM
- Healthy Weight:Healthy Wales