

# Count Me in Month

**School Meals**

**Count Me In Month**

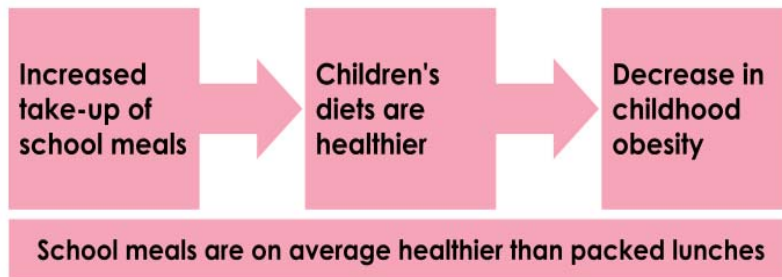
# Overview

**We are Nesta. The  
UK's innovation  
agency for social  
good.**

- Universal Primary Free School Meals Wales in September 2022
- Uptake in UPFSM
- Approached by Nesta.org to participate in their project to increase school meal uptake



# Why do we care about increasing school food take up in Wales



By the age of age of 5 nearly one in four of children in the UK are either overweight or obese

School is an important eating location - 17% of children's snacks and meals are eaten in school

Research has suggested that packed lunches are typically less healthy than school meals - more calorific, more sat fat & more sugar.

Even after introduction of UPFSM, 25-30% continue to eat packed lunch

# Collaborating with Nesta

- Head teachers
- Parents
- Pupils
- Council – policies
- Catering team

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4 schools selected

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Large and medium sized primary schools with planned activities

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Small primary school with no planned activities

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Small primary school with no Count Me In but planned activities (control)



## Prototypes for Parents and pupils

Prototypes developed by Nesta

Sessions with parents and pupils held at each school

1. Social Media messaging

2. Video from the school cook and a council catering manager, talking about school food

3. School meal kit to take home with a recipe card

4. Count Me In Month



# What is it?

School food - count me in month involved all pupils within a school being expected to eat school meals for a month and, being required to actively opt-out if they would like to eat packed lunches.

Why did we think it would work?

- Taps into social norms
- Builds familiarity
- Default effect – flipping the default option
- Low-risk (short-time period)
- Low-cost for schools/councils
- Generally well supported by parents

Supporting activities may be required to help build awareness, trust and familiarisation with school food.

**CAERPHELLY** **nesta**  
**CAERFFILI**

Ionawr 2024 January 2024

## BWYD YSGOL -IE PLÏS!

Ewch amdani a bwytwch brydau ysgol bob dydd yn ystod mis Ionawr: cewch fwyta gyda'ch ffrindiau, darganfod blasau newydd ac arbed amser ac arian.

→ O 8 Ionawr, bydd pob disgybl yn **cofrestru'n awtomatig** ar gyfer prydau ysgol am ddim am y mis.

→ Cofiwch gysylltu â'r Cyngor os oes gennych **gwestiynau** neu os oes gan eich plentyn **ofynion dietegol arbennig**.

→ Cewch **ragor o wybodaeth** am fwydleni cinio ysgol a gwybodaeth am faeth ar wefan Cyngor Caerphilly!

→ Rydym yn annog eich plentyn yn fawr i geisio. **Cysylltwch â'r Cyngor os nad ydych am l'ch plentyn gymryd rhan**, ar yr e-bost neu'r rhif ffôn isod.

**Cysylltwch â ni:**  
catering@caerphilly.gov.uk  
01443 864055

**Get in touch:**  
catering@caerphilly.gov.uk  
01443 864055

**SCHOOL FOOD -COUNT ME IN!**

Try school meals every day for the month of January: eat with friends, discover new flavours, and save time & money.

→ **Starting January 8<sup>th</sup>**, all pupils are **automatically signed up** for free school meals for the month.

→ Get in touch with the Council if you have any **questions** or if your child has **special dietary requirements**.

→ **Find out more** about school lunch menus and nutritional information on the Caerphilly County website!

→ We really encourage your child to try. **Please contact the Council if you don't want your child to take part**, on the email or phone number below.

**Let's eat together this January!**

**Dewch i ni fwyta gyda'n gilydd fis Ionawr yma!**



# Communication



# Communication



Photo by Katie Azi  
on Unsplash

3348 Catering Postcard.indd 1



## SCHOOL MEALS - COUNT ME IN! TRY COOKING OUR GINGERBREAD PEOPLE YOURSELF

### INGREDIENTS

- 225g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- 2tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 75g unsalted butter
- 100g soft brown sugar
- 100g golden syrup
- ground ginger
- cinnamon
- salt

### STEP 1

Heat the oven to 190C/170C (fan/gas 5) and line a baking tray with baking parchment. Sieve the flour, salt, bicarbonate, ginger and cinnamon into a large bowl. Heat the butter, sugar and syrup until dissolved. Leave the sugar mixture to cool slightly, then mix into the dry ingredients to form a dough. Chill the dough in the fridge for 30 mins.

### STEP 2

On a surface lightly dusted with flour, roll out the dough to a ¼-inch thickness. Stamp out the gingerbread men shapes with a cutter, then re-roll any off-cuts and repeat. Place your gingerbread shapes on the lined trays, allowing space for them to spread. Cook for 10-15 mins, then remove from the oven and leave to cool.

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# Communication


January 2024

## SCHOOL MEALS - COUNT ME IN!

We've noticed your child is still bringing in packed lunches during the 'School Meals - Count me in' month, which runs all of January.

We really encourage every child to try, but **if you don't want your child to take part and haven't opted out already**, please fill in the form on the QR code below or phone the council to help us keep track of numbers and minimise food waste.

**Get in touch:**

 01443 864055



# Activities

Tasting for parents and children at school events

Food samples during lunch times for future menus

Allowing packed lunch pupils to come to counter and look/try

- Challenges:
- Staff needed to encourage children – time/resource
- Samples – cost, resource
- Packed lunch pupils elsewhere in school
- Communication
- Allergies and diets



# How did we learn from the project?

Analysis of the data in each school

Observation during lunch times – Nesta Project team and myself

Survey with parent groups after the event

Workshops with school staff and council after the event



# What did we learn?

- Opting-out form did not work – lots of admin and parents ignored in many cases
- Communication - repetitive
- Activities supporting the event worked well
- Activity with no CMIM still worked well!
- Worked best in small schools where communication was good
- Resource would be needed for 76 schools
- Sampling/tasting sessions increased numbers
- CMIM works
- School Leaders

## 'School Meals, Count Me In' Month Opt out form

We encourage our children to eat their school meals as much as possible during 'School Meals, Count Me In' month. However we recognise this may not be possible for some children.

If your child(ren) will not be eating a school meal during 'School Meals, Count Me In' month, we would be grateful if you could complete the opt-out form below. This will support our planning and help reduce food waste. It will also help us better understand what changes we could make to encourage your child(ren) to eat school meals. If your child(ren) plans to eat school meals everyday then you do not need to complete this form on their behalf.

*Please complete on behalf of children who will opt out of school meals any day between 8 January and 2 February 2024.*

1. School name

2. How many children will you be opting out for?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Next



# The Way Forward

- Upholding the default option of a school meal
- Effectively engaging parents with the change
- CMIM multiple times
- September
- Other bodies – public health officials, Welsh government, Head teachers, governors





# Primary School Meals

Check out our **New** Menus!

Featuring Welsh Produce





Any Questions?

Thank you