



Health Challenge Wales – Action on food and fitness for children and young people



Audience:

Any individual or organisation in Wales working on nutrition and/or physical activity for children and young people

A 10 per cent sample of schools in Wales

Copies of a young people's version will be sent in the week of 1st September 2005 to these schools and to Children and Young People's Framework Partnerships to allow discussion within school and youth councils

Overview:

This action plan has been prepared to identify current and future work needed to improve nutrition and levels of physical activity for children and young people in Wales

Action required:

To respond to consultation by 31st October 2005

Enquiries:

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Additional copies:

Can be obtained from the Assembly website www.healthschool.org.uk from the address below, or by Emailing Lifestyles@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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Foreword



Rhodri Morgan AM

Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan – First Minister of Wales



Brian Gibbons –
Minister for Health
and Social Services



Jane Davidson –
Minister for
Education and Life-
Long Learning

Every mother and father puts the health of their own children at the top of their priorities. We all want to see our children grow up fit and well. Among the many factors that affect our health, food and fitness are two of the most important. Scientific evidence supports the common sense proposition that sensible eating habits when young help us keep healthy, not just in childhood, but in later life too. The same is true for physical exercise.



Alun Pugh –
Minister for Culture,
Welsh Language
and Sport

The Food and Fitness Action Plan proposes an ambitious programme of work aimed at securing and protecting the well-being of Wales' children. Government needs to make a contribution to the job of parents in bringing our children up as active, informed and health aware citizens.



Jane Hutt –
Business Minister
and Minister for
Children

We hope that you share our commitment and will contribute your views on our proposals. In doing so, you will not only be helping to improve the health and well-being of the present generation of children and young people. You will be making a commitment to their future and to the future of Wales.



Andrew Davies –
Minister for
Economic
Development and
Transport



Edwina Hart MBE –
Minister for Social
Justice and
Regeneration



Sue Essex –
Minister for Finance,
Local Government
and Public Services



Carwyn Jones –
Minister for
Environment,
Planning and
Countryside

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Introduction

Following three conferences on food and fitness in March 2004, the Welsh Assembly Government set up a Food and Fitness Task Group for Children and Young People. The aims of this group were:

- to respond to Health Challenge Wales, by taking forward the food & well-being and physical activity agendas for children and young people;
- to contribute to strategic planning and co-ordination of food and fitness initiatives for children and young people;
- to identify opportunities for links between existing strategies relating to nutrition and physical activity;
- to act as champions for the concept of initiatives on food and fitness operating in tandem;
- to advise on the development of additional interventions which are evidence-based, or innovative with structured evaluation, to meet identified gaps in local and national provision;
- to consider research and evaluation requirements;
- to consult with organisations engaging children and young people on food and fitness issues.

A Research and Evaluation sub-group also looked at the evidence for action and provided advice. Young people's opinions were gathered in focus groups across Wales, and a selection of their comments is included in this text.

This five year action plan, dealing with food and fitness for nought to twenty five year olds, has been produced as a result of this work.

I
do much
less (physical
activity) than I
should

So
many people
have now been
brought up on that
(fast food)... they have
kids now and they
don't know
what to cook

Why do we need to take action?

- Poor nutrition and lack of physical activity in children and young people can lead to a number of health problems including overweight and obesity. The World Health Organization has stated that obesity is one of the major health challenges for the next decade. They are clear that the dramatic rise in overweight and obesity is not the result of genes or changes in medical practices; and that tackling the problem demands a cross government approach involving education, sport, transport, planning, food and agriculture and finance.
- Recent data collected for the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children survey in Wales indicate that 22 per cent of 15 year old boys and 17 per cent of 15 year old girls are overweight or obese.
- Nutrition in infants and children appears to affect health in later life. Breast feeding may help increase immunity and reduce some allergies. The diets of many children and young people in Wales are inadequate, with low intakes of fruit of vegetables and high intakes of snacks that are high in fat, sugar and salt. In addition, vitamin and mineral deficiencies, e.g. vitamin D and iron, are common in certain groups. Early intervention is important as eating habits can become established in early childhood.
- A balanced diet in childhood and adolescence is likely to reduce the risk of dental caries. While aspects of dental health have improved in recent years, there are inequalities throughout Wales in oral health, associated with a variety of factors including social deprivation and lifestyle.
- For children and young people evidence indicates that sixty minutes of activity on most days will help them achieve healthy growth and development. There is strong evidence that a more active and fitter population would have lower rates of obesity, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, some cancers and fewer mental health problems. The proportion of young people meeting recommended activity levels declines between the ages of eleven and fifteen.
- A number of researchers have noted improved behaviour and school performance following a healthy meal. There is also some evidence to suggest that certain specific learning conditions can be improved by increasing the amount of fish oil in children's diets, either by fish oil supplementation or by eating two portions of oily fish, such as tuna, each week.
- There is growing evidence of effective action that can be taken to improve children and young people's eating habits and levels of physical activity.

**It
(physical
activity) takes
your mind
off things
like school
work**

**Our
school gate's
locked at
weekend so
there's nowhere
to play**

What are we doing already ?

A number of Welsh Assembly Government strategies and initiatives recognise the importance of work to improve nutrition and levels of physical activity in children and young people.

Strategies include:

Framework for Partnership

Children and Young People: Rights to Action

National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services in Wales

Health and Well Being for Children and Young People: Action in Response to the Issues Raised by the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Study 1986-2000

Healthy and Active Lifestyles in Wales: An Action Plan

Climbing Higher: The Welsh Assembly Government Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity

Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales

Food and Well Being: Reducing Inequalities Through a Nutrition Strategy for Wales

Promoting Breastfeeding in Wales

Food for Thought – A new approach to public sector food procurement

Local Community Plans and Health Social Care and Wellbeing Strategies will also reflect these priorities.

National programmes include:

Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS) is a network of local schemes, which are partnerships between health and education. Co-ordinators help schools to identify what they need to do to become healthier and help them to implement the action. Schools involved in the scheme will look at a whole range of health issues, not just food and fitness.

Cymorth: Children and Youth Support Fund (including Sure Start) Since April 2003 Sure Start has formed part of Cymorth – the Children and Youth Support Fund. The programme aims to provide a network of targeted support for children and young people in order to improve the life chances of those from disadvantaged families.

PE and School Sport (PESS) is managed and co-ordinated by the Sports Council for Wales. Its aim is to raise the standards of physical education in primary and secondary schools and to increase participation in extra curricular sport and physical activity.

Dragon Sport, run by the Sports Council for Wales, aims to develop and support after school sports clubs for primary school children. They also train volunteers to run the clubs.

Free Swimming managed by the Welsh Assembly Government in partnership with the WLGA and all 22 Welsh local authorities provides free swimming together with a range of free structured water-based activities to children and young people aged 16 and under during all school holidays. The primary aim is to make a significant contribution to the Climbing Higher sport and physical activity participation targets.

Safe Routes to School is a Welsh Assembly Government funded initiative. Its aim is to improve safety for pupils on their way to school so as to encourage more sustainable forms of travel.

This action plan builds on these national strategies and initiatives and local programmes. Future action will be informed by emerging evidence.

Every
one's
influenced by stars
and stuff...get
them to
advertise it

It's
(physical
activity) a good
way to meet new
people and make
new friends

I
can make a
noodle snack if
mum and dad
aren't home to
cook

If
you do
something
you enjoy it's
fun

Five year action plan

Action in schools

Recommendation 1: Extend Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS)

	What?	Who?	When?
What are we doing already?	Schemes in every Unitary Authority (UA) and accredited as part of WNHSS (1070 schools actively involved)	HPD, NPHS, LA	
What are we going to do?	Extend WNHSS to all LEA-maintained schools	HPD, NPHS, LA	April 2006 to March 2010
	Provide grants for food and fitness projects in WNHSS schools e.g. playground games, fruit tuck shops, water coolers, healthy vending	HPD, NPHS, LA	April 2007 to March 2009
	Provide guidance on whole school food and fitness policies	HPD, DTTE	September 2005 to September 2006

I do more (physical activity) in summer, it gets dark early in winter

You feel healthier...it (balanced diet) is better for you

Recommendation 2: Improve the food and drink consumed throughout the school day

	What?	Who?	When?
What are we doing already?	Food based nutritional standards in place and guidance on school lunches available	DfTE, LA, School Governors	
	Guidance for healthy school breakfasts available	DfTE, LA, School Governors	
	Water coolers provided in schools in Communities First areas. Guidance available	HPD, DfTE, Welsh Water	
	Fruit tuck shop guidance available	HPD, FSA Wales	
	Healthy vending piloted. Guidance available	HPD, NPHS	
	Guidance and case studies available on public sector food procurement	WPIT	
What are we going to do?	Investigate why pupils choose particular foods for school lunches in order to inform future guidance	HPD, DfTE, FSA Wales	September 2005 to March 2006
	Revise school meal standards and include guidance on all food provided in schools	DfTE, HPD	September 2005 to September 2006
	Work with Local Authorities to implement standards and guidance to ensure that food provided in schools is healthy, nutritious and where appropriate seasonal	DfTE, HPD, LA	September 2006 to March 2010
	Provide guidance on packed lunches	HPD, FSA Wales, DfTE	January 2006 to September 2006

Recommendation 3: Provide high quality PE, health related exercise and practical cookery skills

	What?	Who?	When?
What are we doing already?	PE and School Sport (PESS) co-ordinators in place in all Unitary Authorities. Two Development Centres in each Unitary Authority	DfTE, Sports Council for Wales, LA	
	Dragon Sport operating in all Unitary Authorities, offering eight sports to 7 to 11 year olds in 75 per cent of primary schools and providing between six and thirty weeks of activity	CWLS, Sports Council for Wales, LA	
	ACCAC guidance on food in the curriculum	ACCAC, Schools	
	Curriculum resources available on food and nutrition	FSA Wales	
What are we going to do?	Continue and extend PESS programme	DfTE, SCW, LA	From April 2005
	Extend the Dragon Sport concept into secondary schools. Extend and develop Dragon Sport provision in primary schools. Further targets on frequency of Dragon Sport activity in schools will be developed.	CWLS, SCW, LA	From September 2006
	As part of the curriculum review consult on the position of healthy living, food and physical activity in the school curriculum. Update the ACCAC guidance.	ACCAC, DfTE	From September 2005
	Explore ways of developing innovative approaches to the teaching of nutrition/ cookery skills	HPD, DfTE, FSA Wales, LA	From April 2006
	Develop / identify materials for the Foundation Phase (3 – 7 year olds) on food and fitness	ACCAC, SCW, FSA Wales, HPD, DfTE	From September 2005
	Develop physical activity resource for special schools	HPD	April 2005 to September 2007

Action in the community

Recommendation 4: Provide an environment that will encourage children and young people to access opportunities for physical activity and healthier foods

	What?	Who?	When?
What are we doing already?	Walking and Cycling Strategy in place. Examples of good practice being developed with funding from Assembly grants	TP&A, LA	
	Play policy launched and strategy developed	DfTE	
	Free swim initiative in school holidays for under 16s	CWLS, LA	
	Safe Routes to School project operating in 260 schools	RNMD, LA	
	Breastfeeding strategy in place and being implemented	OCNO, NHS Trusts	
	Materials available to teach parents, including ethnic minority parents, healthy weaning skills.	HPD, CDIW	
	Birth to Five, which includes advice on food and fitness, given to all new parents	HPD, NHS Trusts	
	Working with the food industry on a voluntary code regarding the promotion of food to children	FSA	
	Food and fitness health promotion grant scheme funding a variety of projects	HPD	

What are we going to do?	Action to be recommended by Walking and Cycling Forum for Wales review of Strategy action plan	TP&A	From July 2005
	Actions to be recommended by the Welsh Assembly Government Sport and Physical Activity Working Group which will link sport, physical activity and the natural environment of Wales	CWLS	From June 2005
	Increase number of schools involved in Safe Routes to School	RNMD, LA	April 2005 to March 2007
	Organise a conference on safe play, active commuting and planning for active environments to encourage best practice	HPD, TP&A, RNMD, WLGA	November 2006
	Improve access to healthier foods in places such as leisure centres, youth centres, hospitals, care homes, pre-school settings and out of school clubs	HPD, YAPP, CWLS, LA, CSIW	From April 2006
	Develop guidance on sponsorship by food companies in order to limit unhealthy sponsorship to children and young people. Investigate other sources of sponsorship	HPD, CWLS, DFTE, FSA Wales, SCW, Food Industry	September 2006 to March 2008
	Community Chest grant scheme to be expanded to offer grants to encourage more applications from voluntary groups working on health and physical activity projects	SCW	From September 2005
	New rounds of food & fitness health promotion grant funding for projects contributing to this action plan	HPD	April 2006 to March 2010

Don't make fatty stuff so available...you go into a shop and the first thing you see is a rack of chocolate and crisps

Tell the lads it (physical activity) is a good thing for pulling women

Most people can get an hour in (physical activity)

Recommendation 5: Develop skills to enable children and young people to take part in physical activity and prepare healthier foods

	What?	Who?	When?
What are we doing already?	Coaching provided in a variety of sports and activities	LA, Voluntary sports clubs, Private health clubs, Sports governing bodies	
	Get Cooking resource available for session leaders	FSA Wales	
	The Assembly Government is committed to creating at least one Integrated Children's Centre in each Local Authority area. The centres should include at least early years education, childcare, training facilities and open access play	CSD	
	Local programmes develop cookery skills in the community	HPD, PHSD, CSD, Big Lottery, LA	
	Key themes under Cymorth include 'Health Promotion' and 'Play, leisure and enrichment'. These elements play a vital role in the healthy development of children and young people	DfTE	
What are we going to do?	Action to be recommended by Sport and Physical Activity Working Group, which will include activities such as dance, and link with the Walking and Cycling Forum for Wales review of Strategy action plan and Play Policy consultation	TP&A, CWLS, CSD	From June 2005
	Increase the number and quality of coaches and leaders in sport through the new Coaching Plan for Wales	CWLS, SCW	April 2005 to March 2008
	Develop cookery skills courses for children and their parents and young people, including hard to reach groups. To be based on existing good practice e.g. through partnerships with the youth service, community food workers, community education programmes etc	HPD, FSA Wales, NHS Trusts, NPHS, LA	April 2006 to March 2010
	Develop support materials on food and fitness for pre-school settings and out of school clubs based on existing good practice	HPD	April 2008 to March 2009

Action on training

Recommendation 6: Develop and deliver training on food & fitness for those working with children and young people

	What?	Who?	When?
What are we doing already?	Physical activity training for teachers through PESS and Dragon Sport	DfTE, CWLS, SCW, LA	
	Better School Fund includes priorities on PE and food and fitness	DfTE	
	Nutrition modules developed for post graduate training of primary health care professionals	FSA Wales, HPD, Universities in Wales	
	OCN level 2 course on food and health developed for people working with community groups	CDIW, HPD	
	Resource for training caterers available	FSA Wales	
What are we going to do?	Implement nutrition module and OCN courses	HPD, FSA Wales, CDIW	From September 2005
	Evaluate existing training materials and if appropriate develop a generic training manual for food and fitness for professionals	HPD, FSA Wales, SCW	From September 2006
	Establish training, linked to this plan, for people working with children and young people	HPD, DfTE, FSA Wales, SCW	From September 2005

Anything that's good for you is minging...greens, sprouts and stuff

A balanced diet means having a bit of everything and dieting is just starving yourself

Action on evaluation and dissemination

Recommendation 7: Ensure that actions are evidence-based, or innovative with evaluation and that findings are shared

	What?	Who?	When?
What are we doing already?	Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Study (HBSC)	HPD	
	Pilot study of Welsh Health Survey for Children	HPD	
What are we going to do?	Ensure that all new and improved programmes are subject to evaluation	All	From September 2005
	Continue to track physical activity and nutrition related behaviour through HBSC, Infant Feeding Survey	HPD	From April 2005
	Explore how existing surveys and new ways could be used to provide data on height and weight e.g. Welsh Health Survey, National Dietary Nutrition Survey	HPD, HSCD, FSA Wales, NPHS	September 2005 to March 2006
	Explore ways of tracking food and fitness activities through groups such as Estyn, School Councils, NSF Self Assessment Audit Tool, WNHSS, and Children and Young People Framework Partnerships	HPD, DfTE, HSCD, NPHS	From September 2005
	Organise conferences to share plans and good practice	HPD	April 2006

Abbreviations used

ACCAC	Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales
ADEW	Association of Directors of Education in Wales
CDIW	Community Dietitians in Wales
CSD	Children's Strategy Division, Welsh Assembly Government
CWLS	Department for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport, Welsh Assembly Government
CSIW	Care Standards Inspectorate Wales
DfTE	Department for Training and Education, Welsh Assembly Government
FSA	Food Standards Agency
HSCD	Health and Social Care Department
HPD	Health Promotion Division, Welsh Assembly Government
LA	Local Authorities
NPHS	National Public Health Service for Wales
OCNO	Office of the Chief Nursing Officer, Welsh Assembly Government
RNMD	Roads Network Management Division, Welsh Assembly Government
SCW	Sports Council for Wales
TP&A	Transport Policy and Administration Division, Welsh Assembly Government
WLGA	Welsh Local Government Association
WPIT	Welsh Procurement Initiative Team, Welsh Assembly Government
YPP	Youth and Pupil Participation Division, Welsh Assembly Government

Membership of group

Organisation/ Group

Representative

Academic Sector

Stephen Tomlinson

ACCAC

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Mike Shepherd

FSA Wales

Rob Pickard

FSA Wales

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British Heart Foundation

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Sharon Hopkins/Sarah Aitken

Wales Centre for Health

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Elaine Hopkins

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Keith Davies

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Meryl James/Owen Jones-Williams

Welsh Assembly Government

Athur Emyr

Further reading

This list contains official publications of relevance to the food and fitness agenda for children and young people.

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