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Dyddiad - Date: 13/06/2008

Ruth Hatton
Deputy Committee Clerk
Legislation Office
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Dear Ms Hatton,

Re: Consultation - Proposed Healthy Eating in Schools Measure Committee.

I am writing on behalf of Mrs Elin Cullen, Head Resources Management at Carmarthenshire County Council, in response to your letter regarding the Proposed Healthy Eating in Schools Measure Committee and would like to put forward the following suggestions as agreed by Mrs Cullen and myself.

1. *Is there a need for an Assembly Measure to promote healthy eating in schools in view of existing initiatives?*

There is a need to continue to promote and support healthy eating in schools, however, if this becomes 'statute' then the initiative will require additional funding to:-

- Provide equality of service provision across Wales.
- Invest in the infrastructure – there are many issues relating to the standard of school kitchen and in some cases the lack of provision and facilities. In Carmarthenshire there are 31 dining centres where food is produced in a central kitchen and transported to satellite dining centres (these being the schools with the lowest uptake of school meals). These have been identified with our Strategic Asset Management Plan. There are also 22 single brick buildings creating ventilation/ air handling problems and are highlighted within Environmental Health Reports.
- Whilst some work has been undertaken in dining rooms/ halls to improve aesthetics, there is a requirement for additional funding to refurbish and redecorate these areas to meet the Appetite for Life actions.

- Queuing is a major problem in large primary and comprehensive schools with space given to the kitchen and dining areas being inadequate – this again is an issue which is a problem in relation to meeting the Appetite for Life actions.

i.e. 45 minute dinner break = $\frac{2700 \text{ seconds}}{900 \text{ pupils}} = 3 \text{ seconds}$ to queue, make a choice, be served and pay before eating their meal.

- Food provision costs – in order to provide Class 1 Fresh (local) fruit, vegetables and other locally sourced products, there is a need for additional funding, e.g. we currently spend on average 57p per primary meal – to increase this by 10p per pupil, we would need an additional £400K in our provisions budget this financial year.

2. Do you support the key provisions set out in the proposed measures?

Generally we support the key provisions set out with proposed measures, however, before legislating them the School Meals Service in Carmarthenshire and Wales needs additional funding as we are attempting to change a commercial service into a health and wellbeing service with limited additional investment.

If all pupils were to receive free school meals, there are a number of procedures that have to be undertaken by Local Education Authorities, e.g. cash collection, recording and monitoring of data, purchase of cashless systems, banking, etc. which all need to comply with strict audit guidelines would then cease. The efficiencies could assist in supporting the introduction of free school meals for all pupils and would also alleviate the stigma connected to the identification of free school meals.

There is a requirement to further raise awareness of the implications of poor nutrition on health, together with the need to educate children at a young age, in order that they can make healthy choices during the course of their lives. Therefore reintroduction of Home Economics within the curriculum is essential to ensure that children know how to cook fresh food.

3. What are the practical implications of putting these provisions in place?

The practical implications of putting these provisions in place have been explained in response to question 1.

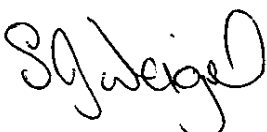
4. Are there further provisions that you would like to see added to the proposed Assembly Measure?

Further provisions that I would like to see added to the proposed Assembly Measure have been explained in response to question 2.

5. Do you think the proposed Assembly Measure will achieve its overall purpose and aim, i.e. to enable a holistic, comprehensive 'made in Wales' policy on nutrition in schools to be developed and implemented?

The Assembly Government's proposed measures will achieve the overall purpose if all the above points can be resolved before legislation is introduced.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Sandra Weigel
Catering Services Manager