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Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg  
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref AW / Scrutiny  
Ein cyf/Our ref JMEWL/00534/24 and JMEWL/00535/24

Councillor Alex Williams  
Chair of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Bridgend County Borough Council

scrutiny@bridgend.gov.uk

27 March 2024

Dear Councillor Alex Williams,

Thank you for both of your letters dated 11 March regarding portion sizes for meals in primary schools and funding for Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM). I'm grateful to you for sharing the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee's feedback following their meeting on 4 December 2023.

The Welsh Government are committing to ensuring that no child goes hungry and making sure pupils in both primary schools and secondary schools have access to a healthy and nutritious meal during the school day.

During the roll-out of UPFSM, all local authorities and governing bodies of maintained schools must continue to comply with the [Healthy Eating in Schools Regulations](#). These set out the type of food and drink which may be provided during the school day. The Regulations are accompanied by the [Healthy eating in maintained schools statutory guidance](#) which contains information on suggested portion sizes. As this guidance is statutory, local authorities need to have clear and justifiable reasons for not adhering to it.

My officials are seeking to review the Regulations and the nutritional requirements, and preparation work to support the review is already underway. The review will consider the most recent health recommendations for child nutrition which includes consideration of portion sizes. It will help ensure the food and drink provided in schools can continue to make a positive contribution towards giving children and young people a healthy balanced diet while encouraging them to develop good eating habits. The review will also look at the promotion of healthy eating in schools. An announcement on the timings of the review will be made in due course and we are committed to working with and capturing the views of stakeholders, including schools and pupils, as part of this process.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn 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.

As you will be aware, the previous Minister of Education agreed a review of the unit rate associated with the delivery of UPFSM and Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP) were engaged to undertake a survey and analysis of existing primary school meal costs in Wales over the summer of 2023. All local authorities were contacted to engage in this exercise, and evidence was gathered from 16 local authorities who responded to the request.

This work informed an announcement on 20 December that there would be an increase of the unit rate to £3.20 from January 2024 and the release of an additional £3.3m of funding to acknowledge the pace of delivery during the second phase of rollout. This equates to an additional local government investment of over £10m during 2023/24 and 2024/25 and the increased unit rate reflects the priority we place on delivering this policy which had to be balanced against the backdrop of extremely difficult budget decisions across Welsh Government.


Regarding food waste, responsibility for monitoring this is with schools and local authorities. The [Workplace Recycling Regulations](#) which come into force on 6 April 2024 require all workplaces to separate out their key recyclable materials for recycling and will require food waste to be collected for recycling if over 5kg/week is produced. The Welsh Government has committed funding of £100k (via the Welsh Local Government Association) to the production of guidance and training to support local authorities. Our [Collaborative Change Programme](#) has also provided support to help local authorities transition their trade waste collections to ensure compliance, including the ability to apply for capital support.

Fundamentally the regulations support the move away from the situation where the material is wasted and disposed of on a costly basis. Fully separating recyclable materials will support workplaces to become more resilient to price rises for the disposal of residual waste, as well as highlighting how much waste is produced. This should in turn encourage action to prevent and reduce waste, helping workplaces save money and become more resource efficient and resilient, whilst taking action on the climate and nature emergency. Guidance for schools can be found [here](#).

As we near the final stages of roll-out, we will continue to work closely with local authorities and the Welsh Local Government Association to highlight good practice and explore opportunities to deliver a sustainable and resilient school food service for our learners.

I am proud of the work we are doing in Wales to ensure more children and families receive this additional support and I am grateful for the efforts of local authorities and all our partners for working with us to deliver this commitment at pace.

Yours sincerely



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