

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

County Council
18th October 2018

REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Phyl Davies, Portfolio Holder for Highways, Recycling and Assets

SUBJECT: Question from County Councillor Matthew Dorrance

How is the Council ensuring young people receive healthy, nutritionally balanced meals in schools across Powys?

Response

1 Executive Summary

1.1 The Catering Service within Powys County Council provides an average of 8000 school meals per day across 96 schools within Powys, of which an average of 1200 free school meals (FSM) per day are served which is our statutory obligation to provide.

1.2 There is statutory guidance on the provision of school meals from the Welsh Government and should be adhered to by all local authority schools, governing bodies and school meal providers, this is laid out in the Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measure 2009.

1.3 There is clear evidence that a poor diet and lack of moderate exercise has an impact on health and wellbeing and is a contributing factor to the overweight and obese demographic of today's society. A healthy school meal provides children and young people a balanced diet and promotes healthy eating habits and social interaction within the dining rooms. It is proven that school meals also promote higher concentration and attainment levels in the classroom in the afternoons.

1.4 Our Catering Service work with schools and Powys PtHB colleagues to promote healthy eating and support schools to achieve the Health Schools accreditation. The service promotes the whole school approach and involves the head teachers and staff to encourage and adopt healthy eating and healthy lifestyle within the schools. Attending healthy eating sessions with pupils, organising meetings with pupil school councils to discuss school menus and food choices and attending parent evenings providing school meals information and showing samples of the school dinners.

1.5 The current average cost of the food element of the meal is 85p with the highest cost of a meal within the 3 week menu being roast beef at £1.69 and

the lowest food cost is 54p which is pasta. These averages are based on the hot meal including pudding and is not a true reflection of actual cost as uptake numbers vary daily.

2 Nutritional Analyses

2.1 Our Catering Service employs a monitoring and menu develop officer whose principal role is to develop our school meal menus. Within the legislation from the Welsh Government the guidance is quite strict and dictates what we can and cannot have on our school menus i.e. there is no confectionary, added salt, crisps or energy drinks on our menus. These food standards have been distributed to all schools and have been produced in a poster format which are displayed within school dining areas. [Healthy Eating in Schools Posters](#)

2.2 Part of the development of our school meals menus which are changed twice a year, generally at Easter time for spring and summer and then October for winter. Our menu development officer discusses menu options with the catering managers and school cooks. From these discussions a 3 week menu cycle is drafted and then analysed using a piece of software called Saffron.

2.3 The Saffron software analyses a balance of 14 nutrients across the weekly menu, these weekly graphs must show (green) acceptable nutrient content within the dishes otherwise an alternative dish has to be found or created to achieve the correct nutrient levels. A good example to increase the iron content was to create a recipe for a chocolate sponge but added beetroot to the sponge mix which was high in iron.

2.4 Once the 3 week menu cycle is completed is it sent to the Food in Schools coordinator at the WLGA for compliance and certification, it can then be published and used within our schools.

3 Legislation

3.1 The Welsh Governments statutory guidance and regulations can be found at the following links: [The Healthy Eating in Schools \(Nutritional Standards and Requirements\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2013](#)

[Healthy Eating in Schools \(Wales\) Measure 2009](#)

[Healthy Eating in Maintained Schools - Statutory Guidance](#)

3.2 Governance for these regulations is monitored by the WLGA's Food in Schools Coordinator and usually conducts quarterly cross boundary meetings to discuss healthy eating topics and special diet provision etc. However

generally it is the local authorities catering service that monitor and maintain the food standards.

4 Food Procurement

4.1 Powys County Council has agreed to use the National Procurement Service (NPS) for framework contracts, food delivery being one of these. Currently our main food distributor is Holdsworth Ltd. based in Crickhowell, who deliver frozen, chilled and dry ambient food produce to all of our schools in Powys. There is Powys produce based in Forden near Welshpool who deliver fruit, veg and milk to our north county schools and then Total produce based in Hereford who deliver the same to our mid and south schools. Radnor Hills a Powys supplier based in Knighton deliver water and fruit drinks to our high schools.

4.2 As much as possible we try to use Welsh produce like Radnor Hills and all of our sausages comes from Langford's based in Welshpool. All meat products are red tractor certified so British produce with all fish sustainably sourced with MSC certification. We would like to use Powys local suppliers, however we would need to find a source of suitable school compliant products that would have to apply to go onto the NPS framework and have to be capable to distribute to all of our schools in the county or supply Holdsworth our distributor. This would come at a cost which will in turn increase school meal prices.

5 Monitoring

5.1 Part of our internal audit processes, regular school kitchen monitoring is conducted by our catering support staff not only to check correct procedures are being carried out in line with environmental health checks, but also correct ingredients, recipes and portions are being used as per our school menu.