

## Food and Nutrition for childcare settings - best practice guidance

We wish to work with childcare settings to help improve and shape environments which support positive eating habits and to help providers to meet the childcare regulations for food and drink.

To this end we have included a number of questions to consider relating to the content of the document:

Please tick type of respondent

Childcare provider  
Childcare Inspector  
Health professional  
Parent

Other (please state): **Public Health Dietitians in Wales network and the Wales Dietetic Leadership and Advisory Group.**

***WDLAG** is a statutory advisory group to the Welsh Therapies Advisory Committee (WTAC). Membership comprises heads of service and operational dietetic managers from all NHS Wales Health Boards/LHB and Velindre Trust, and representation from registered dietitians in Public Health Wales and Cardiff Metropolitan University. Its role is to address issues relevant to managing Nutrition and Dietetic Services in NHS Wales and to provide specialist dietetic advice to WTAC.*

***PHDiW** are a group of specialist dietitians employed within Health Boards or Public Health Wales (NHS). Public health dietitians provide credible and unbiased nutrition information, accredited training and resources to support key settings (such as nurseries, schools, and care homes), programmes and organisations (such as Flying Start, Families First and the voluntary sector), communities, and members of the public to make healthy food choices with knowledge and confidence. Dietitians are trusted stakeholders frequently engaged in a range of local and national working groups, and have assisted, or led in the development of food/ nutrition related policies and guidelines, including the All Wales Obesity Pathway, Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Childcare Settings and the Nutrition in Community Settings Pathway.*

1. Do you agree that up to date nutrition standards and guidance are helpful to have in place?

Yes/No Please explain why

Yes, Public Health Dietitians in Wales welcome and fully support the **Food and Nutrition in Childcare Settings, Best Practice Guidance**. Building upon the 2009 guidance<sup>1</sup>, it will ensure childcare settings can access up to date, evidence based, consistent nutrition information to support children to eat well. We are pleased to have been able to contribute towards the development of the guidance and would welcome further opportunities to support implementation, for example, through training and ongoing professional support.

---

<sup>1</sup> Food and Health Guidelines for Early Years and Childcare Settings (2009) Welsh Government

With an estimated 3.7 million children in the UK living in households that likely cannot afford a healthy diet <sup>2</sup> the foods and drinks provided in childcare settings can make an important contribution towards a healthy diet for families on a low income. Guidance on healthier options is therefore imperative to optimise food and nutrition provision for those who stand to benefit the most.

The guidance provides valuable information for health, social care, and education, play and parent groups. We would recommend that anyone who visits childcare settings in an advisory or quality assurance capacity, for example, food safety teams, Healthy and Sustainable Pre School Scheme (HSPSS) co-ordinators and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspectors, should be fully aware of the guidelines and their application through training. This will ensure a consistent, evidence based partnership approach to promoting best practice.

2. How do you feel about the layout of the sections, are they easy to read and follow?

Some settings have felt the document is presently very large. Developments that might help make it easier to read and follow might include: a summarised guide with important points highlighted with summary sheets that can serve as handouts for training; an app for smart phones with sections to choose from; a search function on the app or website to direct easily to specific topics.

We are aware that more detailed feedback was collated from childcare providers and development officers through the consultation events.

3. What would help to ensure these are easily accessible to you? (e.g. individual sections on the web, printer friendly)

It would be helpful to have the option to print high resolution copies of the online resource, an app for smart phones with sections to choose from; headed tabs to click onto each section/chapter if on the web.

4. Thinking about each of the sections, do you feel there are:

a. any particular sections of information in the document which you disagree about?

With regards to dairy free diets we recommend that this section is reviewed by paediatric dietitians as often cow's milk protein is the main issue and is commonly mistaken for lactose intolerance.

b. any gaps in information which you think should be included?

We are aware that the infant feeding sections of the guidance are not included in this consultation. Dietitians can support further development of the breastfeeding and complementary feeding sections of the guidance as required. Updated infant feeding guidance is also needed for health professionals to ensure that advice families receive is consistent across the board from all those that families come in contact with.

c. any parts that are particularly helpful ?

---

<sup>2</sup> Affordability of the UK's Eatwell Guide (2018) The Food Foundation

Food hygiene and safety guidance is essential. We recommend this is updated regularly to be consistent with the food safety team's guidance.

5. Do you feel there are any particular issues or barriers which could prevent the successful implementation of the nutritional guidelines?

Successful implementation requires training and ongoing support for quality assurance. Quality assured, consistent, evidence based nutrition training is provided through the all-Wales **Nutrition Skills for Life™** programme. Additional capacity would be needed to support further development, delivery and evaluation of training for the childcare workforce, development officers, play workers, advisory teachers, Flying Start teams and the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to ensure consistent, evidence based, partnership approach to supporting best practice.

If yes, please say what they are and how do you think these could be overcome?

In all health board areas, NHS dietitians provide accredited nutrition training and professional support for early years and child care practitioners through the well established and award winning **Nutrition Skills for Life™ (NS4L)** programme. Training supports implementation of national schemes such as the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme and local interventions such as the Gold Standard Healthy Snack Award and Tiny Tums/Boliau Bach best practice certificate. **NS4L** can provide a mechanism for disseminating the best practice guidance to childcare settings and other organisations.

Dietitians have worked with Qualifications Wales, Social Care Wales and the Workforce Education and Development Service to incorporate nutrition and hydration into the new Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development core (induction), level 2 and level 3 qualifications. With appropriate quality assurance, this can raise the level of nutrition knowledge and care across the sector incorporating the best practice guidance. Additional dietetic resource is needed to train qualified assessors and provide ongoing dietetic support.

Investment in dietetic services within NHS health boards in Wales could;

- Raise awareness of the guidance amongst childcare providers through existing training, national and local schemes
- Support the development, delivery and evaluation of new training e.g. direct training with practitioners, awareness raising sessions for development officers and signposting to further nutrition training opportunities through **NS4L**
- Widen access to accredited **NS4L** training for professional groups and childcare organisations across Wales e.g. advisory teachers, Flying Start staff, play services and third sector agencies
- Support further development of training for Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to ensure consistent, evidence based, partnership approach to supporting best practice.

6. What kind of training, support or resource would you like to see to help support the successful implementation of the standards?

Other developments we believe would support dissemination and implementation of the guidelines include;

- Ensure parents are aware of the best practice guidance through promotional material for settings to show how they are working towards meeting the guidance. Settings report that getting parents involved and supportive, can be challenging, good communication is key
- Encourage social media promotion of the resources for both professionals and for families e.g. pre written posts for consistency that can be disseminated regularly
- Provide clear links between campaigns e.g. Public Health Wales' 10 steps social marketing campaign and Healthy Child Wales. This will ensure the workforce is well informed and confident in their role in dissemination
- Similar high quality resources to support discussions with families about food and nutrition.

7. Do you think this guidance will help to improve food provision in childcare settings ?

Yes, the guidelines provide a valuable reference point for all organisations that aim to provide high quality childcare. There are clear links with the childcare regulations and we would support requirements for CIW to report on the level of implementation of the guidelines within the inspection framework for each setting they inspect.

8. How will you use it ?

As previously mentioned, **NS4L** can provide a mechanism for disseminating the best practice guidance to childcare settings and other organisations.

If you are a childcare provider please answer questions 9 and 10

9. Do you think the standards will help you to plan meals, snacks, drinks and menus for the children in your care?

10. Do you think the recipes will help?

We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:  
Please enter here:

We acknowledge that the best practice guidance is only one element of the work being carried out on food and nutrition however, we believe that giving children the best start in life and investing in the development of healthy eating habits from an early age should be a main priority within the forthcoming 10 year Healthy Weight Strategy.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: