

National Assembly for Wales

Children and Young People Committee

CO 41

Inquiry into Childhood Obesity

Evidence from : Healthy Schools Cardiff Network

Response from Healthy Schools Cardiff Network, Cardiff Council Education Service, including the previous PSE Teacher Advisor for Cardiff.

This response is based primarily around school based education provision and the barriers faced by many schools.

2. The measurement, evaluation and effectiveness of the Welsh Government programmes and schemes aimed at reduced the level of obesity in children in Wales.

- Appetite for Life has had a significant, positive impact on the food and drink provision within schools. This has been strengthened further by the Healthy Eating (in Wales) Measure. The implementation of the guidance has been greatly supported by the Healthy Schools Schemes across Wales, helping to ensure schools understand their responsibilities and make the necessary changes to comply with the upcoming legislation. Long term evaluation is needed to understand the impact these measures will have on levels of obesity.

3. The barriers to reducing the level of childhood obesity in Wales, and

4. Whether any improvements are needed to current Welsh Government programme and schemes and any additional actions that could be explored.

- At Key Stage 2 and 3 in schools, healthy eating theory and practical cooking are given such limited time on the curriculum it is likely to have little or no impact on behaviour and certainly does not give the pupils the skills to prepare them for adult life. Without this underpinning knowledge through the curriculum the effect of individual interventions will have limited impact.
- To look at addressing these issues, partners from within Cardiff Education, Health and Catering are in the process of developing a professional Learning Community (PLC) with KS3 food technology teachers who are keen to restore the important messages and skills delivered in this subject to its former strengths. However, the limitations within the National Curriculum may hinder this process.
- Physical Education and Fitness has been given less and less importance within many schools due to pressures such as numeracy and literacy

strategies. As a result, many schools are not providing the recommended 2 hours per week of quality PE. Children who are not naturally keen to do physical activity are therefore not given sufficient opportunities to take part in exercise or exposed to different forms of physical activity they may enjoy. The recommendation of 2 hours per week should be made statutory as a minimum.

- Other potential curriculum areas that teach children about important health and wellbeing life skills, particularly Personal and Social Education (PSE), are also not statutory and as a result they are often given less importance within schools and in some cases, delivered inadequately. This frequently results in pupils not taking these lessons seriously and seeing them as 'free lessons'.
- In order for targeted interventions to be fully effective, there also needs to be universal education around health and wellbeing within schools to provide children and young people the knowledge, skills and understanding that enables them to make informed decisions about their health.
- It should be noted that there is some very good practice in schools to promote healthy eating and physical activity, which is often developed, implemented and embedded through schools' participation in the Healthy Schools Scheme and engagement with initiatives such as MEND, Food Co-ops and PE and School Sport (PESS).

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