Policy and action on food and older people in Wales

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Policy
Strategy for Older People 2003

- Changes in living behaviours even later in life can bring benefits
- Health promotion for older people is a key theme
- Delivered through a Health Promotion Action Plan for Older People
Healthy Ageing Action Plan for Wales 2005

• Projects funded under food and fitness grant scheme
• Training on food & nutrition for caterers, nursing staff and healthcare assistants
• Investigate need for and pilot guidance on health improvement issues including healthy eating in care settings
The Welsh Food Debate

Quality of Food Strategy:
Task and Finish Group Report
Food and Wellbeing

• Vulnerable elderly identified a level one priority group
• Actions for other key players
  – Meals on wheels
  – Free transport schemes to supermarkets
• Three main methods of consultation
  • Open public meetings hosted by the Chief Medical Officer;
  • Conferences / seminars and workshops facilitated by officials;
  • Stakeholder engagement through a questionnaire based on the report from Task and Finish Group;
  • ‘Older people have their say: Older Peoples Food Survey (facilitated by the Welsh Food Alliance).

• Total contributions - 783 individuals / organisations
Public Open Meetings
Comparison of Priorities

- Increase partnership working
- Ensure meals in public buildings are healthy/sourced locally
- Support local producers
- Control advertising of unhealthy foods
- Access to affordable Healthy Food
- Promote locally produced food
- Clear Labelling
- Education/cooking skills

Bar chart showing the comparison of priorities across different sources:

- Questionnaire
- Conferences
- Public

The chart indicates the relative importance assigned by each source to the various priorities.
34% reported a healthy diet is difficult to afford
18% have difficulties shopping - rising to 47% when unwell
53% have difficulty reading labels
47% have difficulties obtaining right sizes of food items
56% have difficulty carrying food home
What is quality food?

- Healthy
- Safe
- Reduce harm to the environment
- Fairly traded
- **Accessible and affordable**
- Supports all cultures in healthy eating
- Supports a strong Welsh Food Industry
Quality Food for All in Wales Action Plan

Make it possible for everybody in Wales to be able to eat food that is healthy, affordable and produced in a sustainable way, whilst supporting a strong and diverse Welsh food industry.
The Strategy for Older People in Wales - 4 Themes

- Valuing Older People - Maintaining and Developing Engagement
- Changing Society - The Economic Status and Contribution of Older People
- Well Being and Independence
- Making it Happen - The Implementation of the Strategy
Well Being and Independence
- Strategic Aim

Improve the health and well being of older people through initiatives to promote health, as well as high quality, responsive and appropriately regulated health, social care and housing services. These will enable older people to live as actively and independently as possible in a suitable and safe environment of their choice.
Healthy Eating

• Increase access to affordable and high quality food
  – food access projects
  – work with public and commercial sectors to reduce inequalities

• Improve quality of food served in community settings

• Tackle malnutrition
Programmes
Recognition one in seven of people in Wales aged 65 years risk of malnutrition

Work focussed on obesity and children and young people

Dec 2006 Food in Hospital Task and Finish Group established to produce a report on the provision of food in hospitals for patients, staff and visitors
Food in Hospitals

Two subgroups

• Nutrition Campaign - successfully promote the message that “Provision of food has the same importance as medication

• Nutrition Care Pathways - develop a chart to address procurement, catering, staff involved in all aspects of food preparation, presentation of food, environment, positioning, oral health requirements

• Both supported by training
Community Food Co-operatives

• Initial 2 year pilot in North and South East Wales April 2004 - March 2006
• From April 2007 expanded to cover all of Wales

Volunteers
Community Food Co-operatives

Volunteers take orders and money

Volunteers phone order through to supplier
Community Food Co-operatives

Produce delivered in bulk the following week

Volunteers divide produce by number of orders placed
Volunteers put produce into bags

Customers collect bags & place next week’s order
Results and achievements

- Pilot aimed to have 26 sustainable food co-ops up and running by the end of March 2006
- By the end of March 2006 77 food co-ops were set up
- 162 food co-ops established to date
  - Providing fruit and vegetables to approximately 6000 families
  - Engaging around 800 volunteers
  - Approximately £1m annual turnover
I no longer eat biscuits, junk food in a manner of speaking. I’ve actually changed my lifestyle.

Since my husband died I was very depressed for quite a while. As soon as I’ve worked on the food co-op I felt useful and it’s not a problem now. Volunteer – North Wales.

Well it’s fresher … the cauliflower if you buy it from the supermarket sometimes the outside green is soft … but here it’s lovely and fresh and everything’s fresh.

Well my kids are eating more fruit and veg … at one time they’d only eat carrots and peas and now they practically every vegetable we’ve got to eat.

It’s made a big difference having it because most of our shops in the village have closed down.

I’ve learned how to talk to people without being embarrassed. It’s built my confidence.
Way Forward

Quality Food for All in Wales Action Plan

Environmental changes:

- Influence strategic levers HSCWB strategies, Older Peoples Co-ordinators, Chronic Disease Management Care Pathways etc
- Work with national and local partners to raise awareness of malnutrition
- Improve the nutritional quality of food supplied through public services in Wales
- Work across the Sector Skills Councils to produce a workforce development plan
Support for local initiatives

– Support targeted programmes, which tackle accessibility and availability issues among vulnerable and low socio-economic groups, with a particular focus on older people

– Work with retailers in Wales to develop schemes to provide neighbourhood healthy retail initiatives / delivery schemes etc