



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Food Matters: Wales

Food policy at the heart of
our lives, our communities,
and our nation.

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Foreword

Food is at the heart of our lives, our communities, and our nation. The Welsh Government is focussed on food matters across the full breadth of policy development and delivery. Whether headline new policies or lower profile activities, we continue to advance food related policies across all portfolios.

This publication delivers our commitment to the Senedd to publish and update a document for stakeholders summarising the wide range of food-related policies. It illustrates how our policies come together around the Welsh Government's ten Well-being Objectives, which in turn maximise our contribution to Wales' seven long-term Well-being Goals under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Food matters are diverse and complex. Success requires long-term and joined up policy and action. We must keep up this focus as we continue to address systemic challenges associated with cost of living and food poverty. We all need access to nutritious food alongside the knowledge to make healthier choices. Food policy must work with agri-food supply chains deeply intertwined with major commercial interests integrated into the UK food system – a system where international trade plays a pivotal role.

This food system, while efficient in its production and distribution, has shortcomings. From environmental degradation to health concerns stemming from the consumption of nutritionally deficient products, it's undeniable that challenges remain.

Continued challenges in the global and geopolitical landscape have highlighted the importance of strengthening the resilience of our supply chains. The UK's departure from the European Union continues to add complexity and cost. There is urgency to meet climate targets and to reverse the long-term decline of biodiversity. These realities are reminders of the intricate ecosystem which connects food to our way of life.

We continue to cultivate a more self-sufficient Wales, where we champion sustainability, and we foster a long-term local element to the food system and supply chains. This has the potential to reduce some of the risk to external factors and climate change.

Since Food Matters Wales was first published in July 2024, we have built clear momentum across our food system. Our food safety standards and supply chain integrity and traceability systems has led to a more integrated supply chain.

Our Strategic Innovation Scheme, delivered through [A Vision for the food and drink industry from 2021](#), has achieved an economic impact of over £150 million throughout the supply chain, underpinning jobs and prosperity across Wales.

The [Sustainable Farming Scheme](#) is now in place from January 2026 – shaped through extensive engagement with farmers to support sustainable production and increase the resilience of our rural communities. The [Community Food Strategy](#) furthers the Welsh Government's commitment to strengthening access to sustainable, healthier, local food and a more connected supply chain.

Our commitment to [Universal Primary Free School Meals](#) is firmly embedded, with continued investment ensuring nutritious food reaches every primary learner in Wales.

Our focus must remain unwavering to create a Wales where food nourishes our bodies and enriches our communities, economy, and environment. This journey is not one we undertake alone. We work with many partners – local authorities, health boards, business, and multiple community interests – and we do so in diverse ways. Every policy, every initiative, and every decision are inter-connected to one and other. Together, let's continue to build a Wales which is sustainable, healthy, and prosperous for all.



Introduction

Food Matters: Wales is a short and concise overview of Welsh Government’s food related policies and activities. It includes policies which directly support the agri-food industry and natural resource management, and wider food related policies across the span of our work for health, education, sustainability, communities and the economy.

The purpose of Food Matters: Wales is to provide a guide for stakeholders and social partners, so they are aware of the context and fuller picture of Welsh Government’s food related work. We hope this facilitates food related discussions and engagements taking place. All named policies and activities are hyperlinked to further information, so you can dive deeper. Food Matters: Wales illustrates how food related policies are developed and delivered in response to the Welsh Government’s strategic agenda which is primarily framed by the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) (hereafter the “WFG Act”) and the [Programme for Government 2021-26](#) (the PfG).

Collectively, food related policies make up a “strategic agenda” for food. We are committed to keeping stakeholders informed about food related policies and will update Food Matters: Wales to keep it current. We welcome your feedback about Food Matters: Wales and any suggestions about additional matters to include. Feedback should be titled “Food Matters: Wales” and addressed to: FoodDivisionalBusiness@gov.wales



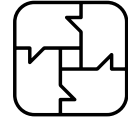
How we work

A Welsh Government cross-portfolio food policy forum has developed Food Matters: Wales. Every food related policy is developed and delivered in accordance with the sustainable development principle and the five ways of working.



Long term

Our food related policies recognise current and future challenges facing Wales including the climate and nature emergency, the impact of four decades of deindustrialisation and the consequences of leaving the EU. They draw on analysis of Wales, UK and global factors, and local considerations, which are likely to impact in the longer term. Our policies and associated plans and activities set appropriate, long-term actions to address strategic challenges Wales faces now and in the future. Our policies and delivery are monitored and adjusted in the light of experience and adapt with a changing landscape, to keep them relevant and impactful for now and the long term.



Integration

Our policies form an integrated strategic agenda. They are co-designed across Welsh Government portfolios and with stakeholders, with attention to how they complement and reinforce each other. Policies collectively build progress through their delivery towards the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, in sustainable ways. We continuously evaluate progress informing the decisions which maintain and deepen integration. Policies are collectively owned by the First Minister and Cabinet ensuring opportunities to achieve more are identified early and acted upon.



Prevention

Food policies are designed to deliver positive outcomes and to prevent problems from occurring, to address existing or emerging problems, or prevent issues from getting worse. They focus on acting quickly to identify challenges early, while maintaining a focus on and direction towards achieving longer-term and strategic outcomes. We work with partners to develop and deliver policies by building shared understanding, breaking down barriers, effective interventions and services, and understanding the changing needs of people through their lives, wherever and however they live.



Involvement

Food policies are developed with stakeholder input, with the people of Wales having their say through consultations and focus groups. Good food policy design and delivery recognises the benefit of early and continuous involvement of stakeholders and the public. Involving our social partners, stakeholders and the public in the policies and services which affect them is the best way to take a sustainable, needs-led approach to policy making and delivery.



Collaboration

Maximising the impact of food related policies means working closely with delivery partners and others, with this operating principle firmly embedded in policy design and delivery. We use multiple mechanisms to engage, collaborate and succeed with others – working with stakeholders, progressive networks and diverse voices across Wales. Both co-operation and collaboration rather than competition and division underpin food related policies, meaning we can deliver effectively at pace.

A strategic agenda for food matters

Food related policies are developed and delivered to advance the WFG Act and the PfG, and collectively make up a strategic agenda for food.

The PfG sets ten well-being objectives for 2021-2026 which we use to maximise our contribution to Wales’ seven long-term well-being goals set by the WFG Act. The objectives outline the steps we are taking to deliver them with the accompanying [Well-being Statement](#) setting out how our well-being objectives match our statutory duty under the WFG Act (shown in **Figure 1**).



Figure 1
How our strategic well-being objectives contribute to the WFG Act’s well-being goals.

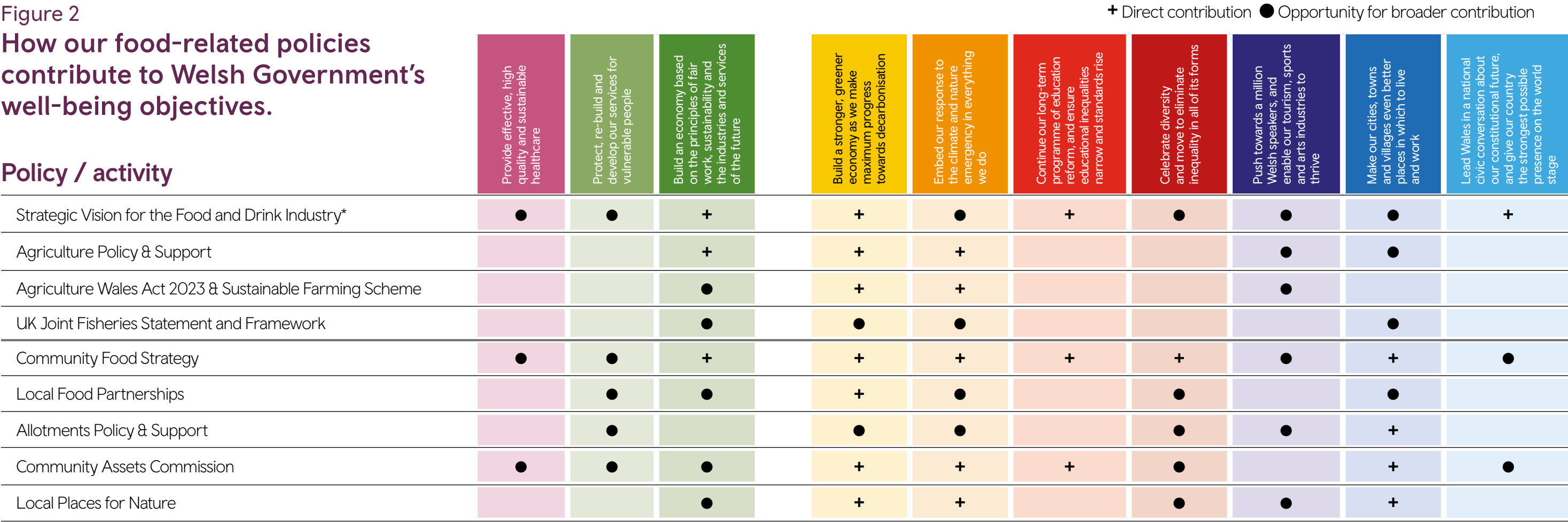
Well-being objective

	+ Direct contribution ● Opportunity for broader contribution						
	A prosperous Wales	A resilient Wales	A healthier Wales	A more equal Wales	A Wales of cohesive communities	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A globally responsible Wales
Provide effective, high quality and sustainable healthcare	+	●	+	+	+	●	●
Protect, re-build and develop our services for vulnerable people	+	●	+	+	+	●	●
Build an economy based on the principles of fair work, sustainability and the industries and services of the future	+	+	●	+	+	+	+
Build a stronger, greener economy as we make maximum progress towards decarbonisation	+	+	●	+	●	+	+
Embed our response to the climate and nature emergency in everything we do	+	+	+	●	+	●	+
Continue our long-term programme of education reform, and ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise	+	●	●	+	+	+	+
Celebrate diversity and move to eliminate inequality in all of its forms	+	●	+	+	+	+	+
Push towards a million Welsh speakers, and enable our tourism, sports and arts industries to thrive	+	+	●	●	+	+	●
Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work	+	+	+	+	+	+	●
Lead Wales in a national civic conversation about our constitutional future, and give our country the strongest possible presence on the world stage	+	●	●	●	+	+	+

Food related policies are included within the well-being objectives. The fuller detail is shown by **Figure 2** which shows the connections between these more detailed policies and activities and the well-being objectives. **Figure 2** shows both direct contributions and opportunities for broader contributions.

In combination, **Figures 1** and **2** show a direct connection between the WFG Act and policies. They show how food related policies are developed and delivered within a legislative framework and ways of working to form a strategic agenda. Developing and delivering policies in this way means they are better aligned and are mutually reinforcing which, in turn, maximises their impact.

Progress towards the WFG Act well-being goals is measured by [National Well-Being Indicators](#), with the pace of change measured by National Milestones. Food is not currently referred to explicitly in the National Indicators, although there are indicators relevant to food consumption and production, such as on poverty, healthy lifestyles and the natural environment. We will consider the case for food in the National Indicators when they are next revised. In the meantime, contextual data related to food, for example on food poverty, has been included in the annual [Well-being of Wales reports](#).



*This policy includes SMART actions and/or targets

Figure 2 - How our food-related policies contribute to Welsh Government’s well-being objectives, continued

	Provide effective, high quality and sustainable healthcare	Protect, re-build and develop our services for vulnerable people	Build an economy based on the principles of fair work, sustainability and the industries and services of the future		Build a stronger, greener economy as we make maximum progress towards decarbonisation	Embed our response to the climate and nature emergency in everything we do	Continue our long-term programme of education reform, and ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise	Celebrate diversity and move to eliminate inequality in all of its forms	Push towards a million Welsh speakers, and enable our tourism, sports and arts industries to thrive	Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work	Lead Wales in a national civic conversation about our constitutional future, and give our country the strongest possible presence on the world stage
Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales*	+							●		+	
Universal Primary Free School Meals and Milk*, Eligible Free School Meals and primary breakfasts.		●	●		●	●	+	●			
Child Poverty Strategy	●	+	●				●	+		●	
Planning Policy Wales			+		+	+		+	+	+	●
Economic Mission - Priorities for a Stronger Economy, & the Foundational Economy*	●	●	+		+	●	●	●	●	●	
Wales Procurement Policy Statement & the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Wales Act 2023	●	●	+		●	●		●	●	●	
Policies for the Visitor Economy*			+		+	+		+	+	+	●
Circular Economy, Waste Reduction and Prevention Policies*	●	●	+		+	+	●	●		+	
Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2	●		●		+	+					
Eco-Schools Wales						●	+	●		+	
Curriculum for Wales (food-related learning)						●	+				

*This policy includes SMART actions and/or targets



Overview of our main policies and activities

Our food related policies aim to create prosperity, healthier lives, and responsible resource use, which in turn improves equality, generates resilience and supports cohesive communities. We want a globally responsible Wales where our impact has a reduced global footprint. Our policies interact with numerous stakeholders and social partners. The local well-being plans and work of public bodies individually and collectively through vehicles like [Public Services Boards](#) and also [Regional Partnership Boards](#), can bring added focus, holistic co-ordination and value to food matters. Our policies and activities can be loosely grouped, each group as important as the other, with multiple connections within them and between them.

Economic well-being

The [Strategic Vision](#) is our focus for the food and drink manufacturing and processing industry. It sets a vision and mission for economic success supporting businesses to succeed in Welsh, UK and export markets, with strong promotion of local and Welsh branded products. Success simultaneously benefits businesses, people and society, and promotes Wales positively here, in the UK and overseas. The Strategic Vision outlines ten action areas including building business and supply chain networks, the development of Welsh and UK market opportunities through the promotion of selected markets and building a 'Food and Drink Wales' brand domestically and in export markets.

Our Strategic Vision includes having an industry with a supply chain that is amongst the most environmentally and socially responsible in the world, providing benefits for citizens, communities, and contributing to our global responsibility. Support to the food and drink manufacturing

and processing industry is not solely focussed on economic prosperity but seeks broad benefits for citizens and society. Particular grant schemes are conditional on businesses signing an ["Economic Contract"](#) committing to putting social value issues such as fair work, and development of the green economy into practice (e.g. low carbon, low waste and sustainable use of natural resources) and economic sustainability into practice. How this is achieved is context specific for the business and the support we offer.

The Welsh Government's Food Division provides comprehensive business development support to the food and drink industry in Wales. This covers both domestic trade and export. The framework of support covers grants ([Food Business Accelerator Scheme](#)), trade development (Blas Cymru / Taste Wales, [Trade Development Programme](#), [Export Development Programme](#) and Hospitality Programme), innovation support ([Food Innovation Wales/the HELIX Programme](#)), support for businesses to grow and evolve ([Cywain](#), Scale-Up, and the Food and Drink Cluster Network), training ([Food and Drink Skills Wales](#)), and an insight into customer behaviour and gaps in the market through relevant data ([Market Insight](#)).

We support Welsh food and drink businesses to become leaders in sustainability, through fully funded, comprehensive and tailored programmes to the sector. [Our Carbon Reduction Plan Programme](#) works with businesses to cut emissions and realise financial and international benefits. Our [Climate Adaptation and Resilience Training](#) prepares businesses for climate risks and opportunities. Through our [Sustainability Cluster](#), businesses receive help to achieve [B Corp accreditation](#).

Food is within the scope of the socially responsible procurement duty under the [Social Partnership and Public Procurement \(Wales\) Act 2023](#) and the [Wales Procurement Policy Statement Principles](#). Public sector procurement can play an enormously important role in localising food supply chains. Developing local supply chain opportunities to meet public sector and other demand can add value to Welsh products and retain value within Wales in ways which promote sustainable, long term economic and social development within communities.

These are key aims of our [Foundational Economy: mission statement](#) which sets out the sectors Welsh Government is prioritising and our objectives, including strengthening Welsh supply chains, promoting fair work, and supporting innovative collaboration.

This approach supports the four national priority areas set out in the [Economic mission: priorities for a stronger economy](#) to promote a more prosperous, greener and a fairer Wales. Diverse mapping, research, and pilot projects (which have focussed on strengthening vegetable and meat supply to schools and hospitals) have helped build knowledge and experience of local supply chains,

creating opportunities to add value and increase supply for local and public procurement needs.

We have established a new Food Community of Practice for the Foundational Economy funded [food projects](#) to develop solutions to challenges and replicate successes. A new suite of [food case studies](#) showcases these successful projects that are increasing Welsh food in the public sector, improving food education in schools, and addressing food poverty

[A project evaluation report for Foundational Economy funded projects from 2023-2025](#) has been published demonstrating the positive outcomes, lessons learned and opportunities for scaling up.

We have co-developed [Buying Food Fit for the Future](#) with stakeholders to encourage focus on value creation, and wider benefits rather than lowest cost. Within the NHS, Shared Services Partnerships manage food provision. Aspects of the [Trade Development Programme](#) are being developed in pursuit of increasing the opportunities to supply Welsh food and drink to meet the needs of the [Universal Primary Free School Meals policy](#).



Strong, resilient communities

The Welsh Government's [Community Food Strategy](#) is now in place, providing a national framework to strengthen local food systems and support the production and supply of locally sourced food. The Strategy brings coherence and empowerment to community based food initiatives and recognises the vital role of Local Food Partnerships, which now operate across all local authority areas in Wales.

Food impacts life chances. We are focussed on improving individual food security, tackling food poverty and preventing malnutrition, whilst also preventing food waste. Support for community food organisations is providing a safety net against food poverty. We have strengthened local co-ordinated action and continue to support [Food Sense Wales](#) and [Local Food Partnerships](#) with local food co-ordinators who can stimulate and connect key stakeholders and grassroots projects to drive sustainable solutions which respond to local need in a strategic, joined up way.

On a broader front, [Ystadau Cymru](#) has established a Community Assets Commission to stimulate innovative thinking around community ownership of land and building assets, including approaches around sustainable land stewardship.

[Planning Policy Wales](#) ensures new developments resonate with local community needs, emphasising sustainability, environmental stewardship, and cultural values. Through the integration of food, asset use and planning, we aim to foster sustainable, dynamic communities. We support community growing and allotments through [grants](#), [guidance](#) and the [Community Land Advisory Service](#). Support for small scale growing in communities also features in elements of schemes operated under a Local Places for Nature approach.



Healthy lives

We aim to encourage better diets and reduce food related illness with a shift towards the [Eatwell Guide](#). [Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales](#) and its [delivery plan](#) is a comprehensive long-term strategy to reduce and prevent obesity. This includes creating a healthy food environment in which healthy food is more visible, available and affordable. It also includes objectives for healthy people such as giving people the knowledge and skills to eat a healthy diet, including weight management services that target those at risk of developing obesity-related chronic diseases. Integrating economic and health policies, [Food Innovation Wales](#) aims to support businesses to develop and reformulate to healthier products.

[The Food \(Promotion and Presentation\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2025](#) have been approved by the Senedd, introducing new restrictions on the promotion and placement of foods high in fat, salt and sugar. These measures limit multi buy offers, free refills of sugary drinks, and the display of HFSS products in key in store and online locations to help reduce impulse purchasing and improve public health. A transition period has been provided for businesses ahead of the regulations coming into force in March 2026. This is supported by [comprehensive implementation guidance](#).

[The Healthy Eating in Schools Regulations](#) and accompanying [statutory guidance](#) set out what local authorities and schools can and cannot provide as part of food offered in maintained nursery and primary schools. Revised Regulations ([The Healthy Eating in Schools \(Nutritional Standards and Requirements\) \(Maintained Primary Schools\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2025](#)) have been passed by the Senedd and come into force on 31 October this year. They will support access to healthier, balanced choices for learners, ensuring closer alignment with the latest nutritional

guidance.

Extending the roll-out of [Universal Primary Free School Meals](#) to all primary school children was completed in September 2024. In delivering and improving the implementation of this commitment, we are learning valuable lessons that will inform any future changes to eligibility criteria for free school meals.

Complementing this school focus, the [Healthy Start](#) programme provides our most vulnerable young families, eligible pregnant women and children up to 4 years of age help to buy healthier foods and provides free vitamin supplements. [The Nursery Milk Scheme](#) provides 189ml of milk a day for children under five attending childcare.

We are also committed to review the National Nutrition and Hydration Standards in nursing settings, which includes the updated All Wales Nutrition and Catering standards for food and fluid provision for hospital inpatients. This provides comprehensive, modernised guidelines for meeting nutritional needs for all hospital patients across Wales, replacing the 2011 Standards and addressing dietary, cultural, safety, demographic and therapeutic requirements across all hospital settings.

Information about nutrition and good food choices is shared through various local and national initiatives. These policies collectively form part of a range of cross-government commitments to prevent and tackle the impact of child poverty which are set out in our [Child Poverty Strategy](#) and more information on progress against the strategy can be found in the [Child Poverty Strategy Progress Report 2025](#).

Learning

Within the Curriculum for Wales, learners are supported to develop the knowledge, understanding and practical skills needed to lead healthy, active lifestyles and make informed choices about their health and well being. This includes learning about health promoting behaviours such as good nutrition, a balanced diet and planning, preparing and cooking nutritious meals. Learners are also encouraged to consider wider perspectives, including sourcing local foods, environmental influences on food choices, and issues around food production and sustainability.

Welsh Government has two environmental education programmes, [Eco Schools Wales](#) and [Size of Wales](#), both inspire and empower young people to drive positive environmental change. These school-based initiatives often include educating children and young people on where our food comes from and provide opportunities to grow their own food in a sustainable way. Outside the classroom, pupils' experience of

better food and diet through roll-out of the [Universal Primary Free School Meals](#) policy and improved regulatory standards will lead to life changing habits.

In the food industry, comprehensive employee training is available through [Food & Drink Skills Wales](#). Additionally, [Food Innovation Wales](#) through the [HELIX Programme](#) provides knowledge transfers and training with funding support for a range of technical courses and educational qualifications, with over a thousand workers benefitting in the last year. In agriculture, [Farming Connect](#) provides advice, knowledge transfer and upskilling support and the [Farm Liaison Service](#) provides advice about a range of grants and administrative matters.

Land and seas

We are developing major land management reforms through the passing of the [Agriculture \(Wales\) Act 2023](#) and the roll out of the supporting [Sustainable Farming Scheme](#).

Together these create and will provide support for sustainable land management objectives, including the production of food in a sustainable manner, lowering carbon footprints and delivering for nature. They aim to reduce the environmental impact of food production and to support ways to sustain, enhance and restore the natural environment in conjunction with food production. We provide capital support for farm businesses through a range of preparatory support schemes such as the [Small Grants Efficiency Scheme](#), which will continue through the new Sustainable Farming Scheme. Development of the horticultural sector and on-farm processing are supported through the [Small Grants - Horticultural Start-up Scheme](#) and [Agricultural Diversification and Horticulture Scheme](#). For the fishing sector, we are partners to the [UK Joint Fisheries Statement](#) and [Fisheries Framework](#) which includes production and marketing of seafood products and their traceability.

Sustainable resource use

With the growing sustainability focus on our support for agriculture, fishing, food manufacturing and processing businesses, and supporting local, community-based food activities through the Community Food Strategy, our policies are collectively developing resilience and climate change mitigation into the food system, as well as addressing our own environmental footprint.

[The Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#) recognises nature, land, water and air as our ultimate resources and charts an integrated approach to managing our natural resources for long-term sustainability. It drives sector emission pathway planning across all sectors, including manufacturing and land-based industries, to reduce carbon footprints and waste. Our policies must make urgent progress to meet climate change targets to adapt and mitigate, and to restore biodiversity.



[Net Zero Wales: Carbon Budget 2](#) contained the policies and proposals for meeting the statutory target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions over 2021-25 (an average of 37% below the baseline). We will publish a final statement on Carbon Budget 2 before the end of next year.

We are focused on reducing waste across the food system. Our [Beyond Recycling circular economy strategy](#) is working to make the circular economy in Wales a reality and commits to reduce avoidable food waste by working with food producers and processors across the whole supply chain. The strategy sets a target to reduce avoidable food waste by 60% by 2030. Recognising our place within the UK wide food system, we are an active partner of [The UK Food and Drink Pact](#) which is a voluntary agreement that enables collaborative action across the entire UK food chain to deliver farm-to-fork reductions in food waste, greenhouse gas emissions and water stress.

We are also focussed on reducing packaging waste and have brought in an Extended Producer Responsibility scheme for packaging, which means that businesses which supply and use packaging will have to pay for its management when it becomes waste. The [Workplace Recycling Regulations](#) came into force in April 2024, and require non-domestic premises to separate food waste for recycling – we are raising awareness and have [published guidance](#) and a [Code of Practice](#). Support from [Business Wales](#) and [WRAP Cymru](#) is available.

[The Environmental Protection \(Single Use Plastic products\) Wales Act 2023](#) has banned the use of several commonly littered or difficult to recycle single-use food service products. [Climate Action Wales](#) provides citizens with advice on how to make positive food choices. Since 2015 the Welsh Government has funded [FareShare Cymru](#) to redistribute surplus food from businesses,

preventing it from becoming waste and ensuring it reaches people in need. We fund the [Love Food Hate Waste](#) campaign which provides public advice to prevent edible food from being wasted. The [Be Mighty](#) campaign aims to educate people to use the edible food they buy and recycle any inedible food via their household food waste collection.

Next steps

Food Matters: Wales is a summary overview of our current and planned food related policies. It aims to inform and to be a tool for our work with stakeholders. It outlines how we work, how policies are developed and implemented. Success lies in policies reinforcing each other in complementary way, which we ensure by careful cross-portfolio working, and collective responsibility as a government. We have committed to updating Food Matters: Wales periodically and to build on our commitment to working in partnership with others, we look forward to your comments and suggestions.



