

Food and nutrition in childcare settings

A response by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) to the Welsh Government consultation on draft guidance to support healthy food and drink provision in regulated childcare settings.

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About the RCPCH

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) is responsible for training and examining paediatricians, setting professional standards and informing research and policy. RCPCH has over 18,000 members in the UK and internationally with over 500 in Wales. We work to transform child health through knowledge, research and expertise, to improve the health and wellbeing of infants, children and young people across the world.

Implementing food and nutrition guidelines in childcare settings

We welcome this update to the 2009 guidelines and support the aim of providing up-to-date evidence-based practical advice on this topic for those providing childcare, given the well-recognised problems of childhood obesity and tooth decay in Wales. We also welcome the attention given to children who need to follow particular diets for medical reasons, such as those with allergies, diabetes or coeliac disease.

This is a timely update, given the renewed focus on prevention and supporting people to stay well in A Healthier Wales and the work currently underway of developing an obesity strategy for Wales.

We hope that the guidelines and their implementation will be aligned with the obesity strategy and efforts to improve children's dental health. We welcome the nutritional information, but seen in this context, it is vital that equal consideration is given to successful implementation of the guidelines, with outcomes being considered within the context of broader health policy objectives.

In addition to ensuring that the communications strategy for the guidance is robust and reaches its intended audiences, we would encourage government to provide clarity as to:

- Which childcare settings these guidelines apply to
- How it will monitor uptake and compliance with the guidelines
- How it will respond if providers choose not to adhere to the best practice set out
- How it will evaluate the success of food and nutrition guidelines in childcare settings.

Contact

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