

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r ymgynghoriad ar y [Bil Bwyd \(Cymru\) Drafft](#)

This response was submitted to the consultation on the [Draft Food \(Wales\) Bill](#)

FB007

Ymateb gan: | Response from: Third Sector Community Food Providers Network

Question 1: Do you agree with the overarching principles that the Bill seeks to achieve?

Yes

Question 2: Do you think there is a need for this legislation? Can you provide reasons for your answer.

Very much so. This Newport-based network of community food providers has seen drastic increase on the demand access to food by community members. Trends of those accessing foodbanks have changed. We see more and more "in work" households having to access due to the increase to the general cost of living. The dramatic hikes in costs to fuel and utilities in recent months has further negatively impacted a growing proportion of our communities.

Question 3: Please provide your views on the inclusion of the Food Goals within the Bill as the means to underpin the policy objectives.

The inclusion of Food Goals is beneficial. It enables targets to aim for and provides a measure of whether the undertaking has been successful or not. It is unclear though, how these goals will be measured. Who is determining what is "affordable", what is "healthy" for example? What are the metrics to be employed?

Question 4: Do you agree with the inclusion of a Primary Food Goal supplemented by Secondary Food Goals?

Yes. Increasing access to affordable food should be a primary. This is the main issue many of the network members are seeing in their service users. The issue may not just be the increase to the cost of food though, but that salaries and benefits payments have not increased at a comparative rate.

Question 5: Are there additional / different areas you think should be included in the Food Goals?

A goal directly relating to reducing the use of foodbanks.

Question 6: Do you have any additional comments on the Food Goals, including the resource implications of the proposals and how these could be minimised?

Question 7: Please provide your views on the inclusion of targets within the Bill as the means to measure how the Food Goals are being advanced.

Question 8: Do you agree with the process for setting the targets?

Further consultation with grass-roots activists required. Suggest liaising with local Networks such as the one operating in Newport that serves as a means of communication and collaboration among community food groups and organisations. Many community groups can be intimidated by official consultation methods and liaising with them collectively through such networks, where they exist, can produce valuable feedback.

Question 9: Do you think the reporting mechanisms set out in the draft Bill provide sufficient accountability and scope for scrutiny?

Question 10: Do you have any additional comments on the targets, including the resource implications of the proposals and how these could be minimised?

Question 11: What are your views on the need for a Welsh Food Commission?

Question 12: Do you agree with the goals and functions of the Welsh Food Commission? If not, what changes would you suggest?

More consultation with grass roots groups and organisations.

Question 13: Do you agree with the size of the membership of the Food Commission and the process for appointing its members?

The line, "The Commission can regulate its own procedures" suggests a lack of parameters and accountability

Question 14: What are your views on the proposal that the chair and members can serve a maximum term of five years and that an individual may be re-appointed as a chair or member only once? Do you believe this is appropriate?

Question 15: Do you have any additional comments on the Food Commission, including the resource implications of the proposals and how these could be minimised?

Question 16: Do you agree that there is a need for a national food strategy?

Yes.

Question 17: Do you believe the Welsh Government's current strategies relating to 'food' are sufficiently joined up / coherent?

Question 18: Does the draft Bill do enough to ensure that Welsh Ministers take advice and consult on the strategy before it is made. If no, what additional mechanisms would you put in place?

Question 19: Do you think the provisions of the draft Bill relating to reporting on the national food strategy are sufficient? If not, what changes would you like to see?

Question 20: Do you think the provisions of the draft Bill relating to reviewing of the national food strategy are sufficient? If not, what changes would you like to see?

Question 21: Do you have any additional comments on the National Food Strategy, including the resource implications of the proposals and how these could be minimised

Question 22: Do you agree that there is a need for local food plans?

Yes

Question 23: Does the draft Bill do enough to ensure that public bodies consult on their local food plans before they are made. If no, what additional mechanisms would you put in place

Local Food Plans to include targets on reducing the need for community members to access crisis food support. More consultation at grass roots level. If they are encouraged to collectively collate and report data, we get a clearer picture of how much they are supporting in each region. Currently, only Trussell Trust Foodbank data is recognised owing to their national status and ability to provide

local, regional and national stats. This is, of course important but does not reflect the true level to which people are having to access crisis food provision.

Question 24: Do you think the provisions of the draft Bill relating to reporting on the local food plans are sufficient? If not, what changes would you like to see?

Question 25: Do you think the provisions of the draft Bill relating to reviewing of the local food plans are sufficient? If not, what changes would you like to see?

Question 26: Do you have any additional comments on local food plans, including the resource implications of the proposals and how these could be minimised?

Question 27: Do you agree with the list of persons defined as being a 'public body' for the purpose of this Bill?

Question 27: Do you have any views on the process for making regulations set out in the Bill?

Question 27: Do you have any views on the proposed commencement date for the Act?

Please provide any additional information relevant to the draft Bill.

These consultation documents were circulated to network members but received little response. However, this is not indicative of their complacency. However open this consultation is, it can be intimidating to small community groups who may think "why would they want to hear from us?" when, in reality, they have regular front-line experiences with people who can not afford to feed their families. Responses given above are based on previous discussions with network members, as individuals and collectively.

One member of the Network offered this view:

"I did start filling in the online survey but the more I did the more I felt out of my depth. The scope of this Bill is huge and difficult to get your head around. The topic has such a wide remit involving public bodies, policy makers, producers and consumers. For the commission to be successful in delivering on the provisions in the Bill it would have to engage with many different organisations at many levels. Perhaps that is why it mentions local food plans.

I did attend the second seminar held on 11th August by Food Futures Gwent. I missed the first one because I didn't get a zoom link after it was rescheduled. This was a great pity as I think the focus on the first one would have been more general whereas the second one focused solely on free school meals, which I had little to contribute to.

One line of discussion at this seminar did, however, highlight the problems this Bill will face. One of those attending was from XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX and they outlined the difficulty in sourcing locally when budgets are tight. They mentioned a school in North Wales that wanted to buy in a lot of frozen peas and had to contract with someone in Lincolnshire as there is nowhere in Wales that could supply them. Other similar examples were given. Another example was that schools buy in frozen chicken pieces from Europe because they cannot find more local suppliers that produce suitably small pieces of frozen chicken that can be used by canteen staff to make pies.

They also mentioned that the issue of food sustainability crosses many different departments where there is often little joint planning. There was also criticism of government funding for some food initiatives that are launched in September and have to be completed by March when the growing season has to be planned on a longer term basis to have any hope of success. Sounds familiar! In my experience much of the Welsh Government's funding is short term. This needs to change.

In the end I felt that there are already a lot of experienced professionals who can identify the issues that need to be addressed in Wales, but how will they be brought together and listened to – this has to be the role of the proposed commission. The fear is that this could mushroom into something large and unwieldy and costing more tax payers money with little to show for it.

I think the recent pandemic and the war in Europe has made everyone more aware of the need to be more self sufficient food wise but Wales cannot do this in isolation as its food production is never going to be sufficiently broad enough. We still need to be working with the rest of the UK.

Perhaps there are things that can be addressed like food waste and those that are responsible for procurement in larger public bodies such as schools and hospitals – that would be a start. A few years ago there was a series on TV about hospital meals and there was also Jamie Oliver's campaign about the quality of school meals. Have things changed because of these campaigns?

Hope this is helpful.”