

Big Bocs Bwyd Evaluation

Phase 3

July 2023

**Big
BOCS
Bwyd**

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
VISION AND VALUES	4
PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW	6
INFORMING THE REVIEW - INFORMATION GATHERING	6
METHODOLOGY	6
COLLECTION AND INTERROGATION OF DATA ALIGNS WITH THE SINGAPORE STATEMENT AND AGREED PROTOCOLS HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED THROUGHOUT. (APPENDIX 1)	6
BACKGROUND AND POLICY - A CONTEXT TO BIG BOCS BWYD	7
FOOD IN CHILDHOOD	7
THE REALITY FOR CHILDREN IN THE REVIEW	9
WHAT IS FOOD POVERTY?	9
WHAT IS FOOD SECURITY?	10
FOOD BANK USE	12
UK POLICY	15
FOOD POLICY IN WALES - THE FOOD (WALES) BILL	15
FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT (2015)	18
UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD	19
UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS	20
COMMUNITY FOCUSED SCHOOLS	21
CHILD HEALTH	23
FOOD WASTE	24
SUSTAINABLE FOOD SOURCES	25
EDUCATION AND BIG BOCS BWYD	27
CURRICULUM FOR WALES	27
BIG BOCS BWYD AS A VEHICLE FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND AUTHENTIC LEARNING	28
BIG BOCS BWYD AS AN AUTHENTIC CURRICULUM IN PRACTICE	30
DEVELOPING FOOD LITERACY	34
PREVENTING FOOD WASTE	36
CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF FOOD AND BIG BOCS BWYD	37
LEARNER WORKSHOPS	37
TASK 1	38
TASK 2	39
TASK 3	42
SCHOOLS' PLANS FOR DEVELOPING LEARNING THROUGH BIG BOCS BWYD	43
LEARNING THROUGH BIG BOCS BWYD AND STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE	44
IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS FOR INCREASING CONFIDENCE AND COMPETENCE OF THE PROFESSIONAL TEAM	45
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATION AND BOG BOCS BWYD	47

<u>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND BIG BOCS BWYD.....</u>	<u>49</u>
PARENTS/CARERS - NUTRITION AND WELLBEING.....	50
PARENTS AND CARERS IN THE REVIEW.....	51
VOLUNTEERS.....	56
MULTI-AGENCY WORKING WITHIN BIG BOCS BWYD	59
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND BIG BOCS BWYD	61
<u>FUNDING.....</u>	<u>62</u>
<u>CENTRAL LEADERSHIP OF BIG BOCS BWYD.....</u>	<u>63</u>
CENTRAL LEADERSHIP.....	63
SUCCESSES FROM A PROJECT LEAD PERSPECTIVE	63
CHALLENGES FROM A PROJECT LEAD PERSPECTIVE.....	64
NEXT STEPS FROM A PROJECT LEAD PERSPECTIVE.....	65
PROJECT COORDINATOR	65
STRENGTHS OF THE PROJECT FROM A PROJECT COORDINATOR PERSPECTIVE.....	65
CHALLENGES FROM A PROJECT COORDINATOR PERSPECTIVE	67
NEXT STEPS FROM A PROJECT COORDINATOR PERSPECTIVE	67
<u>GOVERNANCE, LOGISTICS AND ADMINISTRATION OF BIG BOCS BWYD.....</u>	<u>69</u>
GOVERNANCE OF BIG BOCS BWYD	69
OPEN DAYS	69
APPLICATION PROCESS	70
INSTALLATION OF BIG BOCS BWYD	70
LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE OF BIG BOCS BWYD IN SCHOOLS	71
ADMINISTRATION OF BIG BOCS BWYD IN SCHOOLS	74
REVENUE, BANKING AND AUDIT	74
INVENTORY.....	76
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOGISTICS, LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION OF BIG BOCS BWYD	77
<u>TRAINING, NETWORKING AND BIG BOCS BWYD</u>	<u>77</u>
TRAINING.....	77
ONLINE NETWORKING EVENTS AND BIG BOCS BWYD.....	79
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NETWORKING AND TRAINING.....	81
<u>THE REVIEW'S CONCLUSIONS</u>	<u>82</u>
<u>APPENDICES</u>	<u>82</u>
APPENDIX 1 - SINGAPORE STATEMENT FOR RESEARCH (SUMMARY).....	82
APPENDIX 2 - TRIANGULATION OF DATA	83
APPENDIX 3 - SAMPLE SCHOOLS OVERVIEW	84

Big Bocs Bwyd - Phase 3 Evaluation

Vision and Values

Big Bocs Bwyd is a not for profit education project that has evolved over time. It aims to ensure that, within their community, no child is hungry and that every child is able to learn how to make good food choices that enable them to thrive.

At the heart of the Big Bocs Bwyd project lie the aims of education, reducing food waste and initiating enterprise by using food as part of a cyclical economy to benefit a community and its members.

Learners become food literate by sourcing, growing, cooking with and learning about food; its ethics, origins, sources, uses, cultural significance, disposal and indisputable necessity for living things.

Sustainability, food security and food literacy are the golden threads that augment personal agency, multigenerational cooperation and community collaboration within the project.

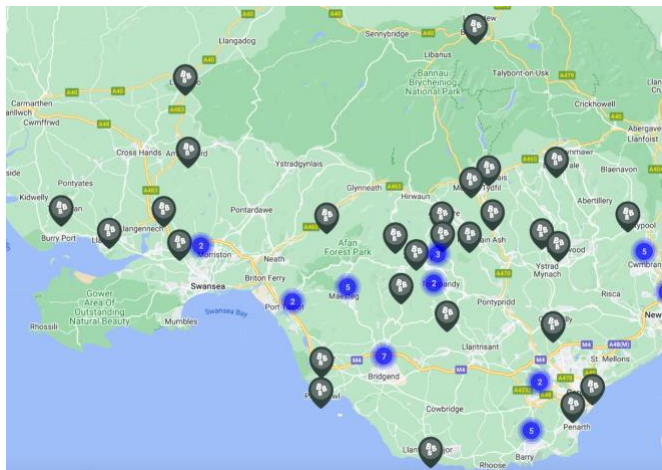
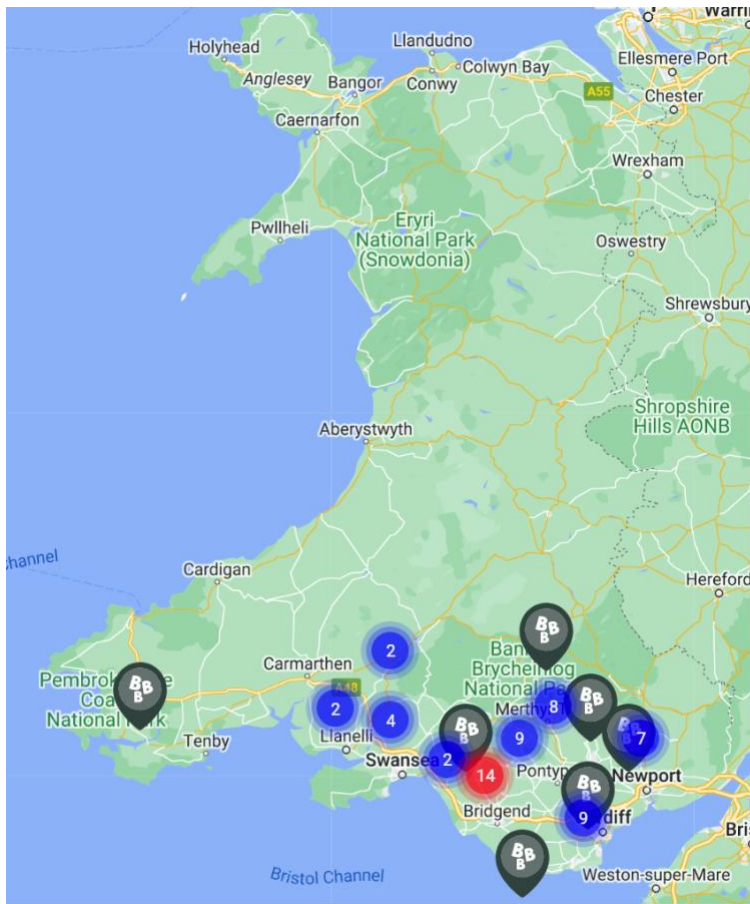
Children and families are provided with food at 'pay as you feel' prices and supported with authentic learning experiences through sourcing, growing, cooking and sharing food.

The project has evolved from the original Big Bocs Bwyd in 2019, at Cadoxton Primary School, Barry, led by its Executive Headteacher, and has since developed into a valued community food asset through its collaboration with schools, volunteers and food supply partners. The success of Big Bocs Bwyd at Cadoxton Primary School has been recognised by T4 Education and places the school in the "Top 10 Finalists" of a worldwide competition in supporting children to overcome adversity.

The installation of a Big Bocs Bwyd in a school is explicitly linked to the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales, ensuring that children are:

- Healthy, confident individuals
- Ambitious, capable learners
- Ethical, informed citizens
- Enterprising, creative contributors

Funding from Welsh Government has enabled the number of Big Bocs Bwyd centres to increase from the original at Cadoxton to 66 across South Wales, as of June 2023. Significant support, interest and action from partners including The Waterloo Foundation, Valleys Regional Park, FareShare, Tyf, The Learning Partnership, The Vale of Glamorgan Council, Men's Shed, Site Services Ltd., The Gregg's Foundation, Castell Howell, Enterprise Cars and others. These important partners have added challenge, perspective and accountability as the project has grown.



Purpose of the Review

The purpose of this Review (Phase 3) is to ensure that the project continues to be monitored in an objective and robust manner against its broad aims of education, community engagement, developing food literacy and preventing food waste, and subsequently to identify and recommend next steps for the project.

Informing the Review - Information Gathering (Components and explanations)

A mixed method research approach has been adopted using both quantitative and qualitative data to inform the Review at each stage. The research team for the review comprised of a lead researcher supported by two independent researchers and one partner researcher.

Methodology

A variety of research methods were utilised to ensure a robust evaluation of the project namely a mixed method approach; quantitative (the factual numbers) and qualitative (the stories behind the numbers).

Data was gathered during a six month period from late December 2022 to June 2023. Responses represent Big Bocs Bwyd schools from all phases of the project (Phases 1, 2 and 3).

The methodology comprises of:

- **Desk Research**
- **Online Questionnaire** for all Bocs Bwyd Schools - 31 questionnaire responses (47% response rate)
- **Structured Conversations** with Key Leads of Big Bocs Bwyd - 12 structured conversations with schools and 2 with project leads from the central team
- **Pupil Voice Workshops** - 12 workshops with children of varying ages
- **Parent/Carer Interviews/Conversations** - 57 parental/carers conversations
- **Volunteers Conversations** - 21 volunteer conversations
- **High Level Engagement Workshops** with partner professionals (4 workshops of 34 participants)

Collection and interrogation of data aligns with the Singapore Statement and agreed protocols have been implemented throughout. (Appendix 1)

Data has been triangulated to ensure that all data sets are fully interrogated. (Appendix 2)

The Review draws data from all aspects of methodology and is organised under key areas. (See Table of Contents pages 2 and 3)

Summary conclusions are represented and captured indicated by blue italicised font (as in this sentence) at the end of each section .

Background and Policy - A Context to Big Bocs Bwyd

Food in Childhood¹

Good nutrition is crucial for children as it plays a vital role in their growth, development, and overall health in all developmental domains.

Physical Growth and Development

Proper nutrition provides the necessary nutrients that promote physical growth and development in children. It helps in building strong bones, muscles, and tissues, as well as supporting the development of organs and the immune system.

Cognitive Development¹

Nutrition also influences brain development and cognitive function in children. Essential nutrients like omega-3 fatty acids, iron, zinc, and vitamins B, C, and E are critical for brain development and optimal cognitive performance, including memory, attention, and problem-solving skills.

Energy and Stamina

A well-balanced diet provides children with the energy and stamina they need for their daily activities, including school, sports, socialising and play. Proper nutrition ensures an adequate intake of carbohydrates, proteins, and healthy fats, which are the primary sources of energy for the body.

Disease Prevention

Good nutrition plays a significant role in reducing the risk of chronic diseases in children. A healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins helps to prevent conditions like obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and certain types of cancer.

Immune System Function²

Adequate nutrition strengthens the immune system, making children more resistant to infections and diseases. Nutrients such as vitamins A, C, D, E, zinc, and selenium are essential for maintaining a robust immune response.

Behavioural and Emotional Wellbeing

Proper nutrition has been linked to improved mood, behaviour, and mental health in children. Nutrients like omega-3 fatty acids and certain vitamins and minerals contribute to

¹ American Academy of Paediatrics. (2019). Importance of Good Nutrition. Retrieved June 2023 from <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/nutrition>

² Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. (2021). Nutrition and Health. Retrieved June 2023 from <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/nutrition-and-health/>

maintaining emotional balance and reducing the risk of mental health disorders like depression and anxiety.

Poor Nutrition³

Poor nutrition in children can have serious health and social implications.

From a health perspective, inadequate nutrition can lead to stunted growth, impaired cognitive development, and a weakened immune system. Lack of essential vitamins and minerals can result in vitamin deficiencies such as vitamin A deficiency, which can lead to night blindness and increased susceptibility to infections. Insufficient protein intake can cause muscle wasting and growth retardation. Additionally, poor nutrition increases the risk of developing chronic diseases later in life, including obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

Socially, children who suffer from poor nutrition may experience negative effects on their overall wellbeing. Malnourished children may have lower energy levels, reduced concentration, and difficulty in learning and retaining information, which can impact on their academic performance and hinder their social interactions. They may also have lower self-esteem and experience social exclusion due to physical appearance or developmental delays caused by inadequate nutrition. These social implications can further perpetuate a cycle of poor nutrition and its associated consequences.

It is universally agreed that good nutrition in childhood has long term benefits. Addressing poor nutrition in children requires a multi-faceted approach that includes improving access to nutritious food, promoting education on healthy eating habits (both skills and knowledge), and providing support for vulnerable populations. It is crucial to prioritise efforts to ensure children receive proper nutrition to safeguard their physical and social wellbeing.

The Review demonstrates the ways in which Big Bocs Bwyd is contributing to achieving these goals.

³ National Institutes of Health. (2021). Children's Nutritional Needs. Retrieved June 2023 from <https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/nutrition/conditioninfo/children>

The Reality for Children in the Review

Meeting children's needs well are key drivers of the Review. As a snapshot, 90% of schools in the Review reported that children were either expressing hunger or, if they were having enough to eat, they were not consuming foods considered to be particularly nutritious. This figure can be broken down into the following categories by responding schools;

10% - Most children arrive in school well-nourished and ready to learn.

67% - Most children have enough to eat but their food is not particularly nutritious.

23% - Most children express they are hungry and depend on the school for hot meals and nutritious snacks for their development and growth.

Examining food policy within Wales and the wider UK elicits a clear overlap between the aims of the Big Bocs Bwyd Project and the aspiration of a nation.

The following summary, based on policy documents for the UK Government and Welsh Government, explains the current position and future aspirations. Each field (food, education and sustainability) is a vast policy area and the following summary of evidence contextualises the Big Bocs Bwyd project within the wider aims of Wales.

A picture of food security, sustainability of food and food education

The fidelity of the Review of Big Bocs Bwyd is intrinsically linked to establishing clarity around the aims and aspirations of Wales in relation to food, education and sustainability. Understanding the interwoven nature of food quality and availability, education and sustainability against the backdrop of an international, national and local context is essential in evaluating the **relevance and value** of the project.

What is food poverty?

“There is no widely accepted definition of ‘food poverty’. However, a household can broadly be defined as experiencing food poverty or ‘household food insecurity’ if they cannot (or are uncertain about whether they can) acquire “an adequate quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways”.

According to the Department for Work and Pensions’ (DWP) Households Below Average Income survey, in 2021/22, 4.7 million people (7%) in the UK were in food insecure households. Among the 11.0 million people found to be in relative poverty, 15% were in food insecure households, including 21% of children. People in relative poverty live in a household with income less than 60% of the contemporary median income”.⁴

Evidence from the Houses of Parliament research reflects the experiences of children and families engaging with Big Bocs Bwyd; many children in Wales experience food poverty.

⁴ Houses of Parliament Research Briefing , Food poverty: Households, foodbanks and free school meals , Brigid Francis-Divine, Xameerah Malik, Shadi Danechi, 20 June 2023

What is Food Security?

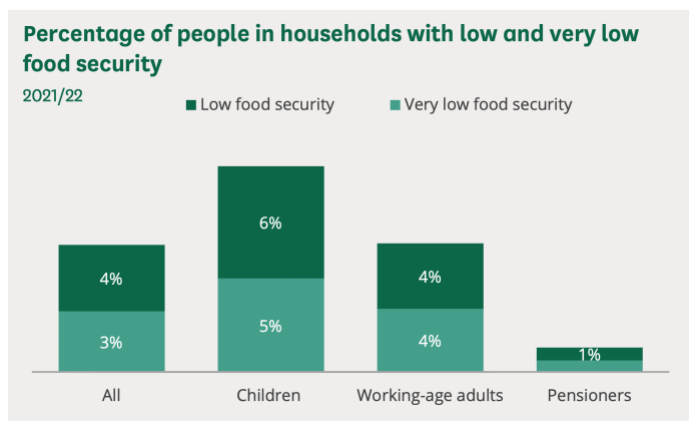
Food poverty is often used as synonymous with household food insecurity. Household food insecurity is defined in broadly the same way across several countries:

- *“Low food security’ means that the household reduces the quality, variety, and desirability of their diets.*
- *‘Very low food security’ means that household members sometimes disrupt eating patterns or reduce food intake because they lack money or other resources for food.”⁵*

Households can have low food security even when the UK as a whole has high food security.

Food insecurity can arise from:

- Income and affordability
- Access to food
- Ability to prepare food - knowledge, skills, equipment and environment
- Sharing food within households

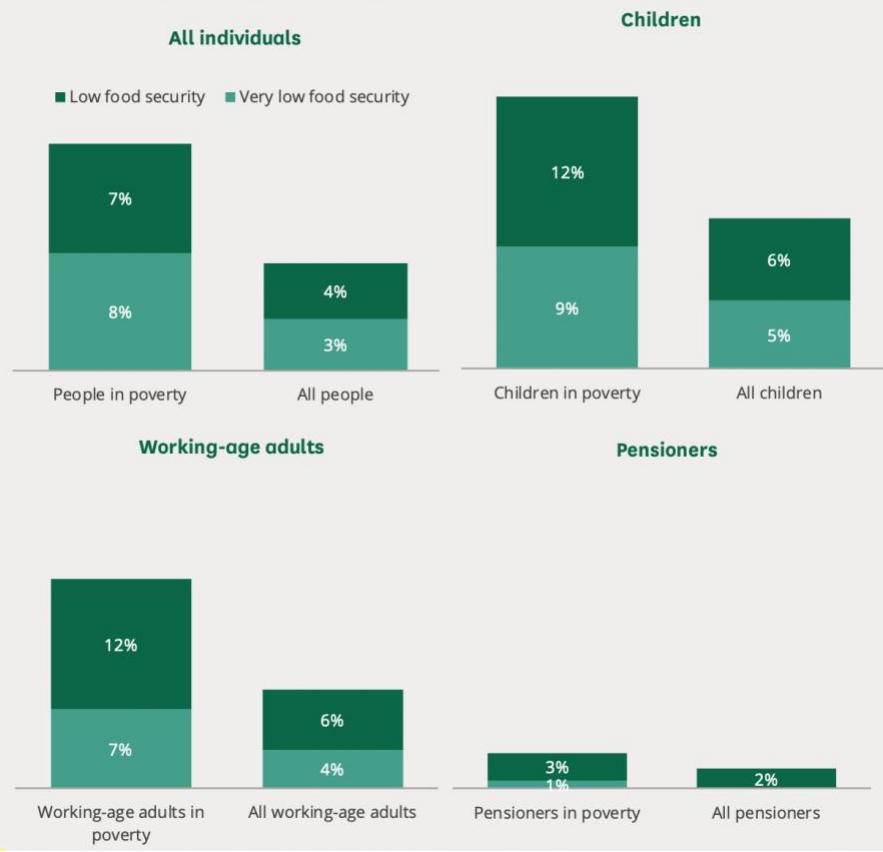


Source: DWP Households below average income

⁵ Houses of Parliament Research Briefing, *Food poverty: Households, foodbanks and free school meals*, Brigid Francis-Divine, Xameerah Malik, Shadi Danechi, 20 June 2023

Percentage of people in households with low and very low food security

People in relative poverty versus all people, 2021/22



Source: DWP

The graphics above identify the population groups affected by low or very low food insecurity, and that **children present a higher percentage than any other group.**

Households Below Average Income

Some households are more likely to experience food insecurity than others. Factors include:

Households with Children

24.4% of households with children experienced food insecurity in January 2023, compared with an average of 17.7%.

In January 2023, 10.5% of children had not had balanced meals, 3.4% had not had enough to eat and 2.6% had skipped meals.⁶

Households Receiving Universal Credit

Around half (49.0%) of households receiving Universal Credit experienced food insecurity in January 2023, compared with 15.3% of households not receiving Universal Credit.

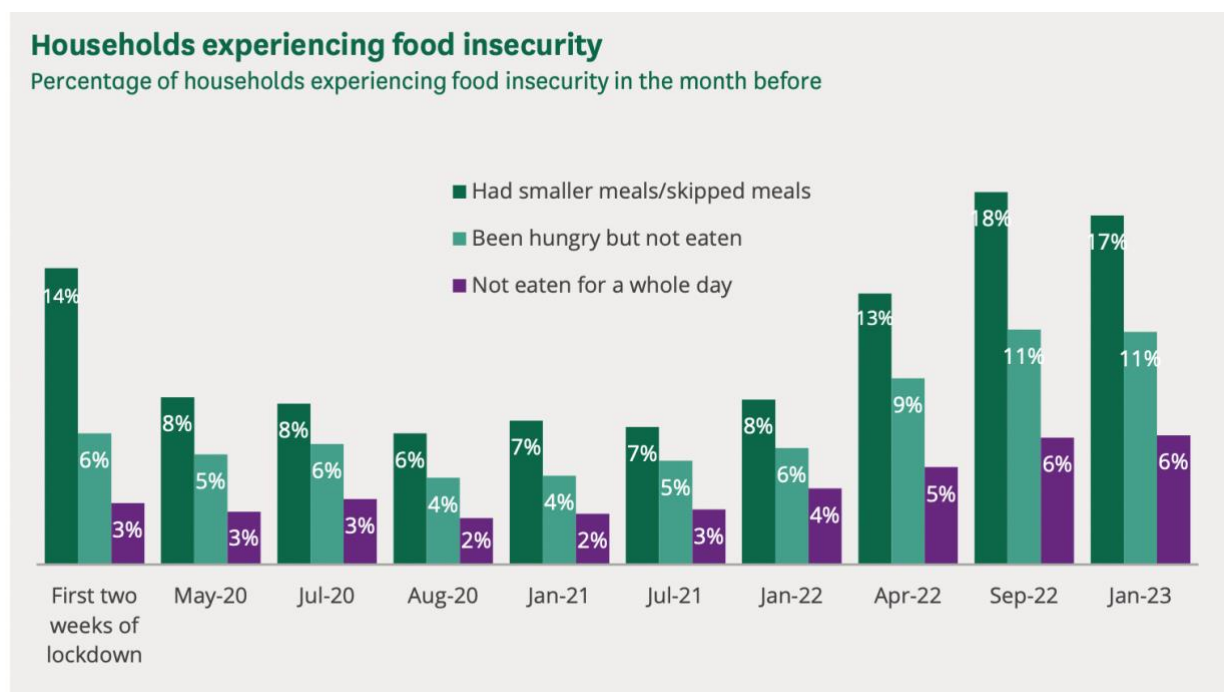
Households with Members with Disabilities

41.8% of households with a member who is **'limited a lot'** by a disability experienced food insecurity in January 2023.

This is compared with 23.7% of households with a member who is **'limited a little'** by a disability and 13.4% of households where nobody is limited by a disability.

Households from an Ethnic Minority Group

27.9% of Asian households, 26.5% of Black households and 26.0% of households with Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups experienced food insecurity in January 2023, compared with 18.2% of White households⁶



Source: Food Foundation, Food insecurity Tracking

As with other nations of the UK, the number of food insecure households in Wales is increasing. Engaging with families experiencing low food security through Big Bocs Bwyd provides a safety net for children.

Food Bank Use⁷

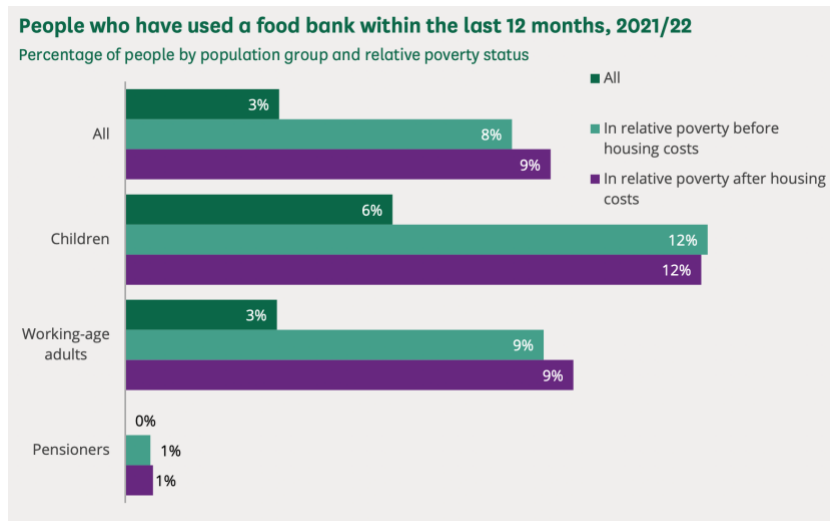
“Food banks are run by charities and are intended as a temporary provision to supply emergency food.

⁶ Source: Food Foundation, Food insecurity Tracking, Round 10, (accessed 14 June 2023)

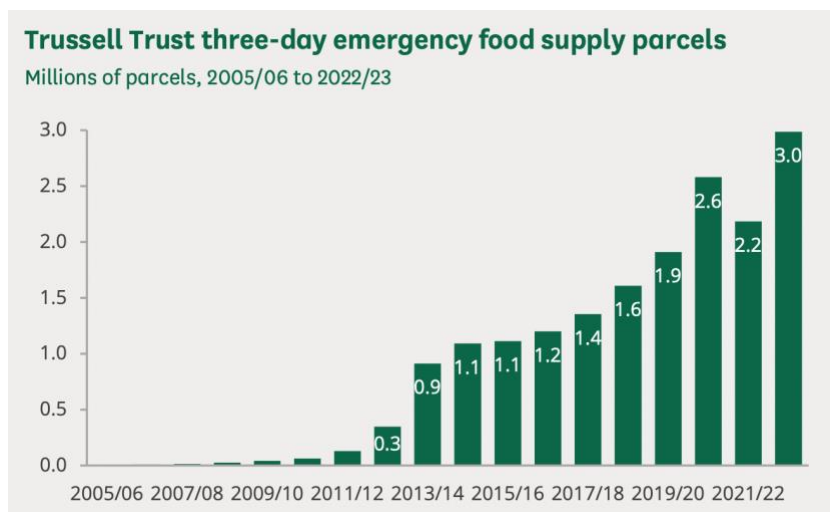
⁷ Houses of Parliament Research Briefing, Food poverty: Households, foodbanks and free school meals, Brigid Francis-Divine, Xameerah Malik, Shadi Danechi, 20 June 2023

The DWP published statistics on food bank use for the first time in March 2023. In 2021/22, 2.1 million people in the UK lived in households which had used a food bank in the previous 12 months, a rate of 3%. This includes 6% of children, 3% of working-age adults, and around 1% of pensioners.”

In 2022/23, the Trussell Trust supplied 2.99 million three-day emergency food parcels, the highest recorded number and an increase of 37% on the previous year.



Source: DWP Households below average income



Source: Trussell Trust End of Year Stats 2023

Trussell Trust food parcel distribution

Thousands, 2019/20, 2021/22, 2022/23



Source: Trussell Trust End of Year Stats 2023

Looking at the Trussell Trust Year end Statistics (above):

- In 2022/23 in London, (London population approx. 8.8 million people in December 2022) 350,000 food parcels were delivered. This represents receipt of a food parcel by **3.98% of London's population**.
- By comparison in Wales in the same period, (Wales' population approx. 3.1 million people in December 2022) 200,000 food parcels were delivered by the Trussell Trust. This represents **6.45% of the population**.
- In 2022/23 there was a **greater need for support** from the Trussell Trust **in Wales, than in London**, with Wales' graphic demonstrating a rapid and significant increase over three years.

The use of food banks has increased threefold in a decade, but some families postpone seeking help because of a perceived stigma around their use. Big Bocs Bwyd alleviates this stigma as it offers universal access as a food community asset, therefore reaching families who may otherwise resist such support. However, many schools found that they needed to work particularly hard with some families, often those most in need, to remove this stigma.

UK Policy

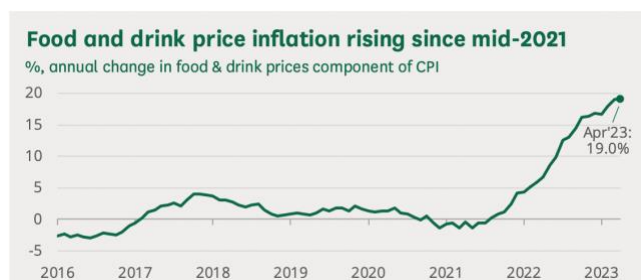
In 2019 the UK government, through DEFRA, issued a “*Call for Evidence and made urgent recommendations to address the uncertainty of Brexit*”⁸ which included seeking information on employment linked to food and to explore hunger in communities. The intention of the process was to reduce diet-related inequality. The evidence magnified the ways in which poverty leads not only to hunger, but also to people relying on diets that, in the longer term, may cause damage to their health.

*“A healthier food [sic] option is often much more challenging, with **the range of healthier options declining the poorer you are**, with the additional barriers such as convenience hindering those on lower incomes from consuming a healthier diet.”*⁹

Further to the recommendations from the Call for Evidence in 2019, the devolved governments of the UK revisited food policy and within each country’s context there was a common focus on:

- *Researching the links between ultra-processed foods and obesity.*
- *The link between deprivation and dietary outcomes.*
- *Exploring whether families have the equipment, cooking skills, time and environment to prepare and cook healthier foods than the convenient alternatives.*
- *Learning from the approaches taken by local food partnerships.*
- *Promoting a whole school and community approach to food.*¹⁰

In 2022, the UK government published its Food Strategy for England, which went further than DEFRA’s call for evidence by recognising the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, coupled with the war in Ukraine and the challenges presented by the cost of living crisis. Food security, the health of the nation, and sustainable eating are at its heart.



Source: ONS, Food and non-alcoholic drink component of CPI May 23 Update

Food Policy in Wales - The Food (Wales) Bill

Current Welsh Government food policy is supported and implemented by different departments, which do not always connect. While their combined, overall long-term aims may have synergy, the present day reality is that they operate disparately, in silos. Given the multidisciplinary nature of “change forces” in the 21st century, the development and

⁸⁸ National Food Strategy - Call for Evidence, DEFRA UK, 2019

⁹ The Dibleby Review - INTERVIEW: the Junk Food Cycle - Viewed March 2022

¹⁰ National Food Strategy - Call for Evidence, DEFRA UK, 2019

implementation of a co-ordinated food policy was explored as a means of supporting Wales' global commitments in this, and other, areas.

On 22 September 2021, Peter Fox MS was successful in a ballot held in the Senedd for the right to seek leave to introduce a Member Bill, ***The Food (Wales) Bill*** 'the Bill' in relation to food in Wales. The proposal in the Bill aimed to establish a more sustainable food system in Wales to strengthen food security, improve Wales' socio-economic wellbeing, and enhance consumer choice. However, the Bill was debated in May 2023 and narrowly defeated by a small margin in the Senedd of 25 votes to 24 votes. While the Bill will not progress any further, there continues to be commitment to its key aims (outlined below) from all sides of the Senedd.

The Food (Wales) Bill would have imposed a legal duty on the government to create a more formal food strategy and to establish a Food Commission. By enabling a coherent, consistent and strategic approach through law, the merging of departmental priorities into one policy, could have led to a **common practice approach** on all aspects of the food system.

The provisions of the *Food (Wales) Bill* would have enabled Wales to pursue a future independent approach to food policy. Although the Bill will not progress to the next stage of legislature, there was common agreement that aspects of the Bill should be built upon and developed.

The Minister for Rural Affairs committed to¹¹:

- Publishing and updating periodically a cross-portfolio document for stakeholders that would summarise its wide range of food policies, and how they join up across policy areas and the well-being goals.
- Forming a cross-Government forum chaired by the First Minister to ensure the efforts they make within Government are subject to appropriate oversight, allowing for better policy join-up to be achieved and communicated, reporting back to the Senedd.
- Looking at what can be developed from a cross-Government forum and in relation to a strategy.

Within the approach proposed by the Bill, reference is made to **Primary Food Goals** and **Secondary Food Goals**. These are of particular relevance to Big Bocs Bwyd and were supported in principle by the Senedd as they reflect the vision of Wales' food security.

"Primary Food Goal¹²: this is the overarching goal of providing affordable, healthy, and economically, environmentally and socially sustainable food for the people of Wales.

Examples of future approaches which might support the Primary Food Goal coming to fruition through Senedd policy include:

¹¹ Statement from Food Policy Alliance Cymru, Accessed July 2023
https://www.foodsensewales.org.uk/app/uploads/2023/05/FPAC_FoodBillStatement_260523_Eng.pdf

¹² Food (Wales) Bill, Peter Fox MS, December 2022

- *A commitment to a coherent, consistent and strategic cross-governmental approach to policy and practice on all aspects of the food system.*
- *The provision of affordable, healthy, and economically, environmentally and socially sustainable food for the people of Wales.*
- *The strengthening of Wales’ food security through a resilient supply chain and supporting the development of its food industry.*
- *Improving Wales’ socioeconomic wellbeing and enhancing consumer choice.*
- *Addressing areas which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the cost of living crisis; poverty and inequality, obesity and malnutrition, nature decline and climate change.*
- *A more resilient food system to address ongoing supply chain issues which limit consumer choice and create the real risk of food shortages.*
- *Ensuring environmental considerations remain at its core, such as: protecting and restoring nature; tackling and mitigating the effects of climate change; and minimising Wales’ global environmental footprint.”*

Secondary Food Goals¹³: these underpin the Primary Food Goal and cover specific areas including: Economic Wellbeing, Health and Social, Education, Environment and Food Waste

Secondary Food Goal	Description
<i>Economic Wellbeing</i>	<p><i>Creating new economic opportunities through promotion of locally produced food.</i></p> <p><i>Promoting sustainable economic, social and community development.</i></p> <p><i>Encouraging better links between food producers, processors and consumers.</i></p>
<i>Health and Social</i>	<p><i>Reducing malnutrition, food poverty and food insecurity. Reducing obesity.</i></p> <p><i>Encouraging equitable distribution of healthy and sustainable food within communities.</i></p> <p><i>Promoting the social wellbeing benefits of food, for example through community growing and allotments.</i></p> <p><i>Promoting the importance of consuming healthy food for improving physical and mental health and wellbeing.</i></p>

¹³ Food (Wales) Bill, Peter Fox MS, December 2022

<i>Education</i>	<p><i>Increasing the quality and accessibility of educational provision on food-related issues.</i></p> <p><i>Developing food skills to ensure better, healthier diets and wellbeing.</i></p>
<i>Environment</i>	<p><i>Lessening environmental impacts of food production, processing and consumption.</i></p> <p><i>Enhancing and regenerating the natural environment through food production.</i></p> <p><i>Restoring and maintaining biodiversity and habitats through food production.</i></p> <p><i>Promoting a food system that mitigates and adapts to climate change, and minimises Wales' global environmental footprint.</i></p>
<i>Food Waste</i>	<p><i>Reducing food waste across the food system, including by food producers, processors and consumers.</i></p>

Food (Wales) Bill, Peter Fox MS, December 2022

Through the **Education Food Goal**, it is envisaged the concept and skills-based focus of Curriculum for Wales will emphasise the need for all children and young people to have the necessary food skills to ensure better, healthier diets, as well as increasing the provision of education on food-related issues and deeper understanding as part of their learning, helping to progress the education food goal.

*The **Primary Food Goals** outlined in the Food (Wales) Bill, broadly supported by the Senedd, are embodied within Big Bocs Bwyd at a school and community level; even now, they are a reality, and provide a template of how these aspirations unfold in practice when action is taken at a community level.*

*The **Secondary Food Goals** closely reflect the current Memorandum of Understanding of Big Bocs Bwyd and provide a framework to build upon. While much has already been achieved through the project, the Secondary Food Goals could become the “hallmarks of gold standard practice” for schools within the Big Bocs Bwyd project in the future. Many of the aims and aspirations for a nation align closely with the values, intentions and actions of Big Bocs Bwyd within communities in Wales.*

Future Generations Act (2015)

Big Bocs Bwyd assists schools in meeting their duties as outlined in the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (FGA) because the intentions of the Act for children now and in the future, are captured within the project.

“The FGA aims to improve the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of Wales by placing a duty on certain public bodies to think in a more sustainable and long-term way.”¹⁴



Future Generations Act 2015

The FGA (2015) puts in place seven wellbeing goals that public bodies must work to achieve and take into consideration across all their decision-making, as follows:

- a prosperous Wales;
- a resilient Wales;
- a healthier Wales;
- a more equal Wales;
- a Wales of more cohesive communities;
- a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language; and
- a globally responsible Wales.

*While most of the seven wellbeing goals of the FGA present clearly within the Big Bocs Bwyd project, not all respondents from the schools involved were aware of them. **Big Bocs Bwyd is a future-facing project which complements and realises the Future Generations Act (2015) providing an opportunity to raise awareness of, and build upon, the Act.***

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

“The Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child’s life and sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. It also explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights.”¹⁵

¹⁴ Future Generations Act 2015

¹⁵ UNCRC https://www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/UNCRC_summary-1_1.pdf Accessed May 2022



The aims of Big Bocs Bwyd underpin many of the UNCRC rights, some examples include;

Article 6 (Life, survival and development)

Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

Article 24 (Health and health services)

Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education on health and well-being so that children can stay healthy. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 29 (Goals of education)

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The UN Sustainable Development Goals are a call to action; they focus our attention on behaviours and attitudes which will sustain our planet and the people on it.



*“The Global Sustainability Goals (UNGSG) were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 and provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests”.*¹⁶

Many of the SDGs are embodied within the Big Bocs Bwyd project which facilitates an authentic approach to exploring, discussing and considering them with children. Some examples include;

1. No poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Good health and wellbeing
4. Quality Education
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Responsible consumption and production
14. Life below water
15. Life on land

Schools show a consistent awareness and commitment to the UNCRC, but the aims of the SDGs were far less apparent or familiar to respondents; the Big Bocs Bwyd project optimises opportunities to explore both the UNCRC and DSGs, and to refocus future priorities for all learners.

*The **aspirations for childhood worldwide** as designated by the United Nations (UNCRC and SDGs) are supported by and seen in action as an integral part of Big Bocs Bwyd on a daily basis by children and families across Wales.*

Community Focused Schools

The role of schools in Wales in 2023 is a demanding and complex one. For children and young people to fulfil the aspirations of the four purposes of Curriculum for Wales, an equitable and

¹⁶ Global Sustainability Goals <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> accessed May 2023

rich offer of learning is needed to meet their needs today as well as to prepare them for their future lives. This is reliant upon, and interwoven with, collaboration with parent/carers, connection and interdependence with the wider community, and support and shared working with partner professionals in each locality.

“Community Focused Schools (CFS) play a prominent role in tackling the impact of poverty and socio-economic disadvantage on educational attainment. High quality learning and teaching has a major impact on the outcomes of socio-economically disadvantaged learners, but the home environment and the wider community are also significant influences. By working collaboratively across school, home and the community we can support our children and young people more effectively. Research shows that a well-developed community school approach can improve attendance, behaviour, attainment and aspirations of children and young people.”¹⁷

“There are three key elements to a Community Focused School.

1. Family engagement.

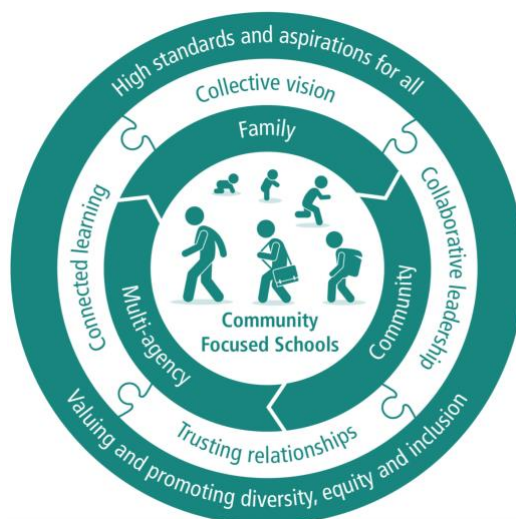
Creating meaningful opportunities for families and carers to be involved in school life and decision making and to be engaged in children’s learning.

2. Community engagement.

Encouraging schools to draw upon and utilise links with community groups and organisations and also offer support and opportunities to community members.

3. Multi-agency engagement.

Developing partnerships with wider services and interventions to remove any barriers to learning. A Community Focused School makes links with these services and supports the child and family to access the right support at the right time.”¹⁸



The three key elements of community focused schools are foundations of Big Bocs Bwyd as a community food asset. With food poverty identified as a barrier to learning, the home, the

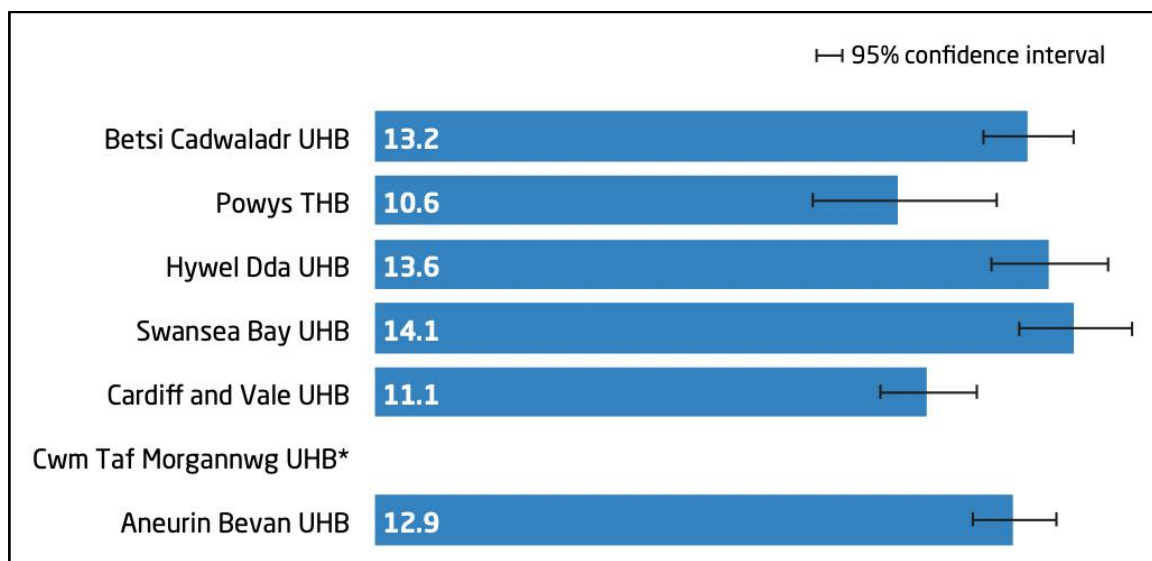
¹⁷ Community Focused Schools Welsh Government, November 2022 (<https://www.gov.wales/community-focused-schools-html>) accessed May 2023

¹⁸ Community Focused Schools Welsh Government, November 2022 (<https://www.gov.wales/community-focused-schools-html>) accessed May 2023

community and multi-agency partnerships are enablers in bringing Big Bocs Bwyd to fruition and in addressing educational attainment and positive outcomes for all learners. **Where schools have a well-developed Big Bocs Bwyd asset, the Community Focused Schools agenda is by definition, being implemented.**

Child Health

Child health has been a priority over many decades. Childhood obesity is a major worry as it reflects a poor diet of calorie dense foods and a lack of exercise. The latest data published by the *Childhood Measurement Programme*¹⁹ showed a rise in childhood obesity over the previous six years. “The trend indicates that children in Wales are more likely to be overweight or obese at reception age than children in Scotland or England.”¹⁹



Percentage of children aged 4 to five years who are obese, Child Measurement Programme, health boards 2021/22.²⁰

In order to address this concern, *Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales*²⁰ recognised that a **whole systems approach** was needed as “preventing obesity is a complex challenge, with many contributing factors acting at individual, community, societal and global levels” and that “delivery cannot be achieved by Government, the NHS or any other individual sector alone”. The *Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales* strategy is based around the themes of healthy environments, settings, people, and a leadership approach which enables change.



¹⁹ National Child Measurement Programme, Office for Health Improvements and Disparities UK Last Report June 2023

²⁰ *Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales*, Welsh Government, 2022

There is a particular **focus on early years and children**, and the *Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales* delivery plan sets out seven national priority areas:

- *“shape the food and drink environment towards sustainable and healthier options;*
- *enable active environments and spaces to encourage more movement in daily life;*
- *promote and support families to provide the best start in life;*
- *enable education settings to be places where physical and mental health remains a priority;*
- *remove barriers to reduce diet and health inequalities across the population;*
- *equitable support services for people to become or maintain a healthy weight;*
- *enhance the system of prevention which enables leadership at every level.”²¹*

While these national priorities are evidenced in the more developed Big Bocs Bwyd schools, more expertise could be built into the project in future where funding and shared professional partnerships allow. For example, the role of community dietitians and paediatricians is an area yet to be explored, and in the next phase, it would be beneficial to investigate where and how these connections can be developed.

Childhood obesity is a complex issue and factors to be considered are food deserts, deprivation, access to quality food, skills and knowledge and the food environment (kitchen, equipment etc.)

Childhood health priorities are encompassed within the Big Bocs Bwyd project. As an additional cog in the whole systems approach needed to address child health inequalities, Big Bocs Bwyd has much to offer now, and in the future, in support of child health.

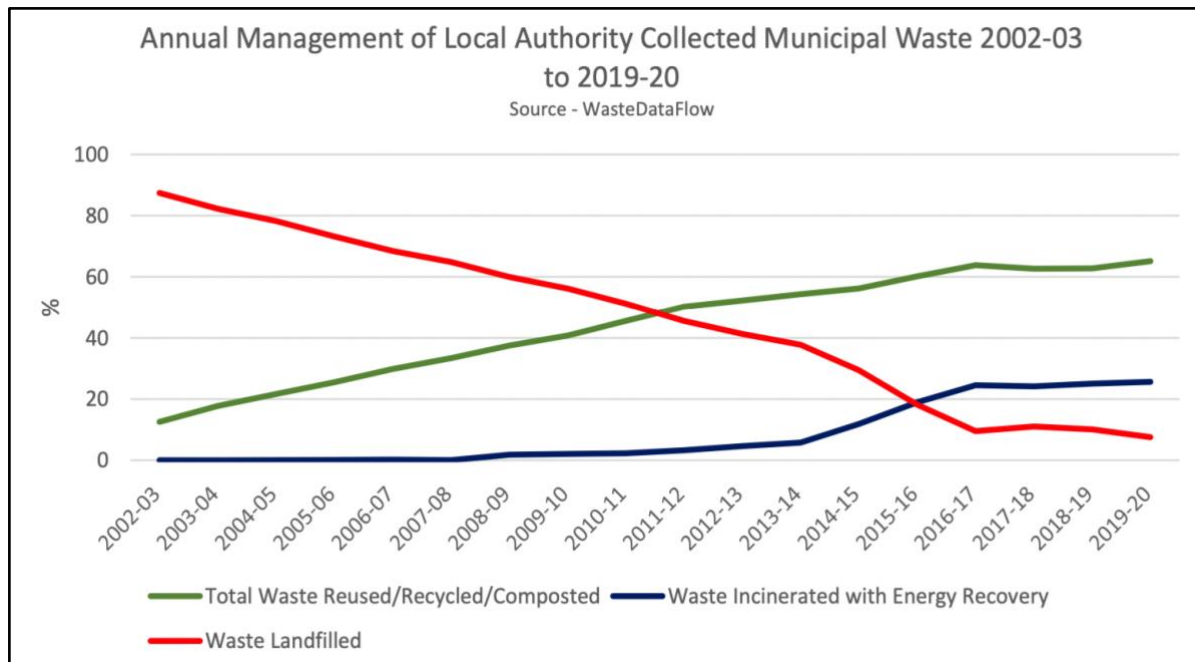
Food Waste

Welsh Government recognises that food waste is detrimental to the economy, the environment and to the people of Wales. *“Beyond Recycling” strategy (2021) commits to a 50% reduction in avoidable food waste by 2025 and a 60% reduction by 2030, against a 2006-2007 baseline.”²²* The gains made in recycling generally since 2022 are encouraging but communities could do more if there is a collective drive.

Waste Management

²¹ *Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales, Welsh Government, 2022*

²² *Beyond Recycling, Welsh Government, 2021*



A consultation is underway for a requirement for businesses to report food waste quantities (June 2023). In the consultation, Welsh Government is considering introducing a requirement for major retailers to redistribute surplus edible food.

“We will eradicate avoidable food waste. We will do this by working with businesses across the whole supply chain, from farm to fork, to minimise waste, maximise resource efficiency and working to limit food waste in all settings.”²³

Big Bocs Bwyd emulates community action in reducing food waste through its partnerships by raising awareness, modelling good practice and through direct messaging. In becoming part of the community’s infrastructure, the successful redistribution of surplus food is gaining momentum in Big Bocs Bwyd communities in Wales. The project has introduced a simple cycle of food economy in many areas.

Sustainable Food Sources

Today, more than ever, the way in which we respect the planet and how we live our lives is the focus of planning for and securing the future.

Global environmental changes are evidenced in climate change, deforestation, desertification, and damage to water-based environments such as the sea, rivers, lakes etc. Food production contributes to approximately 30% of global greenhouse emissions and occupies approximately 40% of global land.²⁴ The need for sustainable diets, i.e. those that produce the least impact on the environment and provide nutritionally rich food for generations now and in the future, while essential, are not yet part of a food system globally, nationally or locally.

²³ *Beyond Recycling, Welsh Government, 2021*

²⁴ *Food and Agriculture Organisations of the United Nations. Tackling Climate Change through Livestock. 2014*

One aim of the “Food (Wales) Bill” focused on improving the local food infrastructure by ensuring that public bodies consider how to promote the availability and affordability of sustainable, healthy locally produced food. *“This may have the secondary effect of tackling such ‘food deserts’ by increasing consumer choice within communities, creating stronger links between people and local food produce and helping to create healthier attitudes towards food.”*²⁵ Welsh Government have yet to set out a clear process for this to become enmeshed within community life.

However, the educational core of Big Bocs Bwyd is to take children’s understanding forward through the conceptual lens of sustainability and embed key principles around food ethics by growing food, using food and respecting food.

*If at a young age children develop their understanding in relation to the sources of food and the impact their food choices have on people and places, they are more likely to align their adult behaviour and choices with sustainable practice. **The aspiration and belief within the project, is that small scale personal and/or local change can, over time, lead to behavioural changes at a societal level.***

Based on Welsh Government aspirations, one can conclude that Big Bocs Bwyd is a high value project as it embodies key priorities as laid out in international and national acts, policies and conventions.

Bocs Bwyd is a future-facing project which is ripe for upscaling and development.

²⁵ Food Bill Wales, Peter Fox MS, December 2022

Education and Big Bocs Bwyd

Curriculum for Wales

The evaluation of data from the Review presents a clear picture of how well Big Bocs Bwyd facilitates an enriching and authentic curriculum offer for learners and documents the reality of how schools are progressing with turning their vision into action.

September 2022 marked the statutory date for schools in Wales to deliver Curriculum for Wales (CfW); a purpose driven curriculum. (Primary schools and Year 7 in secondary schools.)

The purpose of Curriculum for Wales is to nurture and develop children and young people as;

- Healthy, confident individuals
- Ambitious, capable learners
- Ethical, informed citizens
- Enterprising, creative contributors

Four Purposes					
Ambitious, capable learners	Healthy, confident individuals	Enterprising, creative contributors	Ethical, informed citizens		
Integral Skills					
Creativity and innovation	Critical thinking and problem-solving	Personal effectiveness	Planning and organising		
Principles for Curriculum Design					
Authentic	Evidence-based	Responsive	Inclusive	Ambitious	
Empowering	Unified	Engaging	Based on subsidiarity	Manageable	
Twelve Pedagogical Principles					
Areas of Learning and Experience					
Expressive arts	Health and well-being	Humanities	Languages, literacy and communication	Mathematics and numeracy	Science and technology.
Three Cross-curricular Responsibilities					
Literacy		Numeracy		Digital Competence	
Cross-cutting Themes					
Local, national and international context	Careers and work-related experiences	Relationships and sexuality education	Human rights education and diversity		

The Learning Partnership

The framework that CfW provides for school leaders is one of subsidiarity, whereby schools use the national framework to craft a bespoke curriculum for their learners. The pedagogical approach required by CfW to deliver the curriculum effectively, is a responsive one based in authentic learning experiences. By engaging learners in real life contexts as problem solvers, change makers and activists, the conceptual learning encompassed within the six Areas of

Learning are explored, experienced and responded to. Big Bocs Bwyd is an example of CfW coming to fruition. As one headteacher said;

'Big Bocs Bwyd is Donaldson's dream in action!'

Many respondents spoke about the high numbers of families who are experiencing poverty (with a particular emphasis on families experiencing in-work poverty) and how Big Bocs Bwyd provides easily accessible support for them. Food insecurity is a key concern for all schools in the Review in relation to their families and communities.

Data from the questionnaire supports the growing concern of school leaders of food insecurity for a growing number of families:

- 14% - Most of our families are able to provide their children with well-balanced nutritious meals every mealtime. Their behaviours have not changed.
- 66% - Most of our families are struggling to provide their children with well-balanced, nutritious meals every day but do not rely on external help. They are beginning to cut back on other things to ensure their children are well-fed each day.
- 20% - Most families have reached their financial limit and depend on external sources of help to ensure their children receive well-balanced, nutritious meals each day. They are reliant in the longer term on external sources of help to feed their families.

Some schools have adapted their Big Bocs Bwyd provision to meet the needs of their particular community. For example, one school used some of their grant funding to supplement the weekly produce by buying frozen products which were seen as more family friendly in their community. Another school found that families wanted more fresh produce when they did a parental survey, but they had not yet found a solution to addressing this.

Schools felt that Big Bocs Bwyd enabled them to address some of the nutritional concerns they have for their children and families in ways which would not have been possible before CfW. They now link, or plan to link, growing food and cooking into their curricular provision effectively.

Big Bocs Bwyd as a Vehicle for Curriculum Development and Authentic Learning

The value of the project as a vehicle for delivering Curriculum for Wales (CfW) and the purpose, potential and synergy with Big Bocs Bwyd was recognised by all respondents. Some schools said Big Bocs Bwyd aligned with their vision and aims. Schools spoke enthusiastically about the opportunities presented by Big Bocs Bwyd to develop an innovative curriculum.

The questionnaire responses indicated that 80% schools have considered the links between Big Bocs Bwyd and CfW, but not all have acted upon this yet. All schools, even those in the later phase of the project, unearthed potential opportunities to focus on food waste, sustainability, educating pupils and families around making healthy food choices, and extending community engagement.

Respondents said,

'The four purposes are what we want for our learners in the future and Big Bocs Bwyd has the potential to help pupils make positive, lifelong choices. It encourages independence and enables children to take control. It is local and meaningful to them.'

'It is a perfect fit. It totally aligns with the four purposes and provides opportunities for challenge and critical thinking. For example, our children identified a problem with surplus food being wasted so they set about accessing this and using it to cook healthy meals for others.'

'Big Bocs Bwyd provides opportunities to innovate, work with the community and make ethical choices.'

'So many authentic learning experiences stem from Big Bocs Bwyd and it is really easy to intertwine into the whole curriculum.'

'Children are becoming healthy and confident individuals who recognise the nutritional, physical, environmental and economic value of home grown and cooked food. The four purposes are running through everything that Big Bocs Bwyd has to offer.'

'Big Bocs Bwyd is giving children real skills that they will be able to use throughout their lives.'

Respondents indicated that Big Bocs Bwyd offered potential for real-life learning experiences, such as;

- Developing key skills in literacy and numeracy.
- Developing conceptual understanding in SciTech, Humanities, Health and Wellbeing, Languages, Literacy and Communication and Mathematics and Numeracy.
- Utilising the integral skills of enterprise, collaboration, communication and problem solving.
- Cooking healthy meals and growing their own produce to cook with and sell in the Big Bocs Bwyd shop.
- Financial literacy
- Farming - understanding its central place in society and engaging with it.
- Managing food waste responsibly and sustainably.
- Developing and understanding of the cultural and religious significance of food.
- Market research and advertising.
- Learning opportunities for the whole community through Big Bocs Bwyd such as food hygiene and employability skills.
- Intergenerational projects and working e.g. allotments and growing food.

Although all schools spoke very highly about the potential benefits of having Big Bocs Bwyd at the heart of their curriculum, currently some of them are missing opportunities in utilising it. In practice, some schools are fully embracing the plethora of enriching opportunities for their children's learning as part of their core offer, while others have not yet started at all.

It is notable that each school's phase (Phase 1, Phase 2, Phase 3) was not an indicator of its success or commitment to curriculum optimisation from Big Bocs Bwyd. In each phase of the project there are examples of schools from those with limited/emerging curriculum development linked to Big Bocs Bwyd, to others where Big Bocs Bwyd is embedded in their curriculum as a significant asset for purpose led learning.

*All schools understood the **potential** for developing CfW authentically through Big Bocs Bwyd. The successful **implementation** of authentic learning that directly links to Big Bocs Bwyd was strongly evidenced in some schools. Other schools have yet to make it a reality, but regardless of their current stage of operational effectiveness, all schools had identified next steps for future action.*

Big Bocs Bwyd as an Authentic Curriculum in Practice

At this point in time, where Big Bocs Bwyd is embedded and central to the learning opportunities of all learners, these schools should be considered as the **pathfinders or trailblazers** of the project as they are examples of '**Gold Standard Practice**'. Providing opportunities to learn through Big Bocs Bwyd should be a key priority and aspiration of all schools in the project, as it is not a foodbank but a community food asset.

Where Big Bocs Bwyd is embedded and strategically led, the children's experiences are rich, authentic, challenging and motivating. Children and adults learn together work together and thrive together. Examples from schools involved in the project include;

- Providing a universal offer to the children, the school and the community to access Big Bocs Bwyd.
- Preparing food.
- Cooking food.
- Growing food.
- Storing food.
- Stock rotation.
- Initial set-up of the Bocs.
- Monitoring stock levels.
- Customer service.
- Financial duties (taking money, cashing, up, banking).
- Day-to-day preparation of the Bocs.
- Recording fridge/freezer temperatures.
- Creating adverts and posters.
- Sourcing food suppliers within their community.
- Learning about customer service, handling money and food safety.
- Researching recipes that include available ingredients.
- Creating recipes based on the food available, weighing and measuring ingredients according to the recipe.
- Preparing food using a variety of cooking techniques, no cooking, hob cooking, grilling, microwaving and oven baking and roasting.
- Utilising cookery skills; chopping, paring, peeling.
- Pricing comparison between supermarkets and local shops.

- Enjoying eating with/interacting with your friends/ customers.
- Growing fruit and vegetables in the school garden/raised beds.
- Planting in different seasons for crops throughout the year.
- Harvesting food, cooking with it and sharing it with friends in a social setting.
- Finding ways to dispose of food so that waste is minimised, pickling, freezing or donating.
- Welcoming and hosting guests who visit the school.
- Serving guests and interact with them confidently.

In addition, in schools where Big Bocs Bwyd is embedded in the curriculum, this provides a stimulus for more in depth units of inquiry which arise from questions and wonderings linked to food literacy. The most popular aspects of food literacy taught in schools linked to Big Bocs Bwyd are:

86% - Diet and nutrition
 63% - Food and farming
 60% - Food hygiene
 56% - Cultural experiences and traditions
 53% - Food miles and sustainability
 50% - Planning a menu
 50% - Food poverty
 50% - Making meal plans/menus
 46% - Food preparation

Aspects of food literacy less frequently taught in schools linked to Big Bocs Bwyd are:

10% - Safe food storage
 13% - Soil quality and food/crop yield
 16% - Seasonal availability of food
 20% - Ethical sourcing and consumption of food
 23% - Exporting and importing of food
 23% - Food intolerances and food allergies
 30% - Hosting guests and serving food

The units of inquiry above, identified by schools, connect to the aspirations of the Food (Wales) Bill; this is significant, and their correspondence should be amplified.

In some cases, Big Bocs Bwyd has provided an alternative curriculum for pupils most at risk of exclusion or for supporting learners in nurture units. Significant improvements in attitudes to learning, attendance and attainment have been evidenced since it was introduced but some schools seem unclear how to extend this provision across the whole school curriculum and will need support in doing so.

In another school, by using a PPA teacher to introduce Big Bocs Bwyd into the curriculum, the project was launched with gusto and demonstrated its potential to other members of the team. This approach also provided access to Big Bocs Bwyd to all learners within the year groups involved.

Many schools have introduced successful gardening or cooking clubs as a way of utilising the opportunities around Big Bocs Bwyd but state they will find it challenging to upscale these opportunities to a whole school programme without additional funding for staff and resources.

When asked the question,

'At this point in time, is Big Bocs Bwyd a pivotal aspect of learning in your school?'

42% replied 'Yes'

58% replied 'No'

Some schools are clearly grappling with making Big Bocs Bwyd a central aspect of their curriculum, in spite of respondents' views that it is an excellent vehicle for delivering this. In most cases this is a case of having time to develop and embed the project. They reported that a core of keen and enthusiastic staff was driving Big Bocs Bwyd in their schools but unless the leadership team was on board, they simply didn't have the capacity, authority or influence to affect change.

A few schools spoke about introducing a *"gradual approach"* to learning through Big Bocs Bwyd, but this appeared to have just caused drifting and very little action. From the Review's evidence, those schools which have been part of the project since Phase 1 and are considered to be slow or reluctant participants, should now face questions of accountability for the resources they have received and explain the impact (or lack of) that this investment has had on children's wellbeing and learning. Monitoring the impact of a quality resource of such value, at school leadership level, would be an expectation for any other financial or time-based project. In a very small handful of cases where minimal school-based leadership or accountability is apparent, a direct intervention or a retrieval of the resources by the central Big Bocs Bwyd team would not now be unreasonable.

Almost half of schools reported that not all staff were on board, stating that this needed tackling at a leadership level by promoting the vision and expectations of learning through Big Bocs Bwyd and then holding people to account to achieve this. Where more junior members of staff are leading on Big Bocs Bwyd in a school, this was reported as being a very challenging and frustrating aspect of the role, leading to them feeling disheartened and overwhelmed in a few cases.

One school had been involved in Big Bocs Bwyd since Phase 1 but had rewritten their new curriculum without the inclusion of the project as school leaders were not involved in leading, implementing or monitoring the project. Others have started to use Big Bocs Bwyd for learning but are limited in going further and use it only for very basic tasks for their learners; learning which cannot be described as authentic.

When asked the question,

'Are there any barriers to Big Bocs Bwyd being used as an authentic learning experience in your school?'

75% replied - Yes

25% replied - No

Barriers to using Big Bocs Bwyd were linked to lack of leadership for the project, the need for more training, or the need for financial support. Respondents referred to the following specific areas;

- Lack of genuine interest and involvement of senior leaders.
- Changes in leadership and high staff turnover; general uncertainty of the direction of the school's future learning offer.
- A lack of initial strategic planning for the integration of Big Bocs Bwyd across the curriculum by the leadership team.
- Focusing too much on pupil progress and data driven accountability measures, even though this information was not being asked for by the leadership team in all cases.
- Staff cuts in the current financial situation.
- Staff time; the logistics of teaching more creatively with big classes and fewer support staff.
- Curriculum still too heavily literacy and numeracy focused; Big Bocs Bwyd considered as an add-on rather than a central part of the curriculum offer.
- Resistance from some staff who continue implementing pedagogy aligned to the curriculum from 2008.
- A lack of staff confidence and competence to facilitate learning through gardening, cooking and enterprise.
- The rigidity of the timetable within a secondary school context.
- The challenges of developing appropriately authentic learning experiences for very young children using Big Bocs Bwyd and/or considering its potential only for older more literate and numerate age groups.
- A lack of personal interest in food and gardening, teachers' belief that other things in the curriculum as more important.
- In a few cases, the difficulty of changing mindsets about what CfW looks like in action.

Many of the points above are generic and relate to the transition in pedagogy to CfW, while they are not specific to Big Bocs Bwyd, they present a barrier to its development.

*While the potential of Big Bocs Bwyd is recognised as a valuable vehicle for authentic learning, there is an inconsistency between the **recognition** and the **implementation** in some schools. Maximising learning opportunities from Big Bocs Bwyd must be a priority for all schools in the project moving forward.*

Concrete evidence of success, enrichment and purpose in successful Big Bocs Bwyd schools is to be celebrated and applauded and can be assigned to a strategic rather than organic approach to introducing, maintaining and embedding the project.

Leadership commitment and involvement is a critical factor in moving the project forward in all Big Bocs Bwyd Schools. Accountability to and throughout the project are pre-requisites to its success.

In providing learning opportunities that stem from Big Bocs Bwyd that link directly to Wales' specific education policy aspirations, schools where the project is embedded are creating citizens of Wales who are being, and becoming, ethically-minded and evidence-minded in relation to food literacy, food economy, health and sustainability.

Developing Food Literacy

The term 'food literacy' evoked several layers of understanding and differing interpretations from teachers with most respondents confidently explaining their interpretation of the term.

While 96% of schools understand the link between a healthy diet and children's readiness to learn, a more limited understanding of *food literacy* amongst professionals and children was uncovered, with only 58% of respondents stating that their learners would be able to explain this term accurately.

A summary of the responses indicated food literacy is considered to be an understanding of a healthy, nutritious and balanced diet, where food is respected and shared with others, an awareness of the ethical, economical and health implications of how food is grown and sourced, and our personal choices and food habits. Examples of the definition of food literacy include;

"Understanding where food comes from, having knowledge of selecting and preparing food. It is having food nutrition knowledge and understanding the impact of this on your body."

"People understanding how food is grown, harvested and then used. Also, the understanding of different foods and their benefits to the body and mind."

"The understanding of where our food comes from and its impact on our health, the environment and the economy."

"It can be classed as understanding the impact of your food choices on your health, the environment, and the economy."

When asked the questions,

Is food literacy prioritised as part of the curriculum at your school?

43% - Yes

14% - No

43% - Unsure

Would the children understand the term 'food poverty'?

42% - None of the children
42% - Some of the children
17% - Most of the children

Would your children understand the term ‘food literacy’?

33% - None of the children
58% - Some of the children
8% - Most of the children

All respondents gave confident answers when defining food literacy, even if there were variations in the detail, so it appears that there is a disparity between the adults’ understanding of it and how this was communicated with children and/or built into the curriculum.

Teachers understand the benefits to families and the community of having the Big Bocs Bwyd shop but not all are confident in optimising the opportunities for developing food literacy that it presents. In most schools, food literacy is currently taught in isolation to Big Bocs Bwyd.

The most important aspects of food literacy for children to learn about and understand were identified as:

- Healthy eating.
- Understanding the importance of a balanced diet.
- The impact of nutrition on mental health and mood.
- How to make healthy meals on a budget.
- Sources of food (animals and plants).
- Understanding the ethical implications of food choices – food miles, sourcing food as locally as possible, different types of farming, reducing food waste.
- Knowing that they have/will have choices about what they eat. (Noting that many children are not responsible for their diet.)
- Being able to grow their own food and cook with it.
- Learning important skills which will enable them to lead healthy lives.

“We need to prioritise food literacy as a central part of our curriculum, brainstorming and mapping opportunities with the whole staff.”

Some boarder aspects of food literacy such as understanding the origins of food including processes, places, people, and culture were not identified in most schools as being part of their learning offer.

Anxiety around budgets in the current climate was a huge concern for all schools when developing food literacy.

An agreed definition for the term ‘food literacy’ within the Big Bocs Bwyd project could be developed from the responses and would be helpful in agreeing on and building a deeper and more consistent understanding of it across the project. As there was a definite reluctance to

use the term 'food poverty' with children in relation to their own lives, this approach may well open the door to thought provoking conversations in a supportive and objective manner.

Preventing Food Waste

A core aim of Big Bocs Bwyd is to prevent and reduce food waste. Over 50% of children in the Review understood that by promoting and using Big Bocs Bwyd they were helping to address food waste in their community. Learners are beginning to make the link between reducing food waste, and the positive effects on the environment, as well as recognising the financial benefit of saving money as you optimise what you buy. Although 20% of pupils in the Review currently monitor and report on food waste as part of Big Bocs Bwyd, some of the schools in the Review were currently unable to describe the actions they need to take to prevent and reduce food waste.

The intention of preventing food waste made many parents/carers less reticent about accessing the Bocs for food, as they made a distinction between Big Bocs Bwyd as a community food asset and viewing it as a food bank. They stated they would not feel entitled to use a foodbank, but as one of the aims of Big Bocs Bwyd is to reduce the amount of food going to landfill, they felt at ease in accessing the service.

While some schools reported that they cannot access the quantity of food they need to meet demand, 48% of Big Bocs Bwyd schools reported that they have excess stock which may go to waste. Most Big Bocs Bwyd leads are proactive in their approach to this, but it is evident the pupils need support to identify what food waste is and time to explore creative ways of reducing it. Examples of scaffolded, direct action taken with learners to address food waste through Big Bocs Bwyd include;

- Ensuring that stock is rotated and used by its sell-by date.
- Using surplus food to cook meals with and then freeze them for consuming later.
- Growing food in school, harvesting it and using the food immediately to create meals and snacks - no waste.
- Using food apps which help to locate surplus food in stores/shops in their community and inform parents/carers to stop it going to waste.
- Sourcing local produce for sale within Big Bocs Bwyd and advertising on notice boards which farm or orchard it has come from.
- Purchasing dried, frozen, tinned and other long-life foods for the Big Bocs Bwyd so that the shelf life is greater.
- Using surplus food in catering lessons in secondary schools.
- Giving it to pupils to take home (to families most in need).
- Setting up a stall on the school yard to sell/give away (if the dates are the next day) to parents at the end of the school day.
- Freezing food for up to a month, using it as needed within that time.
- Donating left-over tomatoes to a shop for them to make chutney. (The teacher would like to do this in school with the children once they have better kitchen facilities.)
- Composting it where appropriate.
- Offering to clubs in their community.
- Donating it to a local farmer to feed his pigs.

- If all else fails, then the food ends up in the bin it if after sell by date.

In one school it came to light that pupils are not attending school on cookery days as they can't afford to buy the ingredients for the lesson, so the Big Bocs Bwyd lead/volunteers intend to create bundles of ingredients in line with the recipes for that week.

Badging Big Bocs Bwyd as a way to reduce food waste has enticed parents/carers to view their actions (in using the Bocs) as good citizenship, and consequently increased the number of people accessing it.

Learners are keen to be more proactive in reducing food waste but need support to do so. Unlike general re-cycling of other materials such as paper or plastic, which is now a habitual behaviour, reducing food waste is not yet part of their lives and it needs modelling, exploring and discussing. For example, a focus on food waste from schools dinners and thinking about how this can be reduced or used in other ways (such as composting) may be an accessible point to begin the conversation.

Monitoring the amount of food waste from Big Bocs Bwyd is developing within the project. This practice is more embedded in some schools more so than others. By continuing to bring this into discussions with children, and also with colleagues during networking days, it will prompt Big Bocs Bwyd leads to take action and maintain it as a priority.

Children's Understanding of Food and Big Bocs Bwyd

Responses from the questionnaires indicated that in Big Bocs Bwyd primary schools, it is mostly older children who are involved in the project, and in secondary schools it is their younger learners. The children involved in Big Bocs Bwyd either practically, or by the information shared with them in their class-based learning, were enthusiastic and motivated to use and develop it.

Many schools spoke about the way that Big Bocs Bwyd links to the Future Generations Act (FGA), the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Some schools are utilising Big Bocs Bwyd to bring these policies to life, but others cited examples of 'learning about' them in class, many had yet to make the transition of utilising Big Bocs Bwyd as way of showing these in action. Where this had been embedded respondents said;

"We have had a much stronger focus on children's rights to healthy and nutritious food when planning experiences using Big Bocs Bwyd, but this is not yet consistently used across the school."

"The pupils have had a strong voice in setting up and running the provision."

"We looked at our whole curriculum design through Big Bocs Bwyd and have linked it to the UNCRC and new curriculum. This work was positively recognised in our recent Estyn inspection."

Learner Workshops

Learner workshops were undertaken in twelve Big Bocs Bwyd schools. The ages of the children involved in the workshops ranged from three years old (Nursery children) to fourteen years old. (Year 9 children).

In 60% of the schools in the Review, the children were directly involved in the running of the Bocs and about 80% of the children were involved in some aspect of the operation, e.g. marketing, cooking, preparing recipe cards as well as running it. All of the children who were part of the Review were aware of the Big Bocs Bwyd on their school site and could explain how it was used. They had many suggestions of how the Big Bocs Bwyd could be even better.

The children in the Review workshops were selected and were directly involved in the running of the Big Bocs Bwyd at their school. It was difficult to ascertain to what extent other children in each school were involved in the project and if they had the same level of understanding as those in the workshops.

Through a series of structured tasks presented in the learner workshops, children explored the scarcity/abundance of food around the world, the purpose of Big Bocs Bwyd in their community and their understanding of the word 'hunger'.

Task 1

What the world eats²⁶; I see, I think, I wonder...²⁷

(Pictures of food for a family for one week from different countries around the world.)

Learner responses (examples):

I see...

- I see kids having fun and there's also a lot of food on the table.
- I see children enjoying the sweets and fruit.
- I see lots of unhealthy food.
- I see loads of vegetables.
- I see a family of four with lots of different food.
- I see a happy family.
- I see people with not much food.
- I see lots of traditional food.

I Think...

- I think they are in a poorer country or continent.
- I think the family is saving their food and they like fish and noodles.
- I think they're having a pizza party.
- I think they are getting ready to have a great feast with loads of vegetables and food.
- I think they are donating the food to a foodbank.
- I think they will give the food to the homeless because there is only four of them.

²⁶ *What the World Eats* - Manzel, Peter, 2008. Tricycle Pres

²⁷ *I see, I think, I wonder* - Harvard University Thinking Routines "A Culture of Thinking"

I think they have a lot of money to buy this food.
I think they are selling the food for money.
I think it's about having a variety of food to eat to stay healthy.
I think the food looks healthy and not junk food

I Wonder...

I wonder will they eat all the food themselves or will they donate to charities and food banks.
I wonder why is there so much junk food.
I wonder what the traditional foods are called.
I wonder how they cook the food.
I wonder how much money they have and if they eat well.
I wonder if they are celebrating something.
I wonder why some countries have food you might see in Tesco and some have sacks of food such as peas, rice.
I wonder how they get the food, depending on where they live.
I wonder why they have different amounts of food to each other in the photos.

Summary of Task 1

Initially none of the children made the connection between the images of families from around the world to the variety, quality and quantity of food which each family had to feed themselves for one week.

As they explored the idea of food availability/scarcity around the world further, their interest and curiosity strengthened and revealed insights into their current level of knowledge.

As their thinking developed through the task to the 'I wonder...' stage, it is clear that they had ideas that would act as an excellent catalyst for a more in-depth inquiry into food; food equity, tradition and culture, transportation, cooking, locality and sustainability and more.

Teachers explained that in some cases, the group of children were from a school club, such as the Eco Club, and not from one class, so taking an inquiry approach into food forward, would not have worked in a day-to-day situation. However, where the group involved was a class of children, teachers expressed the curriculum was already planned, or that they didn't have the autonomy or authority to make decisions around learning.

Teachers within the schools visited as part of the research, respected and valued the inquiry approach of 'I See..., I Think..., I Wonder...' but did not commit to moving on to a unit of inquiry which stemmed from their group's interests. It was not that they were resistant, in fact the opposite, they expressed they would welcome an opportunity to take the ideas further if the opportunity arose.

Task 2

Group thoughts on Big Bocs Bwyd

Children were asked questions as a group relating to food and Big Bocs Bwyd.

Q1 Where does our food come from?

The majority of learners came up with lists of shops that supply the food. There was limited awareness of the sources of their food i.e. plant or animal based, and that food may be from different countries.

Some children knew that they could grow food in their garden, or at school to sell at the Big Bocs Bwyd. Some children were aware of the potential to grow their own food but did not give detail as to what this might entail.

Some children knew of plans that the school had to start an allotment.

In all schools, there was little mention of farming, food production or transportation of food from other countries. Food economy was deemed to be what was provided in shops and supermarkets and consumed in the home or eating venues, such as fast food places, take-aways and restaurants.

Q2 Why is eating well important?

All groups saw the link with eating well and staying healthy. This has clearly been a priority for schools in securing the children's wellbeing.

Some learners had greater awareness than others of the link between quality food, a variety of food and their health. They talked about good food choices but couldn't always state what these might be. The responses were generally stage appropriate and for the youngest learners there was greater adult input for the scaffolding of ideas and vocabulary.

All groups of children, regardless of age, communicated that food is needed for growth, energy, mental as well as physical health.

One older group of children (Y9) discussed body image and eating well as being aspects of both their physical and mental health. They also indicated that they are not responsible for the food choices for their home and that a lack of money might prevent the healthier choices they'd like to make, being made. They expressed embarrassment about what they ate sometimes due to the limited choice at home.

The connection with dietary habits and future health outcomes was not well understood or highlighted by any of the groups of learners.

Q3. How might Big Bocs Bwyd help us/my community?

All groups saw the financial benefits to users of Big Bocs Bwyd and some recognised that it created an income for the school to use.

Many made the link between Big Bocs Bwyd and reducing food waste.

Some recognised environmental factors associated with using a local food centre e.g. enabling local users to walk rather than take the car to shop.

One group recognised how the pupils benefitted from their involvement in the Big Bocs Bwyd project as they learnt about food, growing plants and handling money.

Another group recognised that the food from Big Bocs Bwyd often helped parents/carers to make healthier decisions about how and what to feed their family. They noted that suggestions from volunteers about what or how to cook unfamiliar foods helped their families.

Q4. What would make Big Bocs Bwyd even better?

Nearly all groups wanted to make the shop bigger, selling more food, staying open for longer and getting more people to use it. Some groups of children wanted greater variety and to make the food on offer more diverse. Vegetarian options and freshly prepared ready meals to take away were also ideas that they put forward.

Making Big Bocs Bwyd more visible on the school site was suggested so that a greater number of people would use it. Suggestions such as moving its site, putting up signs and having a café might encourage people use it more.

All groups suggested that the Big Bocs Bwyd should be open for longer with one group proposing that if it was open in school hours, then pupils could buy a snack there in their break.

Pupils made the link with environmental factors such as not using plastic bags, selling seeds to grow food, and using food waste to create compost. One group suggested that donations should be made from Big Bocs Bwyd to local charities as part of community interdependence; “they help us, so we should help them.”.

Summary of Task 2

From the sample of groups, the importance of farming and food production in relation to sourcing and origins of food is not well understood by most of the learners involved in this task, regardless of age or group. There was a range in the depth of understanding about where our food comes from, with most responses relating to supermarkets and shops.

There was a clear understanding that eating well helps our health, provides energy and is essential for growth. This has been a priority for many schools through initiatives such as the Healthy Schools Award. The long term health benefits of eating well appears to be a gap in learning for the pupils who engaged in the Review although they did comment on the short term benefits of feeling well and energetic.

Food poverty was discussed with the children in a stage appropriate way. Some children expressed that their families are not always in a position to offer them healthy options and many understood that their community was facing a challenge in relation to rising costs and staying well. They appreciate that Big Bocs Bwyd is an important and helpful way to support their community. They value it. They want to engage with Big Bocs Bwyd further; their enthusiasm was evident in all schools and across all the age groups.

Learners were able to talk about the opportunities that Big Bocs Bwyd offers more generically and had numerous ideas as to how it could move forward. They are committed to and enthusiastic about the project and explained that they'd like to do more with Big Bocs Bwyd as part of their learning offer, but their schools days are already very busy with other things.

Pupil perspective about wishing to do more with Big Bocs Bwyd aligns with the responses from some teachers who stated that their school's focus is still on an approach more linked to the previous curriculum. It echoes the view that school leadership to drive Big Bocs Bwyd is needed to make this paradigm shift to authentic learning and more fully by utilising it as a learning asset.

Task 3

One Word - Hunger

Children were asked to think quietly about the word '**hunger**' and what this meant to them. They were then asked to record a single word or short phrase to reflect their understanding.

Responses included:

- I'm so grateful for the food I have.
- You want to eat a lot of food.
- Not eating for a while.
- You don't feel like yourself.
- Feeling angry and sad.
- Starve
- You get dizzy.
- Charity.
- You're too tired to think properly.
- Food giving.
- After a while it makes you ill.
- No food.

Summary of Task 3

The responses to this task are the most emotive ones as many of them demonstrate that children who took part in activities for this Review have experienced hunger first-hand, for example, 'You get dizzy.', 'You're too tired to think properly.'. As a child, if you are well-nourished you are less likely to have such accurate insights.

This task reinforced the reality of low levels of food security for many children in Wales; some of whom have directly represented themselves here through their responses. It is a timely reminder that one of the core purposes of Big Bocs Bwyd is to ensure that no child, within their community, is hungry.

Schools' Plans for Developing Learning through Big Bocs Bwyd

Schools involved in the Review were open about their current stance with CfW and the progress made to date. Even where schools felt they had not had the best of starts with Big Bocs Bwyd, they have ambition and commitment to improve and develop Big Bocs Bwyd as an authentic learning resource.

When asked the question,

'What's next for your school's curriculum?'

Many responses (whether through the Questionnaire, Structured Conversations or High Level Engagement Workshops) indicated clear intentions and ambition for the Big Bocs Bwyd project that should come to fruition during the next academic year (2023/24).

- Following the Review workshop with children, a few schools want to introduce Inquiry Based Learning and feel that Big Bocs Bwyd will provide an excellent vehicle for delivering this.
- A number of schools spoke about updating their curricular themes and ensuring that Big Bocs Bwyd is more firmly embedded into these.
- A much stronger focus on the authentic learning opportunities which exist within the local community, embracing learning experiences that are on their doorstep.
- Many stated a more deliberate and intentional focus on the concepts and skills that children can take with them for life that evolve from engagement with Big Bocs Bwyd.
- An ambition to grow food and offer cooking as a central part of the curriculum so that children are going home excited and enthused about cooking and replicating these skills at home. (Outlined by several schools)
- A focus on how to embed Big Bocs Bwyd within the whole school curriculum rather than it being an extra-curricular activity or part of specialist provision for a minority of pupils.
- A number of schools are in the process of developing kitchen areas so that regular cooking sessions with children are easier to facilitate.
- Most schools are looking to develop further opportunities to promote gardening across the school year. But many find it difficult to secure enough support to deliver and sustain gardening enterprise with children. Many volunteers and staff members do not feel that they have the necessary skills to deliver this. Budget cuts in most schools are making small group work such as this, harder to facilitate.
- Ensuring that parents/carers are aware of the new curriculum and supporting the learning within schools.
- An ongoing focus on mental health and wellbeing which has clearly become an even greater area of concern since the pandemic.

“It is a wonderful resource with so much potential.”

“A fantastic opportunity to develop real-life skills within an authentic context.”

“It is the new curriculum. You can tick every box through Big Bocs Bwyd in a really natural way. It can be what you want it to be. Everything we have tried has been a success and it is acting as a springboard for other community events.”

“You need to free up curriculum time to build it in, otherwise it is just a community poverty project.”

“You need to make it specific to your own community and think how you can embed it without it being seen as a charity.”

“Some teachers need more support than others to plan flexibly and creatively.”

“It opens up children’s tastebuds and encourages them to try new things.”

“Ensuring that the next generation of adults are educated about nutrition, the environment and their carbon footprint is important, and Big Bocs Bwyd can help you to do this.”

“It really enhances your curriculum and children will love it.”

“Get a full team on board before you start as it can easily become overwhelming.”

“The learning experiences just keep on coming and the children’s ideas are boundless.”

“It’s hard work but very worth it for the outcomes that you get. It ticks all the boxes for the new curriculum in a natural and organic way.”

Learning through Big Bocs Bwyd and Strategic Governance

It is evident that Governors understand and value more greatly the learning opportunities relating to Big Bocs Bwyd in schools where groups of learners take responsibility for running Big Bocs Bwyd and then report directly to the school’s governors.

When asked the question,

What do School Governors understand about Big Bocs Bwyd and how has information been shared with the GB?

From the Structured Conversations schools reported that;

- Governors are overwhelmingly supportive of the Big Bocs Bwyd project and many offer practical help to assist in the running of the shop, making food donations, collecting food donations and the gardening aspects of the curriculum.

- All Big Bocs Bwyd schools report regularly on the development of the project at GB meetings and in a few schools, it is the Big Bocs Bwyd ambassadors (pupils) who give updates to governors.
- In several schools, having Big Bocs Bwyd on site has got a number of governors, and the community groups they are linked to, much more involved in the life of the school.
- In one school, parents/carers who volunteer in the shop have subsequently become parent governors which has been beneficial.
- In some cases, where local councillors are on the Governing Body, this has been instrumental in getting the Local Authority to support the setting up and running of Big Bocs Bwyd.
- Where governors are directly involved in the running or supporting of Big Bocs Bwyd, they can be very strong advocates for the provision.

Buy-in from the governing body at the membership stage of becoming a Big Bocs Bwyd school is seen to be an essential aspect in securing the commitment to the project in the longer term. It is not currently clear to Big Bocs Bwyd leads whether this is part of the agreement between Big Bocs Bwyd project leads and partner schools. Governor buy-in needs to be strengthened at the initial stage of becoming a Big Bocs Bwyd school and reinforced for current Big Bocs Bwyd schools.

As a next step for Governors, it would be valuable to develop a succinct online learning tool aimed at governing bodies to develop their awareness of the project around Wales, beyond their immediate community. Schools indicated that governors would benefit from short video of case studies that told the story of Big Bocs Bwyd from different perspectives; those of the children, the professional team and community members, which could be shared during a governor body meeting to assist governors in learning about the benefits and challenges of Big Bocs Bwyd. (A film clip of no more than ten minutes in length.)

The immediate and longer term future and growth of Big Bocs Bwyd as an educational opportunity is intrinsically linked to the value that Governing Bodies around Wales place on it. At this juncture, the governing body's understanding of Big Bocs Bwyd is essential in keeping it on the radar and in challenging school leadership to prioritise Big Bocs Bwyd in School Improvement Plans.

Ideas and Solutions for Increasing Confidence and Competence of the Professional Team

The conversations around Big Bocs Bwyd with local leaders of the project revealed a willingness not only to share the leadership, logistical and practical frustrations they had encountered, but more importantly to offer ideas and solutions:

When asked the question,

'What would help to further develop the skills and understanding of the teaching team at your school in relation to Big Bocs Bwyd?'

Big Bocs Bwyd leads openly expressed that were not confident or experienced enough to deliver whole staff training in their own schools about the project and CfW, nor had they

developed an action plan to include this. All spoke highly positively about the curriculum training they had attended as part of the Big Bocs Bwyd project and would like their whole staff team to receive this.

Other suggestions and insights to develop the skills of the teaching team included:

- CPD in inquiry-based learning as a pedagogical approach.
- Whole school CPD opportunities around food hygiene, cooking and growing food.
- CPD and expert support from Health colleagues on the impact of hunger and poverty on wellbeing from a health-related perspective, taking account of health markers and child development milestones. Teachers are seeking a more thorough grounding in Health beyond the traditional school curriculum.
- Having a clear definition for the terms used in the project to avoid ambiguity and misconceptions amongst the professional team e.g. food literacy, food poverty, food insecurity, the economy of food etc.
- CPD/mentoring in keeping an allotment e.g. the structure and initial development, safe and eco-friendly ways to improve the soil, how to use and care for gardening tools correctly, eco-planting, growing crops, rotating crops to optimise yield and harvesting techniques. What to plant - where, when and how.
- CPD in farming techniques in 21stc and access to the expertise of real farmers and farms.
- CPD in the food industry. The war in Ukraine and subsequent shortage in supermarkets prompted further interest in understanding Wales' reliance on other countries for food as a commodity.
- Maximising the opportunities to build learning around the local community by engaging with special interest groups e.g. allotment owners, shop/café owners.
- Making stronger links with other schools using Big Bocs Bwyd by introducing and utilising a buddy system for new Big Bocs Bwyd schools.
- Planning in staff time for exploring and utilising the existing resources on the Big Bocs Bwyd website.
- CPD in food safety; storage, food intolerances and food allergies.
- CPD in foraging for food.
- CPD in traditional forms of food storage - pickling, cold storage, salting and hanging and drying foods.
- Social media training for sharing messages and telling their own stories about Big Bocs Bwyd.
- Support with curriculum design; a focus on how to develop a more flexible curriculum in secondary schools.
- Different ways to access information - in-person training, online courses, network events and an online forum.
- A wider group of staff being able to access the training and networking events with a stipend to cover staffing costs.

Recommendations for Education and Bog Bocs Bwyd

1. Establish with new and current Big Bocs Bwyd schools the expectations and the essential component of senior leadership buy-in within the Big Bocs Bwyd project. This is to ensure that curricular opportunities from Big Bocs Bwyd are maximised and developed strategically within each school and community, for example, designating member of the SLT as the Big Bocs Bwyd lead, and Big Bocs Bwyd featuring in each school's School Improvement Plan. These should both be considered a non-negotiable.
2. Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with Big Bocs Bwyd schools which requires Governing Body and Senior Leadership support and approval for authentic learning through Big Bocs Bwyd. This should highlight the curricular expectations and accountability measures along the lines of a service agreement.
3. Explore options to fund release time for SLT/Big Bocs Bwyd co-ordinators for educational planning and monitoring for Big Bocs Bwyd across the school.
4. Establish criteria which shows a pathway to growth and effectiveness for authentic learning in Big Bocs Bwyd schools so that next steps and concrete examples or case studies are shared.
5. Develop a buddy system for schools new to Big Bocs Bwyd. Connect each one with those schools considered to have established good practice. (Not necessarily schools from an earlier phase with schools from a later phase of the project, as some schools in later phases have already implemented far more than 'older' Big Bocs Bwyd schools.)
6. Review the suggested areas of CPD from the section and develop a programme over the medium term with appropriate materials. This could comprise of modules for in-person training, online training and packages of training. Some modules may require input from other sectors, e.g. Health and Farming.
7. Develop materials for a "Train the Trainer" approach to be used in schools and delivered by the Big Bocs Bwyd co-ordinator for a basic introduction to Big Bocs Bwyd. The intention is to use this as a compulsory module with whole school team at the onset of the Big Bocs Bwyd project either through an INSET day or through a series of Twilights. Alternatively, this could be delivered by commissioned trainers to deliver the training to others.
8. Develop a glossary of terms for the Big Bocs Bwyd project to be shared on the website. E.g. food literacy, food economy etc.
9. Develop educational case studies from each school with an expectation on them to provide a minimum number each year for their web page to keep the project current and maintain momentum.
10. Ensure that marketing and signage around Big Bocs Bwyd include the message about reducing food waste.
11. Model, discuss and share ideas with children and families about how ways to reduce food waste.
12. Increase the visibility of food waste as part of the curriculum offer for children. Explore how food waste is reduced at a household level, school level and on a big scale, e.g. for a town or city.
13. Develop online resources for schools to access in this area.
14. Seek links with industry and service providers to expand the project's knowledge base.

15. Encourage schools to review the aims of current Welsh Government documentation - *Beyond Recycling, Welsh Government, 2021* and to use its messages in conversations with children.

Community Engagement and Big Bocs Bwyd

When engaging with the community, researchers held dialogue with:

- Parents/Carers
- Volunteers
- Multi-agency Partners

Almost all schools felt that Big Bocs Bwyd presented fantastic opportunities to engage more strongly with the local community. For many schools, their initial interest in Big Bocs Bwyd was driven by food poverty within the locality of their school's community.

They reported that accessibility to food provision for members of their community had become much stronger as a result of Big Bocs Bwyd. They also said that Big Bocs Bwyd had helped them to understand the wider needs of families and had led to more creativity in finding ways to support them. Most schools operate set opening hours, 63% of schools operate Big Bocs Bwyd one or two days per week and 10% of schools operate Big Bocs Bwyd more than three times per week.

“There was a lot of stigma around food poverty initially, but we can't see the school without Big Bocs Bwyd now.”

One school spoke about how Big Bocs Bwyd fed into their whole school improvement priority focused on wellbeing which was underpinned by the Future Generations Act (2015). Other schools spoke of the more recent links to the Community Focused Schools (CFA) agenda and how Big Bocs Bwyd enabled them to bring some of their ideas in this area to fruition. 58% of schools in the Review felt they were using the CFS scheme effectively.

“Big Bocs Bwyd has come at the perfect time for us to develop our new curriculum and it has been a springboard to strengthen links with our local community.”

Reflecting and endorsing the aims of Community Focused Schools, Big Bocs Bwyd links the family, the community and multi-agency partners.

Addressing food poverty by having a Big Bocs Bwyd on-site was the catalyst for many schools in becoming part of project due to its practical, tangible support for the community. Big Bocs Bwyd has strengthened relationships with families and built new relationships across communities in a number of schools.

Parents/Carers - Nutrition and Wellbeing

When parents/carers prioritise their own nutrition and maintain a well-nourished lifestyle, it can have numerous positive effects on their children's wellbeing and development. Adequate nutrition is crucial for both physical and cognitive growth, and parents who prioritise their own health set an excellent example for their children to follow.

The benefits that children can experience when their parents are well nourished include:

Improved Pregnancy Outcomes

A well-nourished mother is more likely to have a healthy pregnancy, which directly impacts the child's development. Proper nutrition during pregnancy reduces the risk of complications, promotes foetal growth, and enhances the baby's overall health.

Healthy Breastfeeding

Breast milk is the ideal source of nutrition for infants, and a well-nourished mother is more likely to produce sufficient milk of good quality. Breastfeeding provides essential nutrients, antibodies, and bonding opportunities, contributing to the child's optimal growth and development.

Nutritional Education

Parents/carers who prioritise their own nutrition often become more knowledgeable about healthy eating habits. This knowledge can be passed on to their children, teaching them the importance of a balanced diet, portion control, and the benefits of consuming fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins.

Reduced Risk of Nutritional Deficiencies

When parents/carers maintain a well-balanced diet, they are less likely to experience nutritional deficiencies. This reduces the risk of passing such deficiencies on to their children. For example, a mother with adequate iron levels is less likely to have a child with iron deficiency anaemia.

Positive Eating Habits

Children learn by observing their parents/carers, and when parents/carers prioritise their own nutrition, they provide a positive model for their children to emulate. Regular family meals, with a focus on nutritious food choices and preparing meals together, can encourage children to develop healthy eating habits and make better food choices throughout their lives.

Enhanced Cognitive Development

Proper nutrition plays a crucial role in brain development. When parents/carers consume a nutrient-rich diet, they provide their bodies with the necessary vitamins, minerals, and fatty acids that support cognitive function, positively impacting on their own wellbeing. This gain is of benefit to their child's

cognitive development too, as parental/carer's optimised health supports them in registering and acting upon their child's development in all areas.

Reduced Risk of Chronic Diseases

A well-nourished lifestyle can help parents/carers prevent chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers. By adopting healthy eating habits and engaging in regular physical activity, parents/carers reduce the risk of these diseases for themselves which assists their parenting, and also sets a foundation for their children's long-term health.

Improved Emotional Wellbeing

Proper nutrition is not only vital for physical health but also plays a significant role in mental and emotional wellbeing. When parents/carers maintain a balanced diet, they are more likely to have stable energy levels, improved mood, and reduced stress.

This positive emotional state can create a nurturing environment for their children, fostering healthy emotional development.

Parents/carers who prioritise their own nutrition provide a multitude of benefits to their children. By setting a positive example, educating their children about nutrition, and maintaining a well-balanced lifestyle, parents/carers can contribute to their children's physical, cognitive, and emotional wellbeing. The impact of parental/carer nutritional choices and behaviours extends far beyond the immediate benefits, as it sets the stage for a lifetime of healthy habits and a foundation for a thriving future.

Parents and Carers in the Review

Parents/carers interviewed spoke positively of the support the service gave them financially, particularly at a time of rapidly increasing food prices. The principle of payment by donation meant that they were always able to provide a meal for their family. In some schools, Big Bocs Bwyd has broken down barriers to families asking for support more readily.

67% of schools in the Review stated some of their families experienced food poverty and 33% stated most of their families experienced it.

Parents/carers appreciated that the service was located at the schools and the consequent convenience entailed. They found the volunteers running the Big Bocs Bwyd helpful, friendly, non-judgemental and supportive, often offering suggestions of new foods to try and putting together items to create a meal with recipe suggestions.

Many parents/carers mentioned that they liked the way in which the children were involved in the running of the Big Bocs Bwyd and felt that it gave them valuable life skills. More parents/carers were motivated to use the service as their children spoke about the project at home.

Around a quarter of the users of Big Bocs Bwyd said that they enjoyed the social connection of coming to the Big Bocs Bwyd and it was helping to tackle social isolation in their area.

Building a community space around Big Bocs Bwyd where parents/carers can meet each other and school staff on a less formal basis was seen as very positive. This offered scope in some schools for more inter-generational work in the community.

Most parents/carers felt that there was sufficient amounts and variety of foods. Many commented on the quality of items, for example one parent said they had bought *Tesco Finest* produce at the Big Bocs Bwyd and this would be out of his price range within the supermarket. There were instances though, where parents commented on food deliveries not being of sufficient quantity and rationing of items was noted. Schools had worked around this by preparing food bags and had restricted the self-selection of items on some occasions. This challenge of accessing adequate quantities of food supplies was echoed by professional colleagues through the High Level Engagement workshops.

Some parents/carers suggested that more vegetarian options would be welcome, along with more fresh produce such as fruit and vegetables. Some parents/carers requested that toiletries and baby goods be available (although some of the shops already provide this). In one school where they had a good relationship with the local baker's shop, this proved very popular with parents/carers. Other parents stated that due to high energy prices they were always on the look-out for foods which would not need to much time cooking so that they could minimise their use of gas and electricity.

The children also felt that the food could be more diverse to reflect the different cultures in their local community. They also thought more could be made of using local shops to encourage donations.

Some schools asked parents/carers for recommendations of what they would like to see sold and then sought to source those items to supplement donations from shops. This was something that parents/carers liked, feeling that their voices had been heard.

Nearly all the parents/carers would like to see the service provision extended for longer hours and for a greater number of days. Having access to the service in the school holidays would be beneficial.

Some parents/carers said that they had only just learnt about the Big Bocs Bwyd and thought that more could be done to publicise it within the local community. Many of the children also thought that more could be done to promote the benefits of using the Big Bocs Bwyd. Some had created adverts which were shared on social media whilst others made suggestions such as displaying more signage, putting up posters, promotion at school assemblies, greater use of social media, and special events such as bake sales.

What parents/carers said about Big Bocs Bwyd...

"I still go to the supermarket but use the Big Bocs Bwyd to top up my weekly shop."

"I plan my meals around what I get in Big Bocs Bwyd."

"It's invaluable. I have four children and things have got a lot harder recently to feed six of us. I use it every time it's open."

"It's friendly, non-judgemental, with nice staff who are helpful. The children like choosing things, I meet new people and I can practise my Welsh."

"I have to manage on £40 a week, I have 2 days-worth of electricity left and half a week of petrol left to travel to work in Carmarthen. I've had food from Big Bocs Bwyd today to make packed lunches for the children for the week."

"A 'pay as you feel' shop means that it is recognised as not being a food bank and so I feel like I'm not judged. That matters a lot."

"It's my weekly highlight. Our Thursday treat!"

"It's a Godsend. I rely on it."

What parents said they'd like to see next for Big Bocs Bwyd...

"More fresh foods e.g. fruit and vegetables."

"Demand outstrips supply and so choice can be limited some weeks, especially if it has high usage. I'd like the school to order more."

"Open for longer. I would like it if it was open during school holidays."

"Would be good if toiletries were sold too."

"Not always reflective of the multi-cultural needs of our community. There's little Halal food on offer and this then limits my choice."

"Baby formula and baby items like nappies would be a huge help to me."

"Better messaging about what it's for and who it's for. Some parents won't use it as they don't consider themselves needy enough. I've heard people say; "I'll leave it for the people who need it.".

"More stock would be good, especially fresh food items. This sometimes has to be limited in order to share it out. It may be pre-bagged rather than self-selected."

"Offering meal suggestions and recipe cards would be helpful, I can be a bit put off by things I don't know how to cook."

"I'd really appreciate pet food being stocked. That's gone up a lot."

"I'd like suggestions of meals that don't use too much electricity."

Targeting specific families in need for additional support from Big Bocs Bwyd is not yet well established in schools, although all were intent of developing this in the foreseeable future. About half of schools do not approach families directly who may need support for fear of offending them. Several schools said that where they had concerns, direct conversations with the member of staff who knows the family best was their most successful way of engaging them in Big Bocs Bwyd. Hosting other school events around the Big Bocs Bwyd space so that families can see what is on offer was another successful approach. In some schools where Family Engagement Officers were employed, there was a strong feeling that they know the families well and were able to approach them directly if they had concerns. Creating an informal meeting space around the Big Bocs Bwyd had led to several schools being able to engage in casual conversations with families in need much more easily. This provided an opening to engage with parents/carers for targeted events and/or support.

Families were identified by/through:

- Conversations with other agencies. The service is flagged up in LAC reviews, social care and Safeguarding meetings.
- Concerns around a child's wellbeing.
- Interactions with parents that raise concerns.
- Anecdotal information from the volunteers who run Big Bocs Bwyd and live in the local community.
- Admin and support staff who live in the local community are often approached informally by parents who are struggling.
- ELSA staff monitor learner wellbeing very closely and report any concerns to SLT. This often included financial worries.
- Midday Supervisors are asked to monitor children who might not be eating their lunch or who present as overly hungry and report any concerns to SLT.
- Sending out questionnaires to parents and carers and targeting families who respond to this.
- It is not necessarily the poorest families who use the service. More affluent families often seem less anxious about using it as a result of the emphasis on sustainability and minimising food waste.
- "Raffle prizes" were given to a number of families at Christmas, supposedly on a random basis, in a couple of schools. This enabled the school to support families who did not seem willing to ask for help and was intended to show them what was available.

While schools have strong systems in place for monitoring child wellbeing, there seem to be few formal systems in place for monitoring family wellbeing. Pastoral leads in secondary schools monitor the wellbeing of children around whom there are concerns and offer support to the family if needed. In primary schools, regular child wellbeing screening was more common, it was reported that as part of this, schools know the families in need and check-in with them regularly as part of the on-going contact and dialogue with families, often undertaken by class teachers. One school uses a wellbeing tracker every half term for families based on informal conversations with parents around school. This has been particularly successful where there are social spaces for parents to congregate around the Big Bocs Bwyd.

Staff facilitating the service noted Big Bocs Bwyd has been very positive in helping to reduce the stigma around food poverty. It is a pleasant resource for families to access. The Big Bocs Bwyd provision is visually appealing and has been developed to have a “farm shop” feel to it; families and other community members have enjoyed using this space and socialised more with the benefit of improved wellbeing.

The fact that access to food and the pressure on families has been somewhat alleviated is positive. Many parents/carers rely on it as a core service in supporting their family.

Getting some harder to reach parents on board as volunteers has been positive - a real win!

Volunteers

58% of schools now use volunteers to run some aspects of Big Bocs Bwyd led by staff from the school. Schools understand that getting reliable volunteers on board is crucial but the retention of securing regular time from volunteers can be challenging. This is something that needs to be constantly focused on by schools. Volunteers take on a large portion of the leg-work in many Big Bocs Bwyd schools. Without their contribution, responsibility for running the shop falls on the professional team who more often than not, don't have the capacity for this on a daily basis. Sharing good practice ideas for recruiting and retaining good volunteers, especially within a multi-cultural community are much needed as a next step.

When asked the question,

Who operates Big Bocs Bwyd?

30% - school staff

33% - school staff and pupils supported by volunteers

20% - school staff supported by volunteers

14% - pupils supported by school staff

“Administering the Big Bocs Bwyd can be challenging as teaching staff. We do not have volunteers to help us with the opening, stocking and cleaning therefore we have planned this in for each class throughout the term. We also rely heavily on certain members of staff helping after school so that we can run the Big Bocs Bwyd efficiently. This does put extra workload on staff members.”

Upskilling volunteers to understand the aims and practicalities of Big Bocs Bwyd and how this fits in with the bigger picture of food economy and food literacy is time consuming but it is accepted as essential by Big Bocs Bwyd leads. The positive of having volunteers as part of Big Bocs Bwyd is that the day-to-day running is secured. Many take responsibility for food collections, stocking up, stock rotation, taking fridge/freezer temperatures, customer service, cleaning, food disposal and cashing up etc. Having some 'top tips' or factsheets prepared for new volunteers would help Big Bocs Bwyd leads.

Some volunteers have moved on to paid employment which is advantageous to them and to society in general, but it leaves a void within the project which can have damaging fall-out. If volunteer vacancies are not quickly filled, the project can slow to a halt as the shop doesn't open as expected, so families go elsewhere for their provisions. This, on occasion, has led to a slow down and loss of momentum within the project. Conversely, where schools engage with several volunteers, the project has gone from strength to strength because of the joint commitment, enthusiasm and initiative of the volunteers.

While a number of schools have regular volunteers assisting Big Bocs Bwyd, only a minority of schools feel that they have established a secure base of volunteers that has sufficient capacity to cover sickness and other unforeseen times when substitutions may need to be made.

While many schools are keen to develop a programme for volunteers in order to lessen the load of the professional team, it has remained a lower priority for many schools when they begin running the Bocs. Initially, school staff may take on key roles themselves and then find they don't have time to recruit and develop volunteers as they are too busy with the daily running of Big Bocs Bwyd. It can be described as a Catch-22; if schools wait for volunteers then Big Bocs Bwyd doesn't get established quickly, but if the Big Bocs Bwyd opens without them in place, then the burden of responsibility for running it is absorbed by the school team. It is essential to build capacity from the community within the project from the start, and this should be a key consideration for new Big Bocs Bwyd schools.

Many positive experiences were reported on by Big Bocs Bwyd volunteers; they valued their involvement with the Big Bocs Bwyd project and felt part of a team.

"We have two retired policemen collecting the food from the Fareshare pickup each week taking it in turns. It has given them a reason to get up in the morning, have a purpose and connect with the community. One of the retired policemen volunteered as a TA in the school and now works through an agency with us twice a week."

While many had skills to offer the project, they also recognised that it was an opportunity for their own development too. They talked about new skills, a growth in confidence and wellbeing, social connection and camaraderie. They felt they were making an important difference to families who are struggling with the cost of living crisis and at the same time finding out more about what matters in children's learning. Their level of food literacy had increased, and they appreciated far more the overall aims of the project.

What volunteers said about Big Bocs Bwyd...

"A positive feeling, it's raised my levels of wellbeing."

"I think it might be a stepping-stone to other things."

"It builds my confidence in talking to people and being involved."

"I can see why it helps children to learn. It's amazing. I wish I had learned things like this when I was in school."

"As a man, it's sometimes difficult to get involved in things, but I've become involved in this."

"I used to be a chef so I make suggestions to customers of what they can cook with the food on offer. It's nice I can do that."

"I understand so much more about food and waste, and also preparing meals from bits and pieces you may have left in the kitchen."

"I would like to gain qualification to help more in the school. This has opened my eyes to the possibility."

“I would like to arrange events to promote it and also to raise funds.”

“People who use it like to come and have a chat. That matters to me.”

The use of volunteers is well established in some Big Bocs Bwyd schools but is at an early stage in others. This aspect of work needs strengthening through a strategic approach to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project. Volunteers benefit from their contact and involvement with Big Bocs Bwyd in developing both softer skills such as supportive interactions, and more tangible ones, such as handing money.

Multi-agency working within Big Bocs Bwyd

Several schools are working hard to engage more strongly with community partners in order to ensure that Big Bocs Bwyd is able to self-sustain over time. 48% of schools in the Review have established links with partner organisations to support the project. In some cases, Big Bocs Bwyd has led to closer working relationships between school staff and other professionals.

“Our community focus has been greatly enhanced through engagement with Big Bocs Bwyd and has enabled us to link up with a much broader range of partners within the local area. We have been working more closely with professional partners to identify and support families.”

Currently, there appears to be limited links with other agencies in terms of promoting Big Bocs Bwyd in most schools. Where this does happen, it is most successful where agencies are co-located on the same site. Getting used to the school as a place where you can seek help has led to families feeling less negatively judged by professionals. Where families are subject to statutory involvement with Children’s Services, they are sometimes wary of accepting any help from the school, but by accessing Big Bocs Bwyd it enables trust build through non-judgmental interactions. If already working with other agencies to support a family’s needs, then Big Bocs Bwyd can be identified as a further possible source of support.

Some schools advertise other support services in the community within their Big Bocs Bwyd shop. One school hosts Citizen’s Advice (CA) support on a weekly basis for parents/carers to access; they can make contact with CA through the Big Bocs Bwyd. This need is often around financial support and Big Bocs Bwyd is always highlighted as an additional and easily available form of support. In one school, the police also signpost families to Big Bocs Bwyd. Schools would like to increase their community partnerships to support families through Big Bocs Bwyd by connecting with other professionals at a local level. Suggestions for this included face-to-face networking in the style of “speed-dating”.

Schools have formed food partnerships with businesses and charities as part of the food supply chain. The vast majority of food partnership have evolved from networking and community links. This includes approaching local companies directly, utilising personal contacts within the teaching team, links through governors and local counsellors and making links with Community Champions in the local supermarket. One LA has established a Big Bocs Bwyd co-ordinator and they inform schools if any agencies have surplus food. Likewise, links with the LA catering manager who has contacts with many food suppliers has proved very effective. Parents are also helpful in providing contacts and ideas, for example those who work in supermarkets or shops. A common message from all schools was to build the contact-base as quickly as possible and be persistent in communicating with them regularly.

There is a range of food delivery partners with FareShare Cymru being the main one (88% of schools). Other partnerships have been established with FairShare Go (18%), Local Supermarkets for surplus food (Asda, Morrisons, Co-op, Sainsburys, Tesco etc) (37%), Neighbourly App - surplus food (7%), Local independent shops (33%), Local grower/farmer (14%).

Most schools were concerned about securing regular food supplies and felt that the demand for these was increasing all the time. Many would like to open their Big Bocs Bwyd shop on a more regular basis but felt they did not have enough produce to do so, particularly fresh produce.

In terms of the quantities of food ordered, 80% of schools order 50kg of food per week and 8% order over 250kg of food per week. These benchmark figures are useful in monitoring the growth and capacity of the project.

Some schools liaised with local foodbanks and charities to offer their surplus food that needed using. This might be excess produce that is going out of date or fresh food that needs cooking and freezing as quickly as possible.

Schools know their regular Big Bocs Bwyd users well and so note more closely aspects of the children's wellbeing. It is used to flag up families who may be struggling and subsequently targeted for additional support.

Many schools are reticent to approach individual families who are struggling and therefore feel more comfortable offering Big Bocs Bwyd as an access point as it is a universal service. Finding effective ways to identify and monitor family wellbeing is a current challenge as boundaries, remit and action are not definitive; is this issue a school responsibility or a social care responsibility? Further conversations would be helpful in seeking opinion and clarity.

As the project has evolved, the offer in some Big Bocs Bwyd schools surpasses providing and selling only food and the range of products has grown to address poverty more generally in the community. Currently, as Big Bocs Bwyd is presented as a food project in its Memorandum of Understanding, there are two routes to consider;

- *Create a list of items which can/cannot be offered from Big Bocs Bwyd and retain the current core food aims of the project,*
- *Re-visit and expand the core aims of the Big Bocs Bwyd project to address poverty and minimising of waste more generally.*

Recommendations for Community Engagement and Big Bocs Bwyd

1. Re-visit the vision and core aims of the Big Bocs Bwyd project to ensure they evolve and align with current practice and future possibilities.
2. Ensure food partnerships are secured for all Big Bocs Bwyd schools. Assist schools in securing new food delivery partners where food is of high quality and sufficient quantity along the lines of the arrangements already underway with Gregg's, Castell Howell and FareShare.
3. Develop a resource of recipe suggestions for Big Bocs Bwyd foods, perhaps in the form of a cookery book or posters where meals are organised in sections relating to how they are cooked e.g. no cooking, hob cooking, grilling, microwaving, baking/roasting in the oven. This is to address to use of gas/electricity as current energy prices are prohibitive for many families.
4. Food literacy courses in the community to upskill staff and parents/carers and volunteers.
5. Source foods which reflect the culture of the families accessing Big Bocs Bwyd.
6. Encourage schools to increase the hours that Big Bocs Bwyd is open, including school holidays.
7. Improve signage and advertising within the Big Bocs Bwyd community, both from a central perspective and locally.
8. Further develop social media communication for Big Bocs Bwyd. Designate a communications lead for the project (funding dependent).
9. Provide QR codes within the Bocs to link to a Facebook page or Twitter feed that provides information from a central perspective for community members on aspects of the project.
10. Create support for Big Bocs Bwyd leads in developing their volunteer groups. Base this on schools where a volunteer group has been successfully established. Ideas for support could include the set-up of group, induction pack (videos, information sheets), roles and responsibilities, training volunteers, advertising for help, hints and tips relating to daily running of Big Bocs Bwyd, factsheets about statutory food aspects etc.
11. Further discussions with schools around family wellbeing are needed to explore/agree the extent to which schools target and support families for Big Bocs Bwyd. The Community Focused Schools agenda provides the opportunity for development of provision and practice in this area.
12. Schools could develop a better understanding of the multi-agency groups within their community, without reinventing services which currently exist, for example the Children's Information Service (or equivalent) in each LA would have oversight of their services and contacts. One idea is a speed-dating style event to get to know the work of others in a short space of time.
13. Explore options to co-fund a part-time Family Engagement Officer role for each Big Bocs Bwyd school, to work alongside the SLT member with the aim of identifying and targeting families and developing the CFS agenda. This role could also encompass responsibility for establishing/developing/ supporting a volunteer group. (Grant funding dependent.)

Funding

Funding for Big Bocs Bwyd has been raised from different sources which include; **public funds** through Welsh Government, from **partners** including the Waterloo Foundation, from **private donations** and through **crowd funding**. The total amount of funding is approx. £1.5m over the three-year lifetime of the project to date. This equates to £22.5k per school (66 schools) currently involved in Big Bocs Bwyd.

Funds have been used to set up the Bog Bocs Bwyd assets, provide leadership time for the project, fund a post within the central team and purchase resources as needed.

Non-financial value has been added to the Big Bocs Bwyd project by companies and individuals providing **tangible assets** for example, fridges and freezers; by **offering time and expertise** such as carpentry and electrical installation, or through **coaching/mentoring** of adults and children in growing, cooking and storing food and in creating the culture of the project.

New funding is crucial to the on-going success of Big Bocs Bwyd. The project is reliant on external funding, none of which is guaranteed. While the non-financial capacity of the project is being developed at community level, e.g. through volunteers, without centralised core funding, to support its further development, the project will lose traction. However, if new funders come on board now, there is no doubt the project's structure will support its growth and reach even more children and families, thus contributing to Wales' wider goals for food, health, sustainability and education.

Central Leadership of Big Bocs Bwyd

Central Leadership

The central leadership team comprises of the Project Lead, Janet Hayward, and a Project Co-ordinator, Hannah Cogbill. Both the Project Lead and the Project Co-ordinator are well respected and admired for their tenacity and commitment to children and communities by the participating schools that are involved in Big Bocs Bwyd.

The Project Lead has exemplified innovative, dynamic and purposeful systems leadership by setting a blueprint for learning through the pedagogy of CfW, community engagement, food education and sustainability, for children facing adversity in Wales.

The visionary leadership, evidenced through Big Bocs Bwyd at Cadoxton Primary School, has not only been appreciated in the local community of Barry, but also on the worldwide stage through the work of T4 Education. Big Bocs Bwyd is on the world map, with nine other high performing and innovative schools across the globe, for supporting children to overcome adversity. **Big Bocs Bwyd has been and continues to be a mission for equity.**

Successes from a Project Lead Perspective

The Big Bocs Bwyd project has education as a core driver. It embodies the four purposes of CfW and has captured the essence its aims by delivering practical and authentic learning for children.

In the schools that are pedagogically ready for Big Bocs Bwyd and have a clear vision for change, it is an impressive learning asset and catalyst for community engagement. In these schools, the project has flourished, providing a vehicle for a more in-depth understanding of the importance of good food (not just any food) for brain development, cognitive function and wellbeing, supporting key policies of Welsh Government such as the FGA, UNCRC and SDGs.

As a health resource, the initial aim of providing nutritious food is being realised in many geographical areas and the project now supports the needs of many families at a time of financial uncertainty. The project is uncovering and contributing to several interconnected aspects of primary health care in the community which afford the best long term health benefits for children. It is only over the longer term of the project that these elements will be truly understood.

The involvement of parents and community volunteers in the running of Big Bocs Bwyd continues to be a tangible and valuable aspect of its success, with an abundance of opportunities for volunteers to develop their self-confidence and employability skills in line with the aspirations of the CFS agenda.

The ever-growing partnerships with other agencies (NFU, Farms, Royal Welsh, Castell Howell and others) ensure that children understand where food comes from and make more

sustainable food choices. These highly valued partnerships bring further credibility and substance to the project, as well as facilitating a deeper and better informed understanding of the economy of food.

Opportunities for learning about food waste and how to reduce it are growing steadily as new partnerships and methods are uncovered and explored. The phrase 'the tip of the iceberg' is one which comes to mind as different schools discover new and innovative ways to extend the food cycle and reduce food waste.

Challenges from a Project Lead Perspective

Presently, many schools are finding their way through the essential changes needed to successfully implement CfW and the Community Focused Schools framework, against a backdrop of severe budget restrictions which limits the offer that schools provide. While CfW and CFS are vehicles for innovation that positively impact on childhood, rather than incorporating and embedding them as a core part of the curriculum, in some schools they remain a bolt-on. Changes to pedagogy, for some, are minimal and teams remain self-constrained by a bygone framework and lingering expectations from 2008.

Schools in Wales are at the embryonic stage of exploring the potential of community partnerships. Regarding the community as an asset which is intrinsically links to the curriculum seems to be challenging for many. While most schools are able to cite examples of community interaction and project-based experiences, links with the community in the previous era of education were transient and took the form of one-off events. Big Bocs Bwyd, by design, is different; it is reliant upon long-term commitment and an evolution of authentic community partnerships. This opportunity should be viewed as irresistible, but there is a reticence by some school leaders to embrace it.

School Leaders are working against a backdrop of limited resources and are overwhelmed with budgetary challenges, lack of specialist support, pedagogical change and recruitment. This would appear to be much worse since the pandemic and the pressures many schools are facing needs to be recognised and addressed at a national level. However, the opportunities that Big Bocs Bwyd offers could mitigate against some of these pressures if additional funding was secured and learning through the project was prioritised and expedited.

Ensuring continuity of provision when staff move on to new schools increases the risk of stagnation within the project, i.e. those who have been trained and supported through Big Bocs Bwyd but have not shared the vision and information with their team. Increasing understanding across a school team is an essential aspect of securing the future and continuity of Big Bocs Bwyd and all it offers.

Food poverty resource or food asset? A shift in mindset and attitude for some schools continues to be the invisible barrier to success with Big Bocs Bwyd. Perceiving the Bocs as just a food-poverty resource places limits on its potential; by contrast, a genuine transformation of the whole school environment transpires when it is utilised as a community food asset. The shift in mindset and attitude is happening slowly and organically, but it takes time given the financial resource currently available for funding staff posts or allocating time. **An**

injection of long-term funding would enable more targeted and consistent support in realising this change for the project.

Next Steps from a Project Lead Perspective

The essential shift away from the accountability measures which have driven our schools for so long must be clearly understood and acted upon by all agencies – schools, LAs, Consortia, Estyn and Welsh Government. This would liberate schools in their thinking and action.

Developing school leaders who are confident to innovate and challenge, and who are able to put their community at the heart of the curriculum could enable children and families to thrive. Through the project, as a next step the Central Team would put time and energy into supporting schools to focus on the right things for their learners and their community. In addition, by supporting schools to establish a Big Bocs Bwyd lead and build their team, key actions and intentions would be cascaded to the whole school and consequently minimise the impact of any staff changes.

An exploration of the development of systems leadership through the lens of a community focus with the Leadership Academy would provide further credibility to Big Bocs Bwyd in the longer term. This work has already started and promises many opportunities for the project if funding is secured.

A clear intention is to develop the existing professional training offer to incorporate whole staff and cluster training around Big Bocs Bwyd and, in doing so, address concerns raised by schools and ensure consistency in the values aspired to in the project.

Identifying a lead governor in all BBB schools is a natural and essential next step. By offering training and guidance to this group and supporting them to ask the right questions of school leaders, ensures that Big Bocs Bwyd becomes a vehicle for embedding the community at the heart of the curriculum. Requiring that schools produce an action plan for the establishment and growth of Big Bocs Bwyd will form part of the Memorandum of Understanding in the future, along with termly progress reports of the planned actions relayed to Governors on a termly basis.

Project Coordinator

The Project Co-ordinator has offered operational support at each stage to schools enabling many to run an effective Big Bocs Bwyd. New learning for improved access is welcomed and acted upon by the co-ordinator.

Strengths of the Project from a Project Coordinator Perspective

The project has provided children with opportunities to learn in genuinely authentic ways. They have ownership of their learning and the growing confidence of children and staff in using the Bocs in ever more creative ways has been observed.

There are meaningful opportunities to develop the integral skills of communication and collaboration and the four purposes of the curriculum. Through discussions with children it is noted that there is a shift from children and families talking about and accessing “food” to “good food”.

Big Bocs Bwyd has enriched the whole curriculum in many schools; learning about growing and cooking good food throughout the year, the willingness of staff to refine and adapt and learn from other Big Bocs Bwyd schools, using year group leaders to manage the shop and report back to stakeholders about their work. These examples provide a snapshot of a very successful project. The future aim is to ensure that **all learners** have the opportunity to be involved in this work.

Children are noted as becoming more astute and perspicacious. The control the children have over the spending decisions of the profits they make is an example of this. They often choose a charity to donate a percentage of their profits to (from Big Bocs Bwyd) in order ‘to give back’ and use the residue to fund a school event or trip which they recognise as contributing to everyone’s mental health.

Another key success is the much wider community use of Big Bocs Bwyd beyond the schools’ families which provides a safety net for all generations. The number of elderly people in the community accessing the Bocs has grown steadily and, as a welcomed by-product, older people comment on their increased social connection and reduced isolation.

At Cadoxton, for example, the establishment of a “Good Food Café” with Year 6 children (in groups of 8 to 10 on rotation) requires them to plan and cook a two-course meal with an open invitation to the community on a “pay as you feel” basis. These occasions for inter-generational learning, sharing stories and songs and building positive relationships underpin the CFS agenda. Feedback from the community about pupils’ behaviour and positive attitudes to older citizens shows how relationships are strengthening. They commented on pupils’ consideration, friendliness and social skills, which extends beyond Big Bocs Bwyd and into their contact with children outside the school environment.

Developing BBB has enabled schools to be much more outward facing within communities and far more genuine community partnerships have been established. The challenges that have arisen are met with resilience and determination to be solution focused. For example, when food sources have dwindled, accessing other grant sources has ensured a continuous supply of food. The entrepreneurial mindset of creating a win-win situation is part of the ethos of the project, and there are examples of offering parents/carers extra hours for children in nursery in exchange for time credits which parents/carers then use to volunteer in the Big Bocs Bwyd shop. This has led to a much broader group of parents/carers volunteering in one school. Many report having been given a sense of purpose, improved self-confidence and feeling less lonely and isolated.

Schools have embraced Big Bocs Bwyd in different ways and made it unique to meet the needs of their own school communities. This includes schools stocking the shop with produce they have grown, engaging with broader community groups, becoming a hub for multi-agency working and building an innovative and creative curriculum around Big Bocs Bwyd.

The development of the cluster lead role in the Cadoxton hub has facilitated stronger capacity for grant applications on a community basis, a strengthened approach to transition through the development of common themes and a more consistent focus on tackling food poverty and waste across its community.

Challenges from a Project Coordinator Perspective

A key challenge is the shortage of food supplies, as demand for these continues to grow; an inadvertent mark of the project's growing success. More people use it, therefore more supplies are needed.

Some schools seem reluctant to take responsibility for developing their own BBB provision without ongoing, close support and guidance. The aspiration is that schools are autonomous in their decisions based on their own community's needs.

The expectation of some schools is that the Central Team has the capacity to respond instantly to queries and schools sometimes abdicate the responsibility of finding solutions themselves. It is not the role of the Central Team to act as 'fixers', so generosity of their time during the life of the project has led to an execrated level of service.

The capacity of the Project Lead and Coordinator is stretched due to their responsibilities beyond BBB. The willingness of each person to give of their time and energy to the project is not in question, but the opportunity to find adequate time to undertake these responsibilities well diminishes year-on-year as the project grows.

Next Steps from a Project Coordinator Perspective

To build capacity the Project Coordinator intends to:

- Continue to embed BBB throughout curriculum, ensuring that learners are the driving force behind this.
- Explore opportunities to expand the cluster lead role across other Big Bocs Bwyd communities.
- Support the development of Gold Standard schools in every LA who can be responsible for sharing expertise, coaching and mentoring others in their own local area.
- Explore opportunities to host LA and local network meetings at different schools to share ideas and best practice.
- Discuss with schools the opportunity to relocate boxes where the children and the community are not able to benefit from the service in any meaningful way.
- Improve the ways in which the impact of Big Bocs Bwyd is measured. Strengthen Big Bocs Bwyd's Key Performance Indicators so that a better understanding of the "why" is captured.
- Continue to broaden the pool of volunteers and upskill them.
- Build on consultation with the community on developments around Big Bocs Bwyd – planting, cooking, learning, partnerships and community reach.

- Extend opportunities for professional learning and make children a part of that process.
- Continue to be outward facing and extend partnerships across the network.

Big Bocs Bwyd has been successfully launched in several areas of Wales and is making a difference in many communities.

Taking the core elements of key national policies, the systems leadership approach of Big Bocs Bwyd has proved a success. It delivers on key national aims for children in Wales at a community and school level. Even in its short lifetime to date, Big Bocs Bwyd is making a significant difference to children and families not only through its formal intentions of education, sustainability and health, but also in more subtle ways that are easy to see, but harder to measure, such as belonging, wellbeing, resourcefulness and agency.

Big Bocs Bwyd is the complete solution to delivering national agendas for schools that focus on putting it at the heart of their work. The legacy of success equating to outcome-led accountability in 2008, as opposed to a clear focus on the long term impact of the four purposes from 2022 onwards, presents a significant shift in mindset and action for school leaders and other organisations. This is a work in progress. BBB provides a template and way forward for schools and organisations grappling with this challenge and is one that should be built upon.

Capitalising on the success of systems leadership through further financial investment would be astute in fortifying the position of the project and the potential for leaders to spend more time on it. The current leadership structure is stretched to its limits due to time, other responsibilities and the growth of the project. The momentum that has built is at risk of fragmentation if the current leadership capacity remains unchanged. The leadership team needs more resource to grow, embed and monitor the project. New funding is essential.

Governance, Logistics and Administration of Big Bocs Bwyd

Governance of Big Bocs Bwyd

The governance of Big Bocs Bwyd sits outside the statutory remit of the school and therefore many schools are exploring ways to oversee the project by constituting a management group.

40% of schools have constituted a group for governing the project, 16% do not have any provision in place at present, and a further 14% stated this process is underway.

The local governance arrangements of the project vary. An overview of how each school has interpreted these would help to guide future Big Bocs Bwyd schools.

Open Days

Respondents indicated that they had been made aware of Big Bocs Bwyd through several channels such as word of mouth, social media, an invitation to an open day, headteacher meetings, a Director mailshot to schools and cluster meetings.

The Open days were described as informative and helpful sessions which enabled those present to view a well-established Big Bocs Bwyd. Attendees were able to visualise what it may look like in their own context and described being inspired and completely sold on the project. Those leading the days had skilfully outlined the potential of realising CfW through Big Bocs Bwyd. There were opportunities to ask questions which created a sense of purpose, direction and excitement.

In providing constructive feedback, respondents stated they would have found it helpful to be given information up front in relation to time commitment and 'red tape'.

What Big Bocs Bwyd leads said,

"An inspirational day with the benefits made clear. By seeing it first-hand it showed us what the full potential is."

"We were able to view a well established Big Bocs, see the organisation of various tasks needed to run it, ask questions."

"We could see the vision for the project - how it could support our learners, parents and the community. We also felt it could become the focal point of our rich, authentic curriculum and links to Welsh Government National Mission, UNCRC, SDGs etc."

"The meeting was extremely helpful. What Big Bocs Bwyd couldn't give was the work needed by the LA e.g. planning. I believe that has subsequently been added."

"It doesn't tell you about the full process, the red tape, environmental health, insurance and lots more pitfalls that occur."

“It would have been beneficial to have a run-down of when we should contact these people/departments and perhaps examples of paperwork/letters we could use and adapt, I feel probably everyone is trying to do their own”

Schools valued the information from the Open Days as well as seeing the Big Bocs Bwyd in practice. Further information on practicalities and challenges would prepare schools better for the time required and for some of the processes they may encounter.

Application Process

The application process was viewed as straightforward and very well supported by most schools.

77% - Simple and logical. It was a straightforward process.

23% - Mostly straightforward but I needed some guidance.

0% - I needed to be talked through the steps to complete the application; it was confusing.

Schools stated that clear guidance to complete the application was provided. They felt able to ask for help during any time of the process when needed. One school felt that a couple of examples of completed applications on the website would have been helpful.

“The application form was straight forward. If anything, we needed more space to write so attached a word document. The questions were straightforward, and we made sure we had thought about how it would meet the needs of our school and community. Help was on-hand at all stages of the process.”

Most schools found it a very straightforward process to apply, and stated it was not too long to wait for the decision on whether their school would have a Big Bocs Bwyd.

Installation of Big Bocs Bwyd

Views and experiences of the installation Of Big Bocs Bwyd were much more varied depending upon the phase of the project. Delays in the process were largely viewed as a result of LA inaction and barriers around Health and Safety issues and Safeguarding. Having good relationships with site staff is an essential factor for ensuring the smooth installation of Big Bocs Bwyd which many schools commented upon. Planning permission and the installation of the electricity supply seem to have been the most challenging aspects for schools who had experienced delays. In the most extreme cases, schools waited up to a year between initially delivery and opening.

What Big Bocs Bwyd leads said,

“The logistics involved in getting started were well organised and straight forward. There was, however, confusion as to whether we needed planning permission to site the Big Bocs Bwyd in our LA.”

“The logistics of getting electricity to the Bocs, as well as creating paths etc were quite costly but now that we are up and running and making a difference it makes any challenges worth it.”

“The challenges came from access to our site. The team were amazing and really worked hard on a day with terrible weather. Supposedly we were the hardest delivery to date!”

“The LA support was not as straightforward as sold by the Big Bocs Bwyd team. We had a lot of red tape and hurdles to jump before we could get the Big Bocs Bwyd in place. There were many planning meetings with the LA to actually get it in place.”

“As soon as you receive the Big Bocs Bwyd and everything is installed, all your checks have been carried out, fire safety etc you are good to go.”

Some concerns were raised that the initial installation did not meet Environmental Health standards. This is specifically concerning the untreated wood used to create the interiors. Some LAs have insisted that this is treated post-installation in order to achieve a high hygiene rating, but others do not seem to be so particular.

“A simple instruction booklet of what to do and when would have been useful, as most people working in schools would not have the experience of working with environmental health, trading standards etc.”

Schools who were the first in their LA to have Big Bocs Bwyd situated on site, often felt that they experienced significant delays because it was new, and LA staff did not really understand it. They felt that they had paved the way for subsequent schools but that this should be highlighted as an issue for those schools who were going to be the first ones in their authority. Most issues from Phase 1 had been addressed for later schools, and schools from Phases 2 and 3 reported positively on communication, installation and timescales.

The inconsistencies experienced by Big Bocs Bwyd schools from different local authorities make it challenging for the central Big Bocs Bwyd team to create and provide generic guidance which is accurate and applicable across the board.

The installation of the Big Bocs Bwyd on school sites has evolved through the phases with many early snagging issues now a thing of the past. The project continues to take on board constructive suggestions and acts on them immediately.

The designation of Big Bocs Bwyd contact within one of the local authorities is proving to be an effective way of centralising queries and could be replicated to other LAs.

The different approaches within local authorities and the variance of stringency with which some rules of compliance are applied, make it challenging to offer general overarching guidance. The Big Bocs Bwyd central team works in an agile fashion to respond to and support schools on an ‘as needed’ basis.

Leadership Structure of Big Bocs Bwyd in Schools

In most schools Big Bocs Bwyd is led by a senior member of the leadership team. This model undoubtedly has the greatest impact and momentum evidenced through the exciting and impressive gains. This is on-going in the most developed schools, monitored regularly and developed strategically.

Many leaders feel they tried to do too much themselves initially and have had to set up a committee of people to support them in order to make it sustainable in the longer term.

Where a senior leader is not leading the project there is a range of designated roles with different people taking responsibility for some or all of Big Bocs Bwyd. In many schools Family Engagement Officers, site managers, teaching assistants and administrators take responsibility for the day-to-day running of Big Bocs Bwyd. This approach delivers variable outcomes which often relates to the time allocation and clarity of each role. Further, more targeted comparisons of these arrangements would help to clarify the issue.

Family Engagement Officers take responsibility for running Big Bocs Bwyd in some schools which positively strengthens family engagement and assists in getting to know parents and carers better. A few schools said they would be interested in establishing this role but were not able to do so in the current financial climate. Funding a part time role through Big Bocs Bwyd would be an option worth exploring should grant funding be secured for the next phase of the project or given consideration if opportunities for future grant applications arise.

Where more junior members of staff take responsibility for running Big Bocs Bwyd, there are issues which arise when they are not given sufficient, additional time to undertake this role. It is unreasonable to manage all the responsibility associated with Big Bocs Bwyd alongside a full-time teaching commitment. In these cases, regretfully, it is inevitable that burn-out will occur. As part of their Duty of Care, governing bodies should resist and oppose this model of leadership as it could be detrimental to staff wellbeing.

The use of the Big Bocs Bwyd leader to cover PPA in one school helped to establish clear curricular links with the provision in every year group. It was a highly successful way to ensure that Big Bocs Bwyd was linked naturally to the curriculum in all year groups and could be an option for other Big Bocs Bwyd schools to emulate.

Getting staff, parents, pupils, pupil voice groups and governors on board are identified as key to the successful running of Big Bocs Bwyd in all schools. Where representatives from the wider community are involved, this has helped to establish Big Bocs Bwyd more firmly in the local area and supported the leadership team with managing the provision. Several schools identified this as a next step for them.

In schools where there have been multiple staff changes, it has been difficult for the leadership team to keep a strong focus on the development of Big Bocs Bwyd at the same time as so many other school improvement priorities. In one case, the support the school is receiving from the local consortium, is focusing on different priorities at the moment and it has been difficult to develop Big Bocs Bwyd provision in this context.

In a number of schools, it is the passion and commitment of one person acting as the driving force behind the whole project. Schools did not necessarily recognise this as a difficulty, but the importance of it being a whole school team approach must be emphasised as much as possible for new schools coming on board. This is to ensure continuity and capacity within the project.

Where the member of staff who has accessed all the Big Bocs Bwyd training leaves, it has proved difficult for some schools to sustain and develop this provision as too much of the knowledge was with one person, leaving a void and setting back the Big Bocs Bwyd project for the school. The gains made have been lost. It is prudent for schools to develop the knowledge base and skillset across their team.

Establishing pupil groups to take responsibility for the running and promotion of Big Bocs Bwyd has proved highly successful in several schools. They have undertaken activities such as advertising campaigns, writing newsletters, presenting to different stakeholder groups and their peers, taking deliveries, stock rotation, managing the money and running the shop. This in turn has motivated parents/carers to use the provision and to learn more about food literacy. Links to the traditional classroom are evidenced as being more natural in these instances as the children and teacher become jointly invested in the project.

Where schools have made formal action plans, which are regularly updated and reviewed as part of their school improvement priorities, this has resulted in a much more embedded and holistic approach to Big Bocs Bwyd. The pedagogical principles of reflective practice where monitoring over a longer period is undertaken in an objective manner, ensure that the quality of learning experiences remains engaging and suitably challenging.

There are many different approaches to leading the Big Bocs Bwyd project evidenced in the Review; some more effective than others. In schools where the leadership of the Big Bocs Bwyd has not been at a senior level, it has been taxing for staff to get the whole team on board, especially with regard to embedding Big Bocs Bwyd across the curriculum. Conversely, where leadership is at a senior level the momentum and progress made are palpable.

The role of the Family Engagement Officer is beneficial within the project, particularly when the project as whole is driven by a senior leader. More schools would adopt this model if the FEO role was funded/part funded.

Some leadership structures for Big Bocs Bwyd are overburdening teachers who have a classroom responsibility as their core role.

Multiple staff changes, or changes in leadership pose risk to the continuation of Big Bocs Bwyd in schools. This can lead to an interruption of service which has consequences for families, partnerships and the community.

Establishing community links and partnerships at the outset of the project has paid dividends for schools in securing support and buy-in from their community. It spreads the load when leaders engage with volunteers and food suppliers in the very early stages

Administration of Big Bocs Bwyd in Schools

Many schools commented upon the time element needed to successfully run Big Bocs Bwyd; often a designated and protected allocation of time was given to the setting-up stage, e.g. two days per week for two terms for the Big Bocs Bwyd co-ordinator. This was deemed to be critical to ensure that the statutory obligations around food safety and planning were implemented well. It also provided a window of opportunity to connect with the community about the project. The questionnaire responses outlined the following;

46% - I find the administration of Big Bocs Bwyd manageable; systems are understood and embedded.

42% - I can find my way around the administration of Big Bocs Bwyd, but systems are not yet embedded; we are still learning.

11% - I find the administration of Big Bocs Bwyd challenging; it needs further development as systems are not yet in place.

The subsequent day-to-day administration of Big Bocs Bwyd largely indicated that systems and processes had been sufficiently developed even though some still needed embedding.

When asked the question,

How do you view the challenges of administering Big Bocs Bwyd?

57% - The challenges are internal school challenges.

20% - The challenges are skills/training challenges. (Admin, not curriculum)

23% - The challenges lie beyond my remit and are experienced by all Big Bocs Bwyd schools.

Challenging areas commented upon are:

- Gaining charitable status
- Banking
- Card payments (including being unable to access internet from Big Bocs Bwyd)
- Accessing stock from other sources
- Understanding environmental health expectations
- How to secure planning permission
- Time
- Team capacity
- Team expertise

The administration of Big Bocs Bwyd is generally well developed. Schools need support with the set-up and in the early stages, but systems in most schools quickly become embedded.

Revenue, Banking and Audit

Revenue from Big Bocs Bwyd is mostly cash only, but this is due to complexity of setting up and maintaining card machines, as well as the costs associated with paying by card. As the project progresses it would be reasonable to expect the percentage of card payments to

increase as schools overcome the logistics of card payments. An approach to electronic payment providers to reduce their fees for Big Bocs Bwyd schools could be made by leads of the project once charitable status is secured.

72% - Cash only

8% - Card only

20% - Both cash and card

When banking and auditing monies from Big Bocs Bwyd, different schools have developed different ways to oversee the governance and oversight of financial obligations. Current arrangements amongst schools include, but are not limited to;

- Committee and treasurer
- Through delegated school budget
- Dealt with by school admin
- School fund and spreadsheet
- Bank with Credit Union
- Spreadsheet and deposited into account at the post office

All schools kept the cash from Big Bocs Bwyd in a safe or lockable container while on site and many school administrators were responsible for the safe keeping and banking of cash. In schools where there were difficulties with long term administrative staff absence, the management and banking of cash from Big Bocs Bwyd was problematic. It would be beneficial in these cases for there to be a support plan/action from the central Big Bocs Bwyd team to quickly upskill someone to undertake these duties on a temporary basis.

Most schools are paying in all monies to an identified account on a prompt and regular basis. Some schools keep a cash float from Big Bocs Bwyd in order to be able to purchase things flexibly and for children to be an active part of this process. In order to comply fully with audit regulations, the small handful of schools operating in this way will need training which stipulates that that this money should all be paid into an account, and then withdrawn as and when needed. Some were aware of this, but others were not. In all schools it was the finance team who were responsible for the recording and banking of Big Bocs Bwyd income.

Most schools account for and audit monies in line with LA and school audit procedures. It would be prudent to re-visit this issue as a priority to assure the integrity of the project with schools by ensuring all are financially compliant with each LA's audit regulations.

Nearly all project funds at school level are managed in full compliance with audit. Even though there is full confidence in the project's accountability for funding, by ensuring future, and on-going, scrutiny of this area there would be additional integrity added to the programme; this is due to different LA audit systems being implemented within Big Bocs Bwyd schools which creates some variation within the project.

When asked the question,

Do you have charitable status for Big Bocs Bwyd?

Many Big Bocs Bwyd schools understand the benefit of registering as a charity in order to access grants for their project. It is clear that this is a slow and complex process.

4% - Yes

60% - No

36% - In progress

It has since been decided by the central Big Bocs Bwyd team that the project as a whole will apply for registered charitable status. This will ease the burden on individual schools to do so. (The process is currently in hand and as of June 2023, it has not yet been granted.) Some schools were not clear that this is the current position so it would be worth giving a brief update through the regular communication channels.

Attaining charitable status for the Big Bocs Bwyd project would be hugely beneficial and this process is underway. Ensuring that progress is communicated with schools would minimise replication of effort and work.

Inventory

In many schools checking the inventory and identifying and addressing problems was undertaken by the finance officer and caretaker. In a few schools the Big Bocs Bwyd lead was still doing this. In some schools there are volunteers undertaking these roles and reporting to the Big Bocs Bwyd lead at the end of the week.

Inventory arrangements at a local level are presently working well but need continued monitoring by the central team in line with current practice.

Recommendations for Logistics, Leadership and Administration of Big Bocs Bwyd

1. Gather further information on the governance arrangements in each Big Bocs Bwyd school for the project. Identify strengths and challenges of each model. Use this to support future Big Bocs Bwyd schools.
2. Develop a guide for Big Bocs Bwyd schools in relation to how to set up/develop their governance structure for Big Bocs Bwyd.
3. Provide a couple of case studies of the set-up of Big Bocs Bwyd which illustrate a straightforward example as well as a more challenging one. These could be available on the website and used during Open Days.
4. Create a step-by-step timeline of what to do when, so that schools understand how the project may evolve. (It is accepted that there is no one size fits all, but a best case scenario would be helpful.)
5. Explore the possibility of establishing one point of contact in each local authority for the Big Bocs Bwyd project in order to smooth the processes that a school has to go through.
6. Make clear the preferred and most effective ways of leading the Big Bocs Bwyd project when new schools come on board.
7. Re-visit the leadership model in current Big Bocs Bwyd schools and create criteria against which its effectiveness can be objectively evaluated.
8. Explore funding streams to develop the role of Family Engagement Officers to provide dedicated time to Big Bocs Bwyd each week. (Part time)
9. Governing bodies should review the working arrangements for staff to ensure that the Big Bocs Bwyd team has a suitable allocation of time for this role, particularly if the Big Bocs Bwyd lead is a class teacher.
10. Ensure that the training, knowledge base and skillset that derives and develops from Big Bocs Bwyd is shared across the team within a Big Bocs Bwyd school to mitigate against staff leaving. This could be achieved by covering supply costs (funds allowing) for more teachers to attend training, or by offering whole school training as part of the induction and development of Big Bocs Bwyd.
11. As part of Big Bocs Bwyd induction, from the outset monitor the development of partnerships and community engagement within each locality to ensure the project is building its capacity for each school. (Partnerships and volunteers.)
12. Develop an audit tool to monitor the administrative and financial practices of Big Bocs Bwyd schools to ensure each one is compliant with audit practices in their LA.
13. Continue to work towards charitable status for the whole project, keeping schools informed of progress at each stage.

Training, Networking and Big Bocs Bwyd

Training

75% of Big Bocs Bwyd schools from the Review have attended or accessed training on Big Bocs Bwyd. All schools that attended, reported that the training events around Big Bocs Bwyd were of high quality and delivered in an engaging manner. 80% of respondents stated that training also provided good networking opportunities. The training had developed their

understanding of how Big Bocs Bwyd can be used as a vehicle for delivering the new curriculum for Wales in an authentic way.

The online resources relating to food on the Big Bocs Bwyd website, cooking with food, growing food and learning about food were valued by leads, and schools would like to see this section the website developed further in relation to sources, culture and farming practices.

Big Bocs Bwyd leads particularly welcomed support in further developing their understanding of CfW and Inquiry Based Learning as it exemplified ways of developing units of inquiry relating to Big Bocs Bwyd. 80% indicated that the Big Bocs Bwyd training made links explicit to CfW and moved their thinking forward with regards to food literacy.

Schools would like the training they have received as the Big Bocs Bwyd lead, offered to their whole staff to support the embedding of food literacy across the curriculum more effectively. Many schools indicated that the option of whole staff training on a cluster basis to build networking opportunities would be effective. Twilights, inset days or short online sessions were seen as a cost-effective way to achieve this. A couple of schools stated that follow-up tasks from training events would be advantageous to assist schools in moving forward and to hold teams accountable.

Ideas for training, in addition to those outlined in the Curriculum for Wales section, found on [pages 51 and 52](#) include:

- How to run a Big Bocs Bwyd committee.
- Induction and training for volunteers with a focus on cultural sensitivities and how to recruit, retain and support volunteers.
- How to network successfully with community groups and charities to support Big Bocs Bwyd.
- Further training on risk assessment. One school had received a significant of additional support from the LA on this and felt there were a knowledge gaps due to the nature of the Big Bocs Bwyd offer going beyond a tradition school curriculum.
- Ongoing training to support new staff in Big Bocs Bwyd schools would be beneficial.
- A focus on the curriculum at PS4 designing the PS4 curriculum and how integrating Big Bocs Bwyd into a secondary curriculum can work.

Training events have been of high quality and are valued by Big Bocs Bwyd leads. They have supported leads in taking forward their responsibilities and understanding.

The messages from the training now need to be shared more widely finding the most appropriate mode of delivery; in-person, online, whole days, or twilights. Respondents felt CPD is a good use of the projects funds.

More training in many aspects have been identified as key to the future strength of the leadership of the project as well as in upskilling school teams in key areas.

Supply cover costs are essential in securing time for Big Bocs Bwyd leads and their teams to attend training.

Online Networking Events and Big Bocs Bwyd

83% of schools have accessed online networking events. Hearing how other schools are using the Big Bocs Bwyd provision challenged their thinking around what's possible, describing it as an opportunity to "pinch ideas" and re-imagine their own Bocs. Talking to other Big Bocs Bwyd leads amplified their understanding that schools have a free rein to be creative with Big Bocs Bwyd and to put their own stamp on it. In doing so, Big Bocs Bwyd leads felt the needs of local community were best served.

Equally helpful is the regular reflection that occurs in networking events, on what is working well for different schools and exploring the solutions people have found to challenges they have faced. The camaraderie at meetings is beneficial as, at times, it can feel isolating to be the lead of Big Bocs Bwyd in the school particularly when school-specific queries are directed at the lead who is only just learning themselves.

Schools would like to network with other schools on a phase-by-phase basis so that issues, ideas and next steps explored could be more specific to different age groups.

Similarly, schools would welcome opportunities to develop relationships with other Big Bocs Bwyd schools in a similar context e.g. small rural schools network, city centre schools, schools with a diverse school population etc.

Information about food suppliers and funding streams is perceived to be 'gold' and Big Bocs Bwyd leads were always mindful of reciprocating at networking events wherever possible. This particular exchange of information is invaluable.

One school was not sure how open people were in the breakout rooms and in presentations. They would prefer a visit to a Big Bocs Bwyd school for some networking events which felt more real and less of a "show". It would also facilitate more face-to-face interactions and build relationships.

A programme of networking events would be welcomed. The focus of some sessions decided upon in advance (core offer) and other sessions responsive to need/interest.

The most common barrier to attending network events was highlighted as staff absences and budget cuts; currently, there is no central funding from the project for supply cover.

Most schools felt that they were at the early stages of developing their Big Bocs Bwyd provision and did not feel they had much to share at this time. A few schools had already shared their practice in the breakout rooms at the network meetings and had spoken about things that were unique to them. This included; how a rural school kept animals on site and used the eggs their chickens laid to sell in the shop, work around the curriculum, successful grant applications, and making links with local businesses. A number of schools spoke about hosting visitors who were interested to see how Big Bocs Bwyd was working in their setting.

Several respondents mentioned what they might be willing to speak about at future events including;

- The resilience needed to get things set up.
- Success with integrating Big Bocs Bwyd throughout their curriculum.
- How the 'hygiene products bank' was initiated and setup.
- Linking the successful growing of fruit and vegetables to farming and cooking.
- Co-use of a day centre with intergenerational work through gardening and cooking.
- The positive outcomes around Big Bocs Bwyd provision in a recent Estyn inspection.
- The passion one school had for Big Bocs Bwyd and growing fruit, vegetables and flowers in a concrete, urban environment.

The networking events are highly valued by Big Bocs Bwyd leads. They find the central team to be open to suggestions and supportive in facilitating the events.

The networking events allow for on-going sharing of practice between Big Bocs Bwyd leads, with a solution-focused approach to challenges as they arise and the crucial development of relationships between Big Bocs Bwyd schools.

The reflective nature of the networking events enable Big Bocs Bwyd leads to stop, think and plan next steps. They connect colleagues with similar issues.

Recommendations for Networking and Training

1. As the project evolves, a core offer of events and training could be developed and offered on a rolling programme as new Big Bocs Bwyd schools come aboard and in line with the evolving need of Big Bocs Bwyd schools at different stages of development of the project.
2. A more bespoke offer of networking and training could be developed in a responsive and agile manner to address issues as they arise and provide new, unique or specific support on an as needed basis.
3. Big Bocs Bwyd leads were excited to consider different options for networking and training and value them greatly.
4. Develop and share the networking programme for the year. Network events could be offered every month/half term. Include areas considered to be part of a core offer, as well as sessions where the focus will be decided nearer the time.
5. Many ideas for next steps for networking were shared as part of the research with the caveat that funding is critical for releasing staff. Ideas included;
 - Many schools mentioned how positive the visits to Cadoxton had been and how they would like more staff to be able to access this.
 - More staff to be included in the networking events to secure confidence and commitment in every school.
 - Developing more local cluster networks and mentoring schemes. This would also be beneficial for focusing on issues which are LA specific.
 - Developing more phase specific networks.
 - Opportunities for children to network, either online or in person.
 - Develop opportunities for shared training and curriculum mapping on a cluster basis.
 - Continue to promote case studies on the website which most schools identified as really useful.
 - Having a lead school in each LA who can take some responsibility for supporting new schools coming on board.
 - In one LA there has been a Big Bocs Bwyd lead established within the authority and the schools have found it very beneficial to have this central contact who has arranged termly meetings between the Big Bocs Bwyd schools.
 - Offer mentoring for new schools.
 - Develop opportunities to make links between schools who might be culturally more similar.
 - Promote links between Big Bocs Bwyd leads in every school.
 - Networking and training events to be hosted in different Big Bocs Bwyd schools so that visits to a range of sites are more easily facilitated. This might help to give more realistic views for what is achievable in sites where a community space and kitchen are not so accessible.

The Review's Conclusions

Big Bocs Bwyd is a visionary project. Its values and intentions align exactly with key UK, Wales and worldwide policies, conventions and bills which pave the way to a better future for the children and families of Wales. What is particularly impressive is that trailblazer schools of Big Bocs Bwyd schools are implementing and strengthening this practice now, not planning it for the future.

School, family and community engagement form the core of the project providing the potential for better health and educational outcomes for children by embodying the Community Focused Schools and Healthy Wales agenda. By learning “through food, about food”, food-activism will shape, guide and inform the character of each child in becoming the kind of person described in the four purposes (CfW).

In the most developed Big Bocs Bwyd schools, their offer for families and children is responsive, dynamic, authentic and engaging. The experiences from the project are paving the way for a better ‘food-informed’ nation which embodies the aspirations of Curriculum for Wales. Elsewhere, some projects are at the early stages of development; successes as well as challenges have been captured through the cooperation of respondents, to whom we owe our thanks and respect for their time and insight. There are important points shared through the Review’s research to learn from and build upon.

Along with the support of generous partners, all of whom are highly valued for their expertise, the project has developed successfully on a modest amount of funding; it offers excellent value for money. Additional funding is essential in maintaining the project’s reach, quality and traction. Increasing the momentum and influence by expanding the project can only be secured and assured with new funding.

In the next phase, strengthening existing Big Bocs Bwyd schools should be prioritised alongside introducing new ones. Implementing the recommendations for existing ones will build the project’s capacity in supporting other schools who aspire to becoming a Big Bocs Bwyd school.

As a nation, Wales should embrace and emulate this progressive and impactful project, ensuring that even more children and their families can access quality food as well as the develop and experience the skills, knowledge, companionship and pride that come from being part of something that brings out the best in us; connection, generosity, kindness and responsibility.

The Learning Partnership Wales
2023

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Singapore Statement for Research (summary)

- No person has been disadvantaged
- Confidentiality of subjects has been guaranteed - no one can be identified
- No personal conflicts of interest have been registered or identified
- Data protection complies with GDPR (UK)
- Protecting Intellectual Property has been safeguarded with citations clearly marked
- Safety of researchers and subjects has been prioritised through Risk Assessments and Evaluations

Appendix 2 - Triangulation of data

Data

Researchers used a variety of data within the Review which provided different sources of information.

Investigators

When undertaking the Review, different researchers were employed to avoid bias and increase reach and depth within the agreed timescale.

Theoretical

Multiple perspectives were applied to the data sets for interpretative purposes, for example, children, teachers, parents/carers/carers, the community etc.

Methodology

Different forms or methods were employed to robustly evaluate the project namely a mixed method approach; quantitative (the factual numbers) and qualitative (the stories behind the numbers.)

Environment

Multiple environments were utilised to ensure representation and breadth; online, in person, different locations, varied times, a variety of cohorts of children, parents/carers/carers partner professionals, all of which facilitated comparison and contrast within the Review.

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Appendix 3 - Sample Schools Overview

School ID	Current Offer and Community Views	Intended Next Steps	Could also consider...
School 1	<p>Children are involved in growing food for the Big Bocs Bwyd. They recognise that they are learning important life skills through working in the shop.</p> <p>Big Bocs Bwyd is well established with universal entitlement to use, regardless of attendance at the school.</p> <p>Big Bocs Bwyd is seen as a community venture and its customers value its provision particularly given the financial constraints faced by many families.</p> <p>Sufficient amounts of food are provided in conjunction with a broad choice of items for the service users. Some families rely on it and use it every week.</p> <p>Food is currently pre-bagged and customers pay a suggested price for a bag of food. There is an appreciation of this by the school.</p> <p>Selected groups of children are involved in the operation of the service. For example, they plan recipes and cook dishes.</p>	<p>Creation of a tearoom to sit alongside the Big Bocs Bwyd and offer takeaway hot food/coffee and tea.</p> <p>Increasing the number of volunteers who run the service.</p> <p>Extend engagement with the Council and local media, highlighting the good work of the project.</p> <p>Offer more varied food.</p> <p>Selling seeds to grow plants and to donate excess food to charity (proposed by the children).</p>	<p>Ensure Big Bocs Bwyd is a feature of the school's School Improvement Plan for 23/24.</p> <p>Assign a senior leader to lead and monitor the project to ensure better integration with the curriculum. The project is currently being organised by the Family Engagement Officer it is very much seen as a project that sits alongside the work of the school with selected groups of children involved.</p> <p>To seek to overcome the perceived stigma to using the service by promoting the positive aspects of the programme. Emphasise the programme as an initiative that reduces food waste as well as one that seeks to help families financially.</p> <p>Develop an overview of Skills are developed by the operation of the programme are transferable and applicable to all. E.g. Growing and cooking food, sustainability, enterprise skills, understanding of marketing and application of associated skills, team working, literacy, numeracy and digital learning.</p>
School 2	<p>The Big Bocs Bwyd is well used by children and their families. Feedback on this use was invariably positive. Many use the service frequently and rely upon it to feed their family</p> <p>A good variety of food is offered which includes vegetarian options. Some parents/carers plan their meals around their Big Bocs Bwyd purchases.</p> <p>The opening times suited most parents/carers who were able to visit the service before their children came out of school.</p>	<p>Open for longer hours and more frequently.</p> <p>Make some adaptations to Big Bocs Bwyd to make it easier to clean and maintain.</p> <p>Label the shelves to make it easier to find things.</p> <p>Extend the use of the service to encourage more social interaction between families.</p> <p>Extend the size of the Big Bocs Bwyd.</p>	<p>Ensure Big Bocs Bwyd is a feature of the school's School Improvement Plan for 23/24.</p> <p>Further integrate Big Bocs Bwyd into the curriculum for the school by reassigning leadership roles to monitor and to drive the project forward. Currently seen as a project which alongside the traditional role of the school.</p> <p>The school has a trained chef as a volunteer. He would like to be involved in working with the children to develop cooking activities in the school. This represents a great opportunity to offer authentic experiences.</p>

School ID	Current Offer and Community Views	Intended Next Steps	Could also consider...
			<p>Offer opportunities to grow fruit and vegetables to sell in the Big Bocs Bwyd.</p> <p>Develop an overview of Skills are developed by the operation of the programme that are transferable and applicable to all. E.g. Growing and cooking food, sustainability, enterprise skills, understanding of marketing and application of associated skills, team working, literacy, numeracy and digital learning.</p>
School 3	<p>Big Bocs Bwyd is open to the school and community.</p> <p>One staff member is responsible for running the Big Bocs Bwyd whereas a different team of staff set the curriculum links to the Big Bocs Bwyd.</p> <p>The school has a garden where they grow vegetables and have fruit trees.</p> <p>Well used by parents/carers who see it as invaluable help with the current cost of living crisis as they could "pay as you feel".</p> <p>Parents/carers liked the fact that the service is located at the school as they pass it each time they collect the children from school.</p> <p>Parents/carers liked the social connections they make by using it as it gives them an opportunity to meet new people and engage socially.</p>	<p>Share curriculum based projects with other schools and engage in networking events.</p> <p>Training for staff is requested to reinforce how the work planned and the Big Bocs Bwyd link with the Curriculum for Wales.</p> <p>Increase the amount of food they sell and make links with local shops to increase donations.</p> <p>Make Big Bocs Bwyd more visible by having more signs or changing the location of the Big Bocs Bwyd to the car park.</p> <p>The children suggested having a café alongside the service.</p> <p>Parents/carers thought that it would be good to have takeaway hot drinks.</p>	<p>Ensure Big Bocs Bwyd is a feature of the school's School Improvement Plan for 23/24.</p> <p>Further integration of Big Bocs Bwyd into the curriculum. There is much in place, e.g. the allotment, the café, working to reduce food waste. Currently seen as a project that sits alongside the work of the school with selected groups of children involved.</p> <p>Involve children as part of the core learning offer.</p> <p>Professional development for staff to emphasise the need of linking the Big Bocs Bwyd with the school curriculum and the expectations of the Curriculum for Wales.</p>
School 4	<p>A member of the SLT leads the project.</p> <p>Big Bocs Bwyd is well established within the community, and it is positively received by those who use it.</p> <p>Customers are predominantly local residents as opposed to only parents/carers of the school.</p> <p>There is a sufficiently broad choice of items for service users and the variety provided enabled users to try new meals.</p>	<p>Develop links with local businesses to supply food which better reflects the diversity of the families in the community.</p> <p>Strengthen links with the charity "United for Change" to enable the school to work with local youth groups to provide cooking courses.</p> <p>Site a café alongside the Big Bocs Bwyd. The plan is to run cooking courses on site which will then provide meals for the café.</p> <p>The development of a community garden and orchard to grow fruit and vegetables for the Big Bocs Bwyd and café. Involve children in the process of growing, cooking, and selling the food.</p>	<p>Ensure Big Bocs Bwyd is a feature of the school's School Improvement Plan for 23/24.</p> <p>Reflect the multicultural needs of the community as, for example, there is little Halal food available.</p> <p>Develop a volunteer group who understand the school vision, are trained and well supported to engage more families to use the service.</p> <p>Explore the use of volunteers in the programme to ensure sustainability moving forward.</p>

School ID	Current Offer and Community Views	Intended Next Steps	Could also consider...
	<p>Opportunities to purchase dried goods and other long-life food.</p>	<p>Seek opportunities to develop links with other Big Bocs Bwyd settings and engage in other networking events.</p>	<p>The children's involvement in the project is limited. All children at the school could benefit from the experiential learning opportunities offered by involvement in the work of the Big Bocs Bwyd that reflect CfW.</p>
School 5	<p>The pupils involved in the project are those currently undertaking an alternative curriculum.</p> <p>At present the food service is used mainly by the school staff.</p> <p>The commitment to a universal entitlement in using Big Bocs Bwyd meant that no stigma was associated with the use of the service.</p> <p>Food supply is usually sufficient to meet demand. Users commented that they can easily produce a meal from what is available.</p>	<p>Reposition the Big Bocs Bwyd on the school site to increase its visibility. The new location will be closer to the training restaurant with the aim of linking the two resources.</p> <p>Promote the service in the wider community by having awareness events such as "Ready, Steady, Cook", and by promoting the Big Bocs Bwyd on social media.</p> <p>Develop the school grounds to grow more food. This includes planting fruit trees, making use of the poly tunnels along with development of the beehives.</p> <p>Fundraising for projects linked to Big Bocs Bwyd.</p>	<p>Ensure Big Bocs Bwyd is a feature of the school's School Improvement Plan for 23/24.</p> <p>Involvement of SLT in the development of Big Bocs Bwyd at operational and curriculum level.</p> <p>There is only a small group of pupils engaged with the project at present. The skills developed by the operation of the Big Bocs Bwyd project are transferable and applicable to all learners, not just those in an alternative curriculum. These clearly meet the expectations of the Curriculum for Wales and its Four Purposes. All children at the school could benefit from the experiential learning opportunities offered by involvement in the work of the Big Bocs Bwyd.</p> <p>Increasing the numbers of people from the community using the Big Bocs Bwyd could be a principal focus in the immediate term.</p> <p>Extending the awareness of the project within the school as well as promoting it with the local community could attract more users and raise the profile of the Big Bocs Bwyd and lay the ground for its re-launch. It feels.</p> <p>The school would appreciate more networking opportunities and support with grant applications. In this regard they would welcome a central co-ordinator from whom they could seek advice and support.</p>
School 6	<p>Big Bocs Bwyd is very well used by parents/carers at the school.</p> <p>Sufficient food is available with a broad choice of items.</p> <p>The school has established a relationship with a local bakery and the bakery shop donates to the Big Bocs Bwyd. These goods are well received by parents/carers</p>	<p>Further promotion of the Big Bocs Bwyd to families and local residents through newsletter, web site recipe suggestions and video technology.</p> <p>The Big Bocs Bwyd is currently run by a Teaching Assistant from the school which has implications for the school budget. The school is considering ways to involve parents/carers and other volunteers alongside the children to run the service.</p>	<p>Ensure Big Bocs Bwyd is a feature of the school's School Improvement Plan for 23/24.</p> <p>SLT involvement at operational and curriculum level. Integrating the project into the curriculum for all pupils at the school should be a priority. At present it is very much seen as a discrete project that sits alongside the work of the school, engaging selected groups of children from the "parliament".</p>

School ID	Current Offer and Community Views	Intended Next Steps	Could also consider...
	<p>and helps to provide families with packed lunches for the week.</p>		<p>Extending the project to include pupils in the growing of fruit and vegetables for sale in the Big Bocs Bwyd.</p> <p>Consider other products to sell included more meat products, drinks, and toiletries. (Requested by parents/carers in feedback)</p> <p>There is a seating area near the Big Bocs Bwyd and the children would like to see more use made of this, possibly by its incorporation into the project development. It could, for example, become a café area at some point in the future.</p> <p>The organisation of the project can be very time consuming. The school would welcome more networking opportunities and ideally the appointment of a central co-ordinator who could offer advice and support.</p>
School 7	<p>Big Bocs Bwyd is led and supported by the SLT.</p> <p>Big Bocs Bwyd is being set up and the school currently delivers the service from a trolley. The opening times vary depending on delivery of stock.</p> <p>The service is of value to users recognising the financial constraints faced by many families. By offering a “pay as you feel” service, they acknowledged that it was helping people who most needed it</p> <p>Food is provided by the Care Share scheme which meets current demand.</p> <p>The children currently have an opportunity to grow vegetables in the school garden but much of the produce is ready to harvest in late July and August (summer break).</p> <p>Selected groups of children are involved in the operation of the service. They assist the staff and promote the service in school assemblies.</p>	<p>The school is prioritising increasing community awareness as to the nature and availability of the Big Bocs Bwyd service. They are considering ways to publicise the project plan to create better signage to the site. The children also thought that it was important that more people to be aware of the service.</p> <p>The school plans to develop greater links with the local community, particularly with adult social care who use an adjacent site.</p> <p>The school is planning to develop a garden area for the children to grow food to sell in the Big Bocs Bwyd.</p>	<p>Ensure Big Bocs Bwyd is a feature of the school’s School Improvement Plan for 23/24.</p> <p>The project is very much in its infancy and the school has many plans to see it develop. Consequently, prioritising the setting up of the unit as a shop and having recognised days and times for opening could see more regular use being made of the service.</p> <p>The scheme is currently being operated by the head teacher, deputy head teacher and a group of pupils. Encouraging parents/carers and volunteers to run the Big Bocs Bwyd would ease the pressure on staff time and costs.</p> <p>Developing links with the local community could result in greater use of the service and encourage local businesses to donate to the project</p> <p>There is currently a small group of pupils involved directly with the project which is at an early stage of development. All children at the school could benefit from the experiential learning opportunities offered by involvement in the work of the Big Bocs Bwyd.</p>

School ID	Current Offer and Community Views	Intended Next Steps	Could also consider...
School 8	<p>The pupils in all year groups learn about the project through the curriculum coverage. Each class has a focus for a fortnight within the school year. These include gardening, creating ideas to develop the Big Bocs Bwyd, sustainability, fund raising, and the use of digital technology to create advertisements.</p> <p>Groups of children are involved in the running of the service. They rotate stock, check refrigerator temperatures, put vegetables into bags and re fill the shelves.</p> <p>The Big Bocs Bwyd is well used by families and the local community. Feedback on this use was invariably positive.</p> <p>As the cost of living increases have intensified the school has noted that the use of the service has increased. Many families are struggling financially, and this is the case even when parents/carers are in employment.</p> <p>Some parents/carers liked the social connections they make by using the service.</p> <p>The opening times assist in avoiding a rush of users at any one time. Some users visit before the end of the school day, whilst others visit after having collected their children.</p> <p>The amount and variety of food is generally considered to be good. Parents/carers comment that there is always sufficient food to create a meal.</p>	<p>The school curriculum is designed to integrate some of the Big Bocs Bwyd work. The school is looking to develop this further by enabling staff to plan further work within the curriculum.</p> <p>The service is well used by the families and the community, but the children see the need to further promote it. They suggested making posters, speaking in school assemblies, and having open days for parents/carers to learn about the project. Project leads are open to their ideas.</p> <p>The school is working with the charity "Under the Sky" to develop the garden area for growing fruit and vegetables. They also want to create more signage, create a sitting area alongside the Big Bocs Bwyd, and to purchase a coffee machine. This is planned for 23/24.</p> <p>The school would like to engage in more networking events and to share examples of grant applications etc.</p>	<p>Ensure Big Bocs Bwyd is a feature of the school's School Improvement Plan for 23/24.</p> <p>Led by SLT, continue to build on the existing integration of the Big Bocs Bwyd into the curriculum.</p> <p>Further SLT-led planning for optimise and increase the two weeks each year that children focus on Big Bocs Bwyd could be a priority.</p> <p>Professional development for staff to emphasise the need of linking the Big Bocs Bwyd with the school curriculum and the expectations of the Curriculum for Wales.</p> <p>Provide non-contact time for staff to collaborate and develop the curriculum for the school in relation to the project.</p>
School 9	<p>The Big Bocs Bwyd is well established and the feedback from parents/carers is favourable.</p> <p>The school outreach worker is responsible for organising and promoting the Big Bocs Bwyd. She visits the community groups to encourage parents/carers to use the service.</p> <p>The volunteers like the involvement of the Year 6 children in the project. They help to unpack, fill shelves, stock take and buy snack for the classes.</p>	<p>The school would like to see a greater footfall and hope to make links with the adjacent Children's Centre.</p> <p>The school has plans for the pupils to grow food to sell in Big Bocs Bwyd. Parents/carers have been invited to a community day to prepare the raised beds and the children will then plant and grow the vegetables in the next few months.</p> <p>Greater involvement of parents/carers by promoting the scheme at coffee mornings and via liaison with the Children's Centre.</p>	<p>Ensure Big Bocs Bwyd is a feature of the school's School Improvement Plan for 23/24.</p> <p>Designate a member of the SLT to lead the project with the outreach worker currently in post.</p> <p>Further integrate Big Bocs Bwyd into the curriculum for the school. The project is currently being organised by the outreach worker for the school who is very enthusiastic and has many ideas to extend its use in the community. However, it is very much seen as a project that sits</p>

School ID	Current Offer and Community Views	Intended Next Steps	Could also consider...
	<p>The service is easy to access. It is universally available and non-judgemental.</p> <p>Users feel that the choice on offer is good. The opportunity to purchase frozen food is a positive additionality to the offer. The extension of the product offer beyond food is seen as a real help, especially for a family with young children. They can buy such things as nappies, bibs, and baby clothes.</p> <p>The service has many regular users who visit every week. Parents/carers pay a donation for the food they purchase.</p> <p>The volunteers are helpful and offer suggestions for meal creation from the available food. They will often ask the number in the family and prepare a bag of groceries to make a family meal.</p>	<p>To produce fliers to display at local shops and at the day Centre for older residents.</p> <p>The school would like to set up a seating area for parents/carers to socialise. They hope to attract new users by hosting taster sessions for parents/carers and children. The pupils also suggested that serving hot food could be an attraction.</p> <p>Volunteers and children would like to set up a recipe wall where parents/carers can pin their favourite recipes.</p> <p>The pupils would like to see the Big Bocs Bwyd expanded by having more space for food and by opening every day. They thought that this could be supported by having more volunteers and by allowing the children to help more often.</p> <p>The pupils want to grow food to sell. They talked about different farming methods. They appreciated that they could learn about such things as the growing cycle through this experience.</p> <p>Children suggested using the food to create hot meals to sell.</p>	<p>alongside the work of the school with selected groups of children involved.</p> <p>Involve SLT in the strategic leadership of Big Bocs Bwyd with the head of the Children's Centre.</p> <p>Develop greater links with the Children's Centre, alongside the school. This could involve attending community sessions at the centre, sharing resources, inviting staff of the children's centre to engage with the service, and promoting the service through Flying Start social media platforms.</p> <p>Seek to overcome the perceived stigma to using the service by promoting the positive aspects of the programme. This would entail emphasising the programme as an initiative that reduces food waste as well as one that seeks to help families financially.</p>
School 10	<p>The running of Big Bocs Bwyd is organised by the Family Engagement Officer, assisted by teaching assistants from the school. The overall organisation and curriculum planning for the Big Bocs Bwyd is co-ordinated by the deputy head.</p> <p>The pupils in the deputy head's class help to stock Big Bocs Bwyd and offer general help with its organisation.</p> <p>The school has tried to change perceptions of the service in a positive manner by promoting it as a community venture. There is universal entitlement to use, regardless of attendance at the school. As such, some of the older residents in the locality use the service when they might otherwise have been reticent to do so.</p> <p>The school promotes Big Bocs Bwyd as an opportunity to reduce food waste. Any left-over food is donated. Left over tomatoes, for example are given to a</p>	<p>The school has plans to create a social seating area for parents/carers.</p> <p>The pupils suggested setting up a café selling hot drinks, where customers could sit and chat.</p> <p>The volunteers would like to prepare more 'promotion bags aligned with seasonality and special events.</p> <p>The volunteers and the school staff recognise that there is a need to source a greater variety of food; this is a priority.</p> <p>The children would like to grow food to sell. They would also like to be involved in cooking and preparing food such as cakes and pizzas. They suggested a school visit to a factory to learn more about food production</p>	<p>Ensure Big Bocs Bwyd is a feature of the school's School Improvement Plan for 23/24.</p> <p>Integrate Big Bocs Bwyd into the curriculum for the school. The project is currently being organised by the outreach worker for the school who is very enthusiastic and has many ideas to extend its use in the community. However, it is very much seen as a project that sits alongside the work of the school with selected small groups of children involved.</p> <p>Currently only one class is involved in the Big Bocs Bwyd project. They gain valuable skills throughout their time in the class, but their involvement ends at the end of the academic year. There could be opportunities to share this peer expertise with pupils in other classes and extend the overall awareness of the project throughout the school.</p> <p>Optimise opportunities for pupils at the school to cook with the surplus food, (instead of giving it away) giving</p>

School ID	Current Offer and Community Views	Intended Next Steps	Could also consider...
	<p>community café locally which will use them to make chutney.</p> <p>The pupils appreciate the environmental benefits of the project. They recognised that it helps to reduce food wastage and that surplus food can be cooked and sold. The children have developed their IT skills as part of the project, including recording a cookery demonstration to promote the service</p> <p>Very positive feedback was received from parents/carers who use the service. They appreciate the financial help they receive, particularly with the current cost of living crisis. All items are 50p and sometimes free if it's the end of the week.</p> <p>The opening times suit the parents/carers, many use the service after collecting their children from school. The children help to choose what they want for their evening meal. This gives them a chance to try new foods and prepare different meals. The parents/carers though that t it encouraged healthy eating.</p> <p>The "theme weeks" are very popular. These include a "Tea for 50p" bag of food – bread rolls and tin of soup and a Christmas dinner bag for £5 with everything for a family Christmas meal.</p>		<p>them authentic experiences, helping them to learn about where food comes from and promote healthy eating.</p>
School 11	<p>Positive feedback from the parents who feel that there is a real need for this service in the area.</p> <p>It is open for one morning per week for two hours.</p> <p>A group of volunteers from the local community run the BBB on a rota.</p> <p>Some parents commented that the variety of food is not as good as it was when the BBB first opened. Some of the items delivered are not always appealing to parents, eg seaweed crisps or oat milk.</p> <p>Due to financial reasons the school has had to reduce the amount that it purchases from FareShare. As such, the amount of items each parent can buy is sometimes restricted because of insufficient supply of food. A fixed</p>	<p>A teacher from the school co-ordinates the project but is not always available; the school would like to address this so more stable arrangements are adopted.</p> <p>The children suggested that they would like to be involved in running the BBB alongside the volunteers.</p> <p>The children would like to build units about food and Big Bocs Bwyd into their class-based learning.</p>	<p>Adopting BBB into their SIP and identify a member of the SLT to lead its development.</p> <p>Reflect on whether the school has the capacity and intention to optimise learning for children and the community from BBB.</p> <p>Develop more secure food partnerships with providers.</p> <p>A high turnover of staff, including a change in the senior leadership team, has meant that many of the staff are not aware of the vision and purpose of BBB. The should now school plans to revisit the purpose of BBB with staff and provide training as to its aims and values.</p> <p>A relaunch the BBB to families in the next academic year.</p>

School ID	Current Offer and Community Views	Intended Next Steps	Could also consider...
	<p>amount is charged to families. £4 for 4 fridge items and 6 shelf items.</p> <p>Parents see it as a service for everyone as school staff and members of the local community use it.</p> <p>The children recognised the benefit to parents as they can “buy food when they drop their children off for school. They don’t have to travel far to shop”</p> <p>The school aims to ensure that food is not wasted. Any surplus food is sold to staff or given as extra to families. The volunteers like that it is promoted as a sustainability project rather than a food bank. Parents don’t perceive there to be any stigma to using the service.</p> <p>Families would like the BBB to be open in school holidays, especially the six week summer holiday.</p>		<p>To run the BBB initially with the school Eco Committee before extending it to all children at the school.</p> <p>To extend the opening hours of BBB, set up a café, and grow food for BBB.</p>
School 12	<p>Parents spoke favourably about BBB. Many of the parents used the service twice each week.</p> <p>Some parents donate food to the BBB. They may not use the service themselves but feel part of the project by donating a bag of groceries to be sold.</p> <p>Parents said that the volunteers are helpful, offering suggestions for meal creation from the available food. One parent commented that one of the volunteers helped her to put together a meal for her whole family.</p> <p>Most parents thought that there was sufficient choice of food available. They liked the food that was available, stating that this usually met their needs. Some parents commented that they would like the opportunity to purchase more tinned items, meal packs and home grown fruit and vegetables. Cleaning products were also requested.</p> <p>Parents appreciated the financial savings that were made by using the BBB. They thought that the fact it is a “pay as you can” shop was very beneficial</p>	<p>A school governor is involved with the project and is very enthusiastic. She has a thorough knowledge of how to rotate the garden through the year in order to yield the maximum amount of home-grown fruit and vegetables. She offers advice to the school gardening club and the school would like to build on this in future.</p> <p>Older children at the school undertake an enterprise activity during the year. They baked cakes, calculated the costs, marketed and then sold the product in the BBB</p> <p>Older children at the school undertake an enterprise activity during the year. They baked cakes, calculated the costs, marketed and then sold the product in the BBB the school would like to extend this to other year groups.</p> <p>The BBB is well established but the school still has plans to expand.</p> <p>The school has secured funding to develop raised beds so that the children can grow fruit and vegetables. The children in nursery and reception will plant the crops. They will cook the food they grow and sell any surplus in the BBB.</p> <p>Develop a compost area to prepare compost for the garden so the children can use food past its sell by date .</p>	<p>Asking the school governor to write a case study of her plans for the garden area. This could be shared with other schools via the BBB website.</p> <p>Currently, the children grow food to cook and eat in class. Any surplus food is sold in the BBB. Growing food specifically for the BBB would generate more income and satisfy parents request for more fresh fruit and vegetables.</p> <p>There are two volunteers who organise and run the BBB currently. This amounts to a high level of responsibility. Having more volunteers on a rota would ease the burden</p>

School ID	Current Offer and Community Views	Intended Next Steps	Could also consider...
	<p>The school has extended the service to offer more than just food. There is a "Sharing Shack" adjacent to the BBB where parents can access clothes, games, books etc all free of charge.</p>	<p>The governor with an interest in gardening plans to offer training to staff who lack confidence when gardening.</p> <p>Nursery and reception classes will keep a journal on the garden through the year and record its development.</p>	