

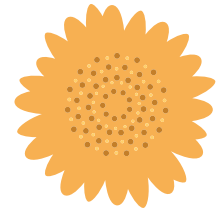
# Big Bocs Bwyd Summary

Phase 3

July 2023

**Big  
BOCS  
Bwyd**

# Big Bocs Bwyd Summary



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.

Big Bocs Bwyd has been successfully launched in several areas of Wales and is making a difference in many communities. Bocs Bwyd is a future-facing project which is ripe for upscaling and development.

The aspirations for childhood worldwide as designated by the United Nations (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Sustainability Development Goals) 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.

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.

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. 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.

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. 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.

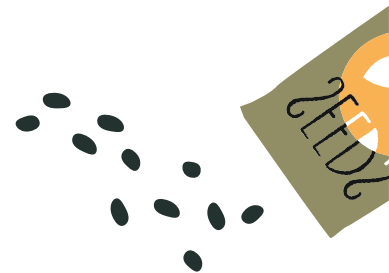
Sustainability, food security and food literacy are the golden threads that augment personal agency, multigenerational cooperation and community collaboration within the project. Big Bocs Bwyd emulates community action in reducing food waste through its partnerships by raising awareness, modelling good practice and through direct

messaging. The project has introduced a simple cycle of food economy in many areas.

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



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. 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. 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. The experiences from the project are paving the way for a better ‘food-informed’ nation which embodies the aspirations of Curriculum for Wales.

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.

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.

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.

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.

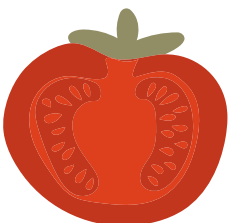
The Secondary Food Goals closely reflect the current Memorandum of Understanding of Big Bocs Bwyd and provide a framework to build upon and could become the “hallmarks of gold standard practice” for schools within the Big Bocs Bwyd project in the future.

The Future Generations Act (2015) puts in place seven wellbeing goals that public bodies must work to achieve and take into consideration across all their decision-making. Most of the seven wellbeing goals of the FGA present clearly within the Big Bocs Bwyd project. 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.

The three key elements of Community Focused Schools are foundations of Big Bocs Bwyd as a community food asset; Family Engagement, Community Engagement and Multi-agency Engagement. With food poverty identified as a barrier to learning, the home, the 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.

Taking the core elements of key national policies in Wales, 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 2022onwards, presents a significant shift in mindset and action for school leaders and other organisations. This is a work in progress. Big Bocs Bwyd provides a template and way forward for schools and organisations grappling



with this challenge and is one that should be built upon.

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. 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.

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.

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.

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.

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. Simultaneously, they will 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.

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.

