

# The Route to Health Improvement

## Notable Practice Case Study

This practice relates to one (or more) of the below key features :				
Corporate Culture	Policy Development ✓	Collaboration ✓	Capacity Building	Governance

### Cardiff Health Alliance – Food & Health Network

#### Background & Context:

The Cardiff Health Alliance recognises the importance of food on the health of the population. In its initial analysis of the determinants of health and local priorities, the Health Alliance highlighted food as a key area to be addressed if health improvement was to be improved and set up a multi-agency steering group to develop a Food & Health Strategy and Action Plan for Cardiff.

#### Cardiff Food & Health Strategy

The Strategy provided a holistic approach and refers to food in its widest sense and the issues of sustainability, food quality, availability, education and nutrition are all inherent within it. The strategy provides an integrated approach and tackles the widest impact of food on the health and well being of Cardiff residents.

The Food and Health Strategy was developed through collaboration between people working in food sustainability, environmental health, trading standards, social services, schools and further/higher education, health promotion, community dietetics and the voluntary sector. This collaboration involved sharing skills, knowledge and expertise, and created a strong foundation for improving current and future food initiatives in the city. An aim of the strategy was to encourage links across food initiatives to provide support and ensure consistency of approach.

#### Description & Characteristics:

##### Cardiff Food & Health Network

Following on from the collaborative, developmental approach, one of the outcomes of the Strategy was the establishment of a Food & Health Network, launched in January 2006. The Network meets quarterly and the membership consists of people working in a diverse range of food and health related activities, particularly those with a community development role. Meetings have focused on a range of issues and activities, including Food Co-ops; developing the Appetite for Life consultation response; food focused award schemes, local information exchange and the next meeting will consider the issues of obesity in Cardiff.

##### Food in Schools Workshop

A recent event held by the Network was a 'Food in Schools Workshop'. The event, held in a high school, with delegates offered a school lunch, was attended by a wide range of stakeholders interested in school activities and child nutrition. The audience included headteachers, teachers, governors, school auxiliary staff including nurses and catering, plus professionals from a wide range of disciplines including Environmental Health, Trading Standards, community dietetics, oral health, catering, academia, etc. The event focused on the principles of the 'Appetite for Life' consultation, and using health impact assessment (HIA) as a tool, considered how to develop a whole school approach to food in schools.

Presentations were given on:

- Obesity issues by Stephen Monaghan, Cardiff Public Health Director;
- School catering services and 'Appetite for Life' by Sue Eakers, Head of Cardiff Schools Catering;
- The importance of school meals at home and in Europe by Prof. Kevin Morgan, Cardiff

University

- Welsh Assembly Government's perspective on food in schools from Ruth Conway, WAG
- Health Impact Assessment by Alison Golby, HIA Support Unit

The afternoon session consisted of delegates each attending two of six workshops and considering food in schools in relation to the following influences, using a HIA approach.

- Lifestyles
- Economic Conditions
- Social and Community Influences
- Macro-Economic, Environmental and sustainability factors
- Living and environmental conditions
- Education and training

The outcomes of the workshop will be used to help inform the work in preparing to assist schools in the implementation of Appetite for Life, which will include the development of a tool kit for schools.

### **Why was/is this initiative/approach successful?**

- The event was fortunate in securing interesting and informed speakers.
- The workshop was well attended by over 60 delegates from a broad range of backgrounds, providing a diverse and knowledgeable audience. The level of interest and commitment to the topic meant that delegates were attentive, keen to contribute and appreciated the health impact approach. This resulted in well informed discussion in the workshops and useful contributions being made.
- The timing of the event contributed towards the success, scheduled between the consultation response to Appetite for Life and the publication of final guidance, when people had time to learn more about different approaches before the pressure of implementation was upon them.

### **Measures of Success:**

- Willingness of high profile speakers to contribute to the event.
- Number of delegates
- Range of delegates
- Scope and number of audience questions to the panel of speakers
- Level of debate during the workshops
- Positive event evaluation responses

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