



Prosiect Gwyliau Gwaith Chwarae
Playworks Holiday Project



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Playworks Holiday

Project 2025-26

Guidance for local authorities

Effective from 1 April 2025

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Foreword

The Playworks Holiday Project (a holiday hunger initiative) aims to support access to increased play opportunities for children and young people during the school holidays and provide healthy food / snacks.

Feeding children over the school holidays, when breakfast clubs and free school meals are not available, can be a challenge for some families. No child should have to go hungry, and to help support those families, the Welsh Government intends to support tackling holiday hunger through playwork settings in 2025-26.

Play is a vital element in children's development and something that can provide a strong protective factor in children's lives. Playing and staffed play provision positively impacts on children and families who are experiencing poverty. Playing can shield children from the negative aspects of poverty, helping them to develop their inner resources and build resilience.

About this guidance

1. This is non-statutory guidance from the Welsh Government to support local authorities to plan their approach to utilising their Playworks Holiday Project funding allocation during the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.
2. Queries about this guidance should be directed to:

Childcareandplaymailbox@gov.wales

1 Aims

The main aims of the Playworks Holiday Project are to provide better play opportunities for children in vulnerable communities and to realise the benefits this brings in terms of child development and activity levels. In addition, the programme aims to improve outcomes for children in relation to holiday hunger by complementing the School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) Food and Fun. This should reduce the financial pressure on parents and carers during school holidays.

Playing and staffed playwork provision positively impacts on children and families. The provision appeals to families who benefit from early preventative systems. Playing helps children to develop their inner resources and build resilience to difficulties and uncertainties in their home and other parts of their lives. Therefore, the focus for 2025-26 will be on staffed playwork provision, which will continue to help children and young people recover from the consequences of the Coronavirus pandemic and promote play opportunities.

Local authorities should continue re-engaging with the playwork sector where these links have been severed due to the lack of funding. Local authorities should also aim to make available / increase the provision of healthy food / snacks at playwork provision.

Primary aims of the project:

The provision of enriched play opportunities, which are free at point of access or at a nominal charge of no more than £1, and positive experiences such as:

- socialising
- being active
- having fun / being happy
- learning something new

The project also provides additional benefits by supporting the sustainability of playwork settings and supporting parents, families and communities.

To help reduce holiday hunger by providing food / snacks to:

- encourage healthier eating
- reduce financial pressure on parents / carers

2 Expected approach for funding

Local authorities should plan their approach based on the staffed playwork services available to them as identified in their Play Sufficiency Assessments. This is to take into account the differing landscape for play across Wales and support the re-establishment or setting up of new playwork provision, where it is not currently available and does not negatively impact on existing playwork, childcare or other similar provision.

Priority approach

Prioritised approach to allocating the Playworks Holiday Project Funding 2025-26:

| | |
|------------|---|
| Priority 1 | Extend the hours or days of existing playwork provision |
|------------|---|

| | |
|------------|---|
| Priority 2 | <p>Local authorities should look at the gaps in play provision in areas of need and where gaps are identified, they can use funding to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• re-establishment of playwork settings that have ceased due to lack of funding or expansion of existing settings (preferred approach)• establishment of new playwork services. In this case, local authorities must demonstrate that new provision does not negatively impact on existing Care Inspectorate Wales registered provision or School Holiday Enrichment Programme• if new provision is required, funding can be used for all set up and running costs, for example insurance, equipment, maintenance, staff, training, management and administration |
|------------|---|

| | |
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| Priority 3 | <p>Add food to existing community, open access play or out of school childcare provision, as this is where value can be added at minimum cost. Each local authority must ensure that food / healthy snacks are provided at some provision.</p> |
|------------|---|

Funding can be used as follows:

- to fund food, healthy snacks and drinks (it does not need to be a hot meal) guidance on healthier food and drinks is attached at Annex A
- if there are community groups providing free food for Playworks Holiday Project activities, you are able to provide them with funding to improve the quality and nutrition of the food
- to fund the purchase of equipment required to provide food, for example refrigeration, cooler boxes, equipment, plates, cutlery, reusable drinking bottles etc
- to cover the costs of staff to support the provision of food so that food provision does not detract from the play opportunities provided
- building the skill base of existing staff with regards to food provision, for example food hygiene training or healthy eating

Note: Meals can also be provided via the Playworks Holiday Project at this time at the discretion of local authorities.

NOTE: The offer of food must be for all participants not just the vulnerable, to avoid any stigmatisation.

Points to consider when making food available:

- food must be provided by a food provider registered to provide food with their local authority and hold relevant Food Hygiene certificates, or providers must hold such certificates themselves

- providers must obtain consent to provide food to children, ideally, as part of their registration process. This consent must include information on allergy risks and treatment plans. Risk assessments relating to food provision must be carried out

- Priority 4 To support the cost effectiveness of only funding food and support the development from playwork to youth work as children grow up:
- consider funding the addition of food to youth settings that have trained playwork staff and provide rich play opportunities
 - this funding cannot be used to fund youth provision

- Priority 5 Consider funding places in childcare or out of school settings for children at risk of holiday hunger where other provision does not exist, or the additional benefits of childcare and play will make a significant impact on the child.

What else can be funded?

- up to 10% administration costs
- staff time – this can be funding for a fixed post or a secondment / part time post. Funding can be claimed from 1 April 2025 until 31 March 2026 in order to enable engagement with playwork provision and finalise claims. **Job descriptions or itemised key tasks must be provided as supporting evidence**
- bespoke play resources / packs for families with vulnerable children

This list is not exhaustive, if local authorities have any queries regarding what can be funded, email: Childcareandplaymailbox@gov.wales.

All costs relating to provision for example travel, cleaning, costs incurred in order to comply with risk assessments can be claimed from this funding.

What cannot be funded?

- the funding should not be used for junk food, sweets and unhealthy treats, either as part of meals or snacks or as part of activities (for example as prizes for games)
- the funding should not be used to fund childcare or places in out of school holiday provision unless the children are vulnerable, or meet the requirements set out at Priority 5

3 Settings eligibility

- 3.1 Only staffed Playwork settings can be funded through this programme. Registered open access play settings must have regard to the [National Minimum Standards for regulated childcare](#) for children up to the age of 12 years and the regulatory requirements.
- 3.2 Settings do not have to be registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to be eligible for funding, however if they are unregistered they must ensure and demonstrate that they operate within the requirements of the Child Minding and Day Care Exceptions (Wales) Order 2010¹ (as amended) and the [Working together to safeguard people: Code of safeguarding practice](#). Open access playwork provision must also confirm that they apply the First Claim; a framework for playwork quality assessment² principles. These enable playworkers, and any other adults with an interest in children's play, to analyse, by observation and reflection, the play environments they operate. It gives a framework to assess the quality of what is being provided and experienced.
- 3.3 All staff working at the setting must have a valid Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- 3.4 All settings must have a safeguarding policy and key staff must have received appropriate training.
- 3.5 Risk-benefit assessments relating to playwork provision are required. Information about Play and Risk, including an implementation guide, a risk-benefit assessment template and a worked example, is available for those who do not already have a system in place.³

4 Funding criteria

- 4.1 Funding should not result in any stigmatisation of children. Open access playwork provision should be targeted within vulnerable communities and where vulnerable children are known to live. All children within the community will be able to attend but professionals can target known vulnerable individuals to encourage attendance by those most in need.
- 4.2 Where children are funded to attend paid settings, other children and parents / carers should not be made aware of their funding status.
- 4.3 Local authorities must ensure that any initiatives funded are in line with their 2025-26 Play Sufficiency Action plan. They must consult with colleagues within their local authority as part of their planning, in order to make sure this funding is used in a complementary way and does not unintentionally negatively impact on other related areas of work, in particular:

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2010/2839/article/15/made>

² <https://play.wales/the-first-claim-a-framework-for-playwork-quality-assessment/>

³ <https://play.wales/play/play-and-risk/>

- childcare
- education regarding the School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP). However, SHEP only operates during the summer months
- those involved in child poverty initiatives.

5 Coverage

- 5.1 The funding can be used for **all** school holidays in the 2025-26 financial year, as required by the local authority:

Easter 2025

Whitsun half term 2025

Summer 2025

October half term 2025

Christmas holidays 2025

February half term 2026

Easter 2026 – **NB: 30 and 31 March 2026 only**

The funding can also be used for weekend provision, if there is a need.

- 5.2 Funding can be used for settings catering for children from 0 to 17 years (up to the age of 25 for disabled children) with a focus on children of school age.
- 5.3 Local authorities are asked to consider using the funding with respect to Matter B – providing for diverse needs:
- children across the age range set out in 5.2
 - Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic children
 - Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children
 - disabled children and those with additional learning needs, including neurodivergence
 - children for whom Welsh is their first language or attend Welsh medium schools
 - other recorded cultural and language factors

6 Media pack

- 6.1 All creative assets developed to promote your activities should adhere to the [Welsh Language Standards - Communication and Marketing guidelines](#) and be branded The Playworks Holiday Project. Branding assets are available to you via Objective Connect.

7 How funding will be allocated and transferred

- 7.1 The funding will be allocated to the 22 Local authorities in Wales calculated using the sum of the three main schools Indicator Based Assessments (IBAs) from the local government settlement funding formula. The formula is intended to reflect variations in the need to spend which might be expected if all authorities responded in a similar way to the demand for services in their area. This is the mechanism for distributing Revenue Support Grant (RSG)⁴ to unitary authority and police forces. It has also been used by the Welsh Government to allocate other grants. Local authorities have experience of funding being allocated using this method and are involved in the development of the formula.
- 7.2 Local authorities will be expected to use local provision and knowledge to allocate the funding to settings or organisations best placed to carry out the programme.

This approach is recommended as local knowledge of provision and areas of need is essential to the success of this programme. As playwork provision is structured and delivered differently across local authorities, this allows them to utilise the funding in the most appropriate way.

- 7.3 The funding will be distributed via the Children and Communities Grant (CCG).
- 7.4 Local authorities are expected to make the best use of the funding allocated to maximise the outcomes for children.

8 Areas of need and vulnerability

- 8.1 This funding should be focussed in areas where children are at higher risk of being vulnerable.
- 8.2 Local authorities will have local knowledge of these areas but the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD)⁵ was designed to identify the small areas in Wales that are the most deprived. The geographic areas used in the calculation of WIMD are the 1,909 Lower layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Wales. The average population of an LSOA is 1,600. Local authorities should ensure their funding is accessible to the most income deprived LSOAs in their area.

9 Monitoring, review and evaluation

- 9.1 By receiving this funding, local authorities are committing to providing data and information to monitor the impact and inform the evaluation of this programme. This will be in an Excel spreadsheet format, which will be distributed to local authority play lead officers before the start of the 2025-26 financial year.

⁴ [Local government revenue and capital settlement: final 2024 to 2025 | GOV.WALES](#)

⁵ <https://gov.wales/welsh-index-multiple-deprivation>

- 9.2 Evaluation is key to measuring the effectiveness of the programme and informing any future programmes of this type. However, evaluation must be proportionate and not detract from the rich play opportunities being provided as part of the programme. Data collected through the monitoring forms will be used to assess whether or not funding has met the Playworks Holiday Project aims.
- 9.3 As the Playworks Holiday Project has now been incorporated into the Children and Communities Grant (CCG), local authorities are also required to complete mandatory monitoring information in line with the CCG timeline and process.

10 Useful contacts

| Organisation | Contact |
|---------------------|---|
| Welsh Government | Linda Mann / Emma Battenbough Childcareandplaymailbox@gov.wales |
| Play Wales | Marianne Mannello Tel: 029 20 486050 Welsh line: 029 22 409795 Marianne@playwales.org.uk https://www.playwales.org.uk/eng/contactus |

Annex A – Revised November 2024

Guidance on Healthier Food and Drinks

INTRODUCTION

This guidance covers a range of food provision options from tuck shops to hot snacks and meals. Different approaches will work in different settings.

Why is providing healthier food and drinks important?

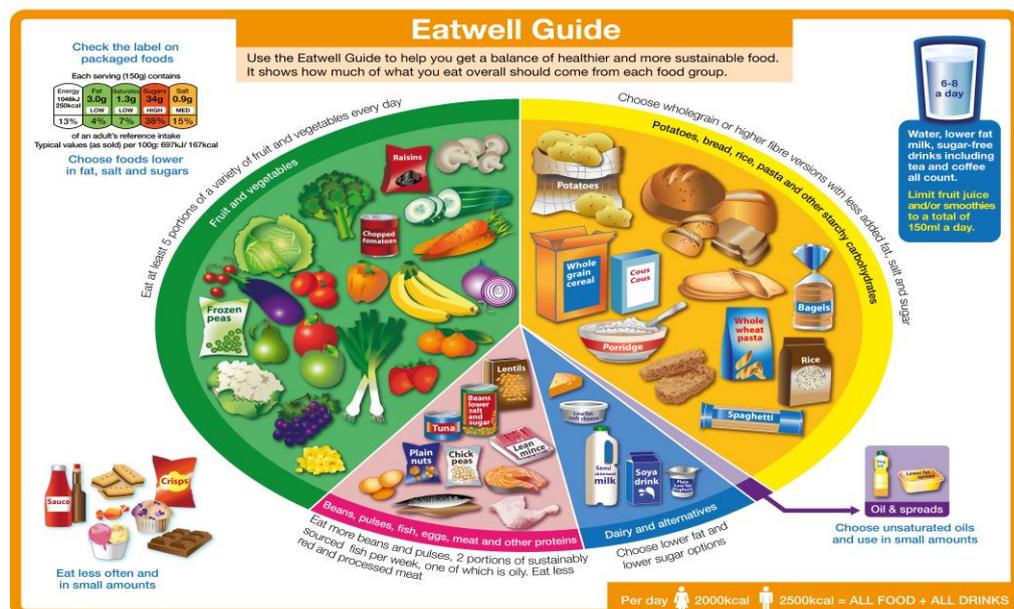
Ensuring children and young people eat and drink well can:

- Help them achieve and maintain a healthy weight
- Help ensure healthy growth and development
- Maintain energy levels throughout the day
- Establish healthy eating habits for life
- Offer long-term protection against diseases including heart and circulatory diseases, some cancers, diabetes and osteoporosis
- Help young people look and feel great
- Help improve mood, concentration and performance

CHOOSING A HEALTHY DIET

Choosing a variety of different foods every day is the key to eating well. No single food can provide the essential nutrients needed on a daily basis, so variety and balance are what counts.

The 'Eatwell Guide' is intended as a healthy eating guide for adults and children over the age of 2 years. It shows the different types of food we need to eat – and in what proportions – to have a well balanced and healthy diet.



This means, for most people, choosing every day:

- plenty of fruit and vegetables
- plenty of potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy foods
- some milk and dairy products
- some meat, fish, eggs, beans, nuts and other non-dairy sources of protein
- limiting foods and drinks high in fat, salt and/or sugar.

The 'Eatwell Guide' is a useful tool for helping people put healthy eating into practice and can be used as a basic guide when planning food provision.

Cultural and Special Diets

Any special dietary need of a child which is due to the child's health, religious persuasion, racial origin or cultural background must be catered for. For more information, see Section 4 of the Food and Nutrition Best Practice Guidance for childcare providers: [Food and nutrition guidance for childcare providers | GOV.WALES](#)

Fluids: keeping topped up

Keeping well hydrated is just as important as healthy eating. Adults and children need at least 6-8 cups of fluids a day (about 1.2 litres) - more in hot weather and after physical activity. Water is lost throughout the day through urine, sweating and breathing and every drop needs to be replaced. A combination of drinks (and foods) can help with this. Healthier drinks are those low in added sugar. Some can also provide vital nutrients too.

Sustainable food choices

Food production, packaging, transport and waste have a significant environmental impact. By choosing sustainable foods and minimising wastage, we can have a positive impact on our local and global environment as well as our health. Think about reducing packaging or using reusable items where possible, limiting the use of plastic, and exploring any options to buy food locally produced.

Health and Safety

Anyone involved in food preparation needs to have completed the required health and safety training. Contact your local authority environmental health service for guidance.

Food Safety, Hygiene and Allergens

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) website provides information on food safety including best before and use-by dates, food hygiene and guidance on allergens,

including the 14 allergens that need to be declared by food law. Please see the link: [Food safety | Food Standards Agency](#)

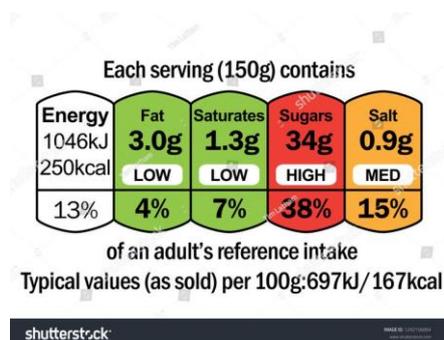
The FSA provides a free online allergy training course, find more information here: [Online food safety training | Food Standards Agency](#)

Also, be aware of choking hazards in babies and young children, please see link: [Food safety advice on choking hazards in settings - Foundation Years](#)

More information on food safety management procedures can be found here: [Safer food, better business \(SFBB\) | Food Standards Agency](#)

Identifying healthier foods: Look out for front of pack nutrition labels

Many food manufacturers and retailers display nutritional information on the front of food packaging - front of pack nutrition labels which include red, amber and green traffic lights that show whether a product has high, medium or low amounts of fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt.



Most foods will have a mixture of colours, but by picking products with more greens and ambers you'll be making a healthier choice.

A GUIDE TO HEALTHIER SNACKS

Children and young people have high energy and nutrient needs, and what they eat at mealtimes may not be enough to meet these needs. Healthy nutritious snacks can make an important contribution to overall energy, protein, vitamin and mineral intake. They also play a big part in helping to manage hunger between meals.

Ideally snacks should:

- Be planned
- Come from a variety of food groups
- Contribute to meeting the balance in the 'Eatwell Guide'.

Here are some examples of types of healthier snack provision:

Ambient (room temperature) snack foods

| Examples of healthier foods | Examples of less healthy foods |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit in natural juices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processed fruit bars containing added sugar or fat • Fruit in syrup |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuts and seeds without added salt or sugar* • Fruit, nut and seed bars* • Baked crisps, low fat crisps** • Plain pretzels** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coated or salted nut and seed snacks* • Any type of confectionary • Ordinary crisps • Deep fried snacks • Bombay mix |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain biscuits (e.g. rich tea, digestive) • Crackers • Oat cakes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filled, chocolate-coated and sweet biscuits |

*possible allergens - see page 12 for info on Food Safety, hygiene and allergens. Also, potential choking hazard for young children - see

<https://foundationyears.org.uk/2021/09/food-safety-advice-on-choking-hazards-in-settings/>

**watch the salt content – try and choose lower salt varieties

Chilled or fresh snacks

| Examples of healthier foods | Examples of less healthy foods |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh fruit • Fruit salad pots • Vegetable pieces with dips (choose lower fat options) • Salad pots | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit pies |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast pots with skimmed, 1% or semi skimmed milk • Teacakes • Currant and fruit breads • Bread, English muffins and crumpets • Bagels • Porridge • Malt loaf | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast cereals coated with sugar or chocolate • Croissants • American style muffins • Danish pastries • Doughnuts |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low fat/sugar yogurts or fromage frais | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full fat yoghurt and fromage frais |

| | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheese and crackers | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filled sandwiches, rolls, baguettes, pitta breads and wraps e.g. tuna and sweetcorn, salmon and cucumber, chicken salad, humous and grated carrot. (Choose brown and wholemeal breads as well as white and use front of pack labels to choose healthier options) • Pasta salads and pasta mixes • Pizza slice with healthier topping, e.g. chicken & mushroom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat pies • Sausage rolls • Meat or vegetable pasties • Pork pie • Scotch egg • Spring rolls • Samosa |

Chilled drinks

| Examples of healthier drinks | Examples of less healthy drinks |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain water (still or sparkling) • Skimmed, 1% or semi skimmed milk • Fruit/ vegetable juice and/or fruit smoothies (limit to a total of 150ml a day. Only at mealtimes) • Squash with no added sugar • Milkshakes made from skimmed, 1% or semi skimmed milk and fruit • Yoghurt drinks made from low fat yoghurt and fruit • Fresh flavoured milk with less than 5% added sugars • Flavoured unsweetened waters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flavoured milk with more than 5% added sugars • Sugary squash • Sugary and fizzy drinks |

A GUIDE TO HEALTHIER MEALS

If you have access to a kitchen and prepare food (hot or cold) to serve to children and young people, then this section is for you.

Catering tips

| Foods | Healthier catering tip |
|------------------------|---|
| Sandwiches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try wholegrain, granary, seeded, half and half bread, wraps or wholemeal pitta bread • Use reduced fat spreads based on olive, sunflower or rapeseed oil • Fill with lean meat, salmon, egg or tuna mayonnaise (using reduced fat mayo), reduced fat cheese or humous • Include lettuce, sliced tomato, cucumber, grated carrot • Try toasted sandwiches or paninis with reduced fat cheese or less of a grated strong cheese |
| Jacket potatoes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace butter with a lower fat polyunsaturated spread (see above) and use less or none at all if adding other toppings • Fill with tuna mayonnaise (made with reduced fat mayo), baked beans, cottage cheese, grated cheese and pickle, chilli or vegetable curry |

| Foods | Healthier catering tip |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Burgers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try serving veggie burgers with relish • Buy good quality lean burgers and cook under the grill slowly to release extra fat • Serve in a wholegrain roll with salad and relish • Serve with small portions of wedges or oven chips |
| Breakfast cereals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include low sugar, low salt, high fibre options alongside, or instead of, sugary varieties • Serve with skimmed, 1% or semi skimmed milk |
| Pasta noodles and rice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try different shaped pasta or noodles or rice (wholemeal, or a mixture of white and wholemeal, where possible) • Serve more pasta, noodles or rice and less sauce • Serve with tomato based sauces rather than creamy ones and crusty bread rather than garlic bread • Sauces are a good way to sneak in extra veg – cut it up finely |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Fruit and vegetables | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a good variety of different fresh fruits • Try fruit smoothies or milkshakes made with fresh, canned (in juice) or frozen fruit • Offer popular salads with crusty bread or as a garnish with snacks. Use reduced calorie dressings • Include fruit and vegetable based snacks e.g. vegetable soups, melon, salads, vegetable sticks - carrot, cucumber and pepper, etc - and dips • Add extra vegetables to sauces and pizza toppings • Offer fruit salads, fruit jellies and dried fruit |
| Milk and dairy foods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use skimmed, 1% or semi-skimmed milk in recipes, drinks and on cereals - they contain just as much calcium as full fat milk • Offer a range of cheeses including lower fat versions e.g. Edam, Gouda, cottage cheese and reduced fat Cheddar • Serve low fat yogurts and fromage frais |
| Snacks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toasted English muffins; currant teacakes; sliced malt loaf • Fruit breads; cinnamon toast; cheese / poached egg / baked beans on toast |

FURTHER INFORMATION AND WEBLINKS

Food Allergies

For more information about common allergies and guidance for caterers, visit the following website link:

<http://www.allergyuk.org/>

Food Standards Agency – Choking Hazards

Information on early years food choking hazards:

[Food safety advice on choking hazards in settings - Foundation Years](#)

Veg Power

Information on ways to increase vegetable intake in children and young people:

[Eat Them To Defeat Them | VegPower & ITV](#)

Get Cooking recipes

Recipes from the Flying Start Get Cooking Scheme:

foodcardiff.com/blog/getcookingrecipes/

Better Health - Healthier Families recipes

[Healthier Families - Home - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Eating Well Recipe book for 1-4 year olds.

firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-early-years

Flying Start Food and Nutrition Team

[The Flying Start Food and Nutrition Team - Flying Start Cardiff](#)