

Mark Drakeford AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: SF/MD/4155/13

Ann Jones AM  
Chair  
Children, Young People and Education Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

28 January 2014

Dear Ann,

Further to my appearance before the Children, Young People and Education Committee on 15 January regarding childhood obesity, I am writing to provide a written response to two questions which were not asked due to time constraints. My responses to these are provided below.

**How best practices of local authorities, for example prohibiting future planning applications for hot food takeaways within a 400m radius of schools or colleges, are being shared more widely.**

Wrexham County Borough Council is seeking to prohibit new hot food takeaway applications within 400 metres of schools and colleges, via the use of Supplementary Planning Guidance. This policy has been put into place in a few areas in England but Wrexham is the first local authority to implement it in Wales.

Research indicates that children attending schools near fast food outlets are more likely to be obese than those whose schools are more inaccessible to such outlets. In Wrexham County Borough nearly 60% of schools are located near to hot food takeaway outlets. Having additional outlets close to schools could negate efforts by the Council and its partners in supporting the Healthy Schools and Appetite for Life Programmes to ensure that young people have access to healthy options. Whilst pupils in primary education are not allowed out of school premises during the school day, research indicates that the most popular time for purchasing food from shops is after school.

Wrexham has published a Local Planning Guidance Note as part of a broader Healthy Eating and Being More Active Strategy to tackle obesity in the area. The note focuses on hot food takeaways with regard to appropriate location and concentration, highway safety, general amenity and community health issues. The guidance note advises that food outlets in close proximity to, and surrounding schools, can provide an added incentive and temptation to children to over-consume fast food.

The approach adopted in Wrexham has been shared via presentations to the Wales National Obesity Forum Conference and as a poster at the most recent National Public Health conference. It has also been shared in an article published by the physical activity and nutrition network, and in television documentaries and local media. It has also been shared by the WLGA with the Directors of Public Protection network in Wales.

Other local authorities in Wales have expressed interest in pursuing this policy and Denbighshire County Council is actively looking at revising its current Planning Supplementary Guidance to implement this approach.

### **Views on whether the use of Health Impact Assessments should be included within the Public Health Bill.**

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a widely available method which provides a means of assessing both the health hazards and benefits of a wide range of policy proposals. It has been used by a range of organisations, including Welsh Government, local authorities, voluntary sector organisations, the NHS and community organisations. I fully expect HIA to be used when appropriate to do so.

We started a general discussion about the potential role of legislation in contributing to public health objectives through a Green Paper consultation exercise, which concluded in early 2013. Responses on the specific issue of HIA were mixed. Whilst there was a high level of support for the concept of using HIA as a method for ensuring health interests are considered as part of policy making, a number of respondents expressed reservations regarding a legislative requirement to undertake HIA. These included the need to avoid any unnecessary bureaucracy or any approach thought to be disproportionate.

There was, however, widespread support for the adoption of a 'Health in All Policies' approach to policy development. In light of this, we are working across the Welsh Government to ensure that legislation such as the Future Generations Bill makes a positive contribution to this agenda, as such an approach will recognise that improving health will require collective effort across the devolved public service.

In addition, we have also been exploring a number of potential legislative proposals to support discrete public health priority areas. I plan to provide further information about this work in a Public Health White Paper, which I aim to publish shortly.

*Best wishes*

*Mark.*

**Mark Drakeford AC / AM**

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services