

Online tool to support delivery of 'whole school' approach to food

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The UK government, as part of the Levelling-Up agenda, has advocated

that all primary schools should develop a 'whole school food policy', which outlines how a school approaches food across the entire working day to support children in making healthy food choices.

The policy paper states that [primary schools](#) should produce a statement on their website that includes their commitment to food learning within the curriculum, as well as how children and stakeholders can get involved with decisions around food culture, and how the [school](#) maintains a consistently high quality food offering.

Researchers, supported by the Medical Research Council (MRC) and in partnership with the Department of Education, held several workshops with [school leaders](#), teachers, caterers and parents, where they reported difficulties in understanding what is meant by a whole school food policy, and concerns around time pressures, [staff training](#), and available funds.

CONNECTS-Food

The feedback from these workshops has informed the development of a new online resource, called CONNECTS-Food, which helps schools work out how well they are already doing at implementing their whole school approach to food, as well as provides templates for school leaders to use in drafting their food policy statements, and sets out key principles that they should follow to implement their 'whole school' approach.

These principles, covering areas such as the priorities of school leaders, stakeholder engagement and pastoral care, will support schools in considering what may be feasible for them to implement in their school.

Obesity levels

Professor Maria Bryant, from the University's Department of Health Sciences, said, "Children consume a third of their food at school, providing an opportunity to promote healthy diets and reduce levels of obesity."

"It is the Government's recommendation that schools adopt an approach to food linked to activities across the whole school day, but there is enormous pressure on schools at the moment, with recovery post-pandemic, and funding issues to contend with, so expecting school leaders to do even more, means that they need extra support to understand what is required of them. "

"We hope that our online resource, which was built based on the workshops that we did with schools on this topic, will make the job of developing a food policy much quicker and easier."

More information: Website: www.connects-food.com/

Provided by University of York

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