

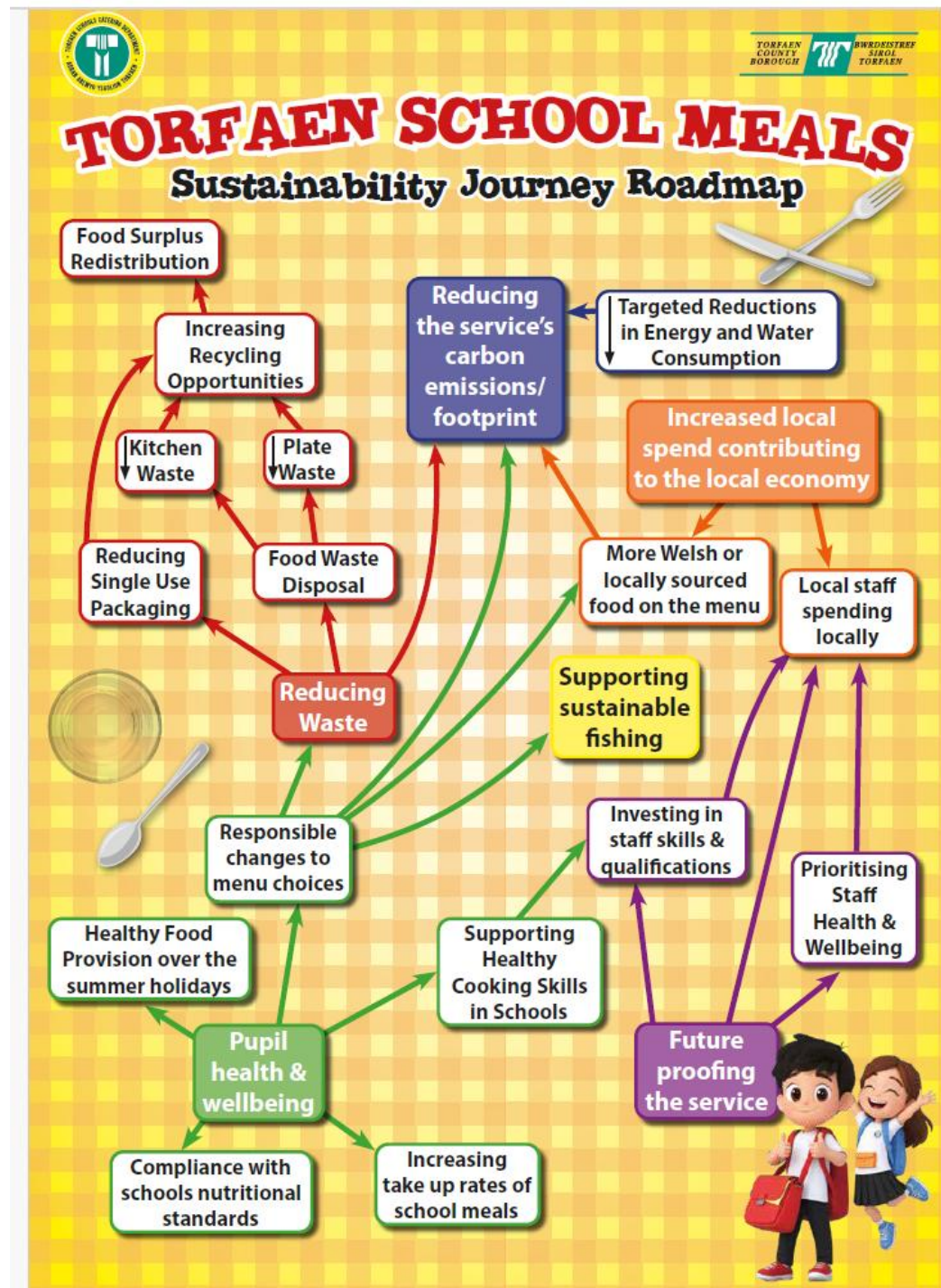
Our Sustainable School Meals Roadmap/Journey

Louise Gillam LLB DCA BSc (Hons) RD
School Catering Dietitian
louise.gillam@torfaen.gov.uk



**SERVICE
AWARDS
2025**

Best Climate Action
or Decarbonisation
Initiative
-WINNER





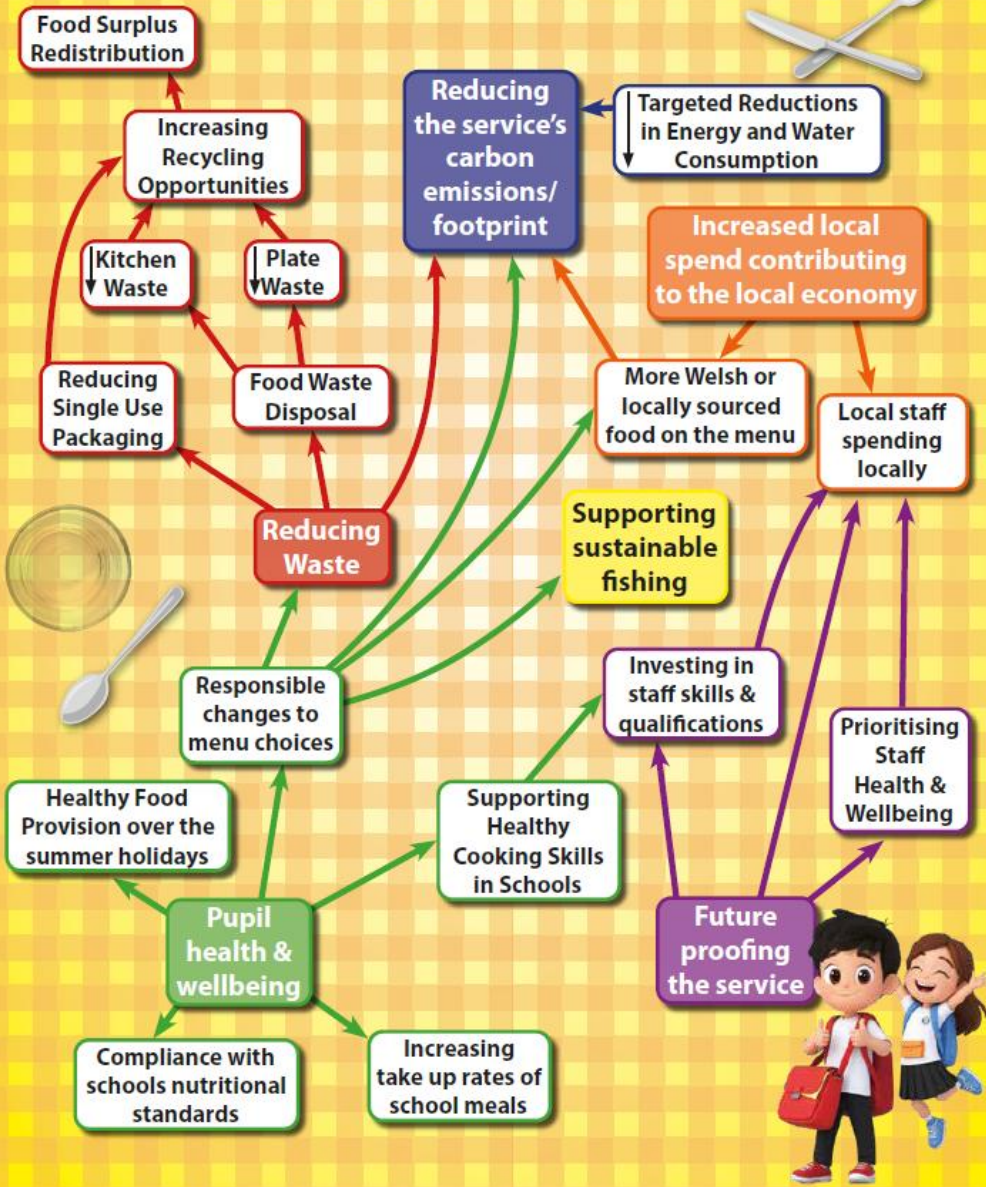
Transparency, Accountability & Continuous Improvement

- Decisions today influence health, wellbeing & environmental future of both our pupils and the wider community
- Sustainability – a complex, evolving area
- No single solution
- Long term evidence-based approach
- Incremental improvements, not about quick wins



TORFAEN SCHOOL MEALS

Sustainability Journey Roadmap



Sustainability is a HUGE topic

We have tried to break it down into bite size chunks/pledges – 22 windows of opportunity

Behind each window, info about where are now, where we want to be, actions we are taking

Live document – reviewed and updated periodically

Go online for the full report (54 pages)

22 windows

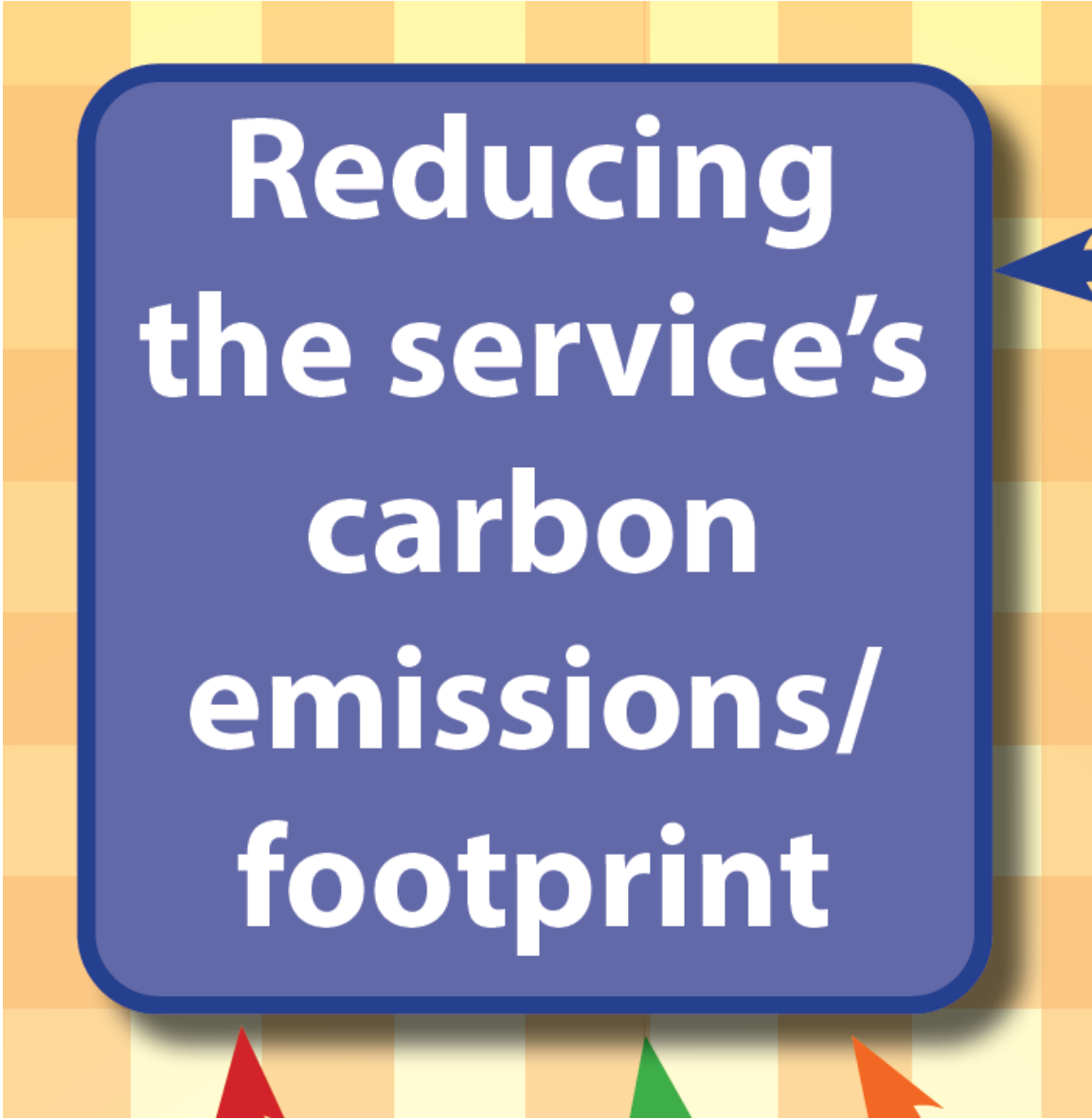
Let's look at just 4!

**Reducing
the service's
carbon
emissions/
footprint**

**Responsible
changes to
menu choices**

**↓ Plate
Waste**

**Future
proofing
the service**



Reducing the service's carbon emissions/ footprint

Evidence Based Approach

Extensive research already

Focus on 2 main areas

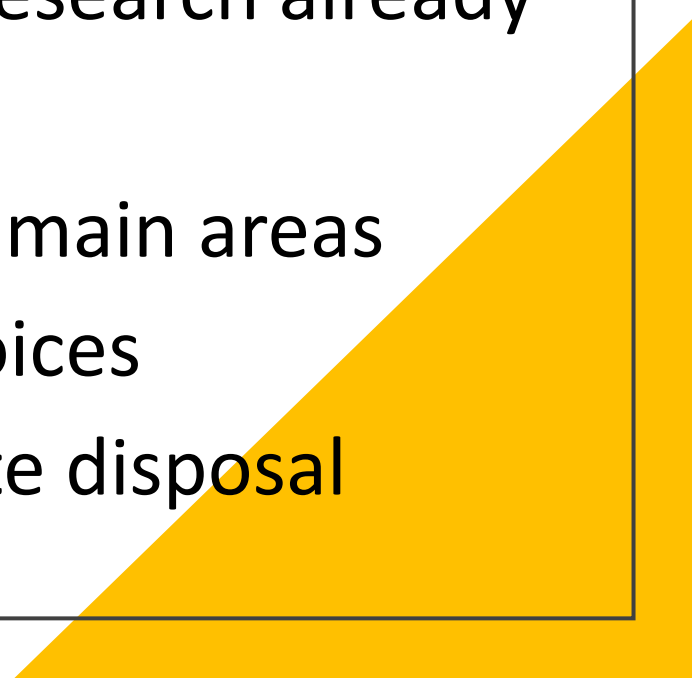
- menu choices
 - food waste disposal
- 

Figure 4b 2025-26 mains carbon intensities (kgs CO₂e per kg)



Carbon Profile of your MAINS (cont.)

Figure 4c 2023-24 mains carbon intensities (kgs CO₂e per kg)



very low low medium high very high

University of Edinburgh analysis

Through a combination of **responsible menu changes** (60/40 red meat/quorn recipes, veggie and vegan dishes daily in addition to meat dishes)

PLUS

Plate Waste reduction and **changing waste disposal** method

RESULT

Per kilo of food served we demonstrated a whopping **32% reduction in carbon emissions in just a year.**

**FOODS WITH THIS SYMBOL ARE
GOOD FOR THE PLANET**



LET'S KEEP OUR PLANET COOL

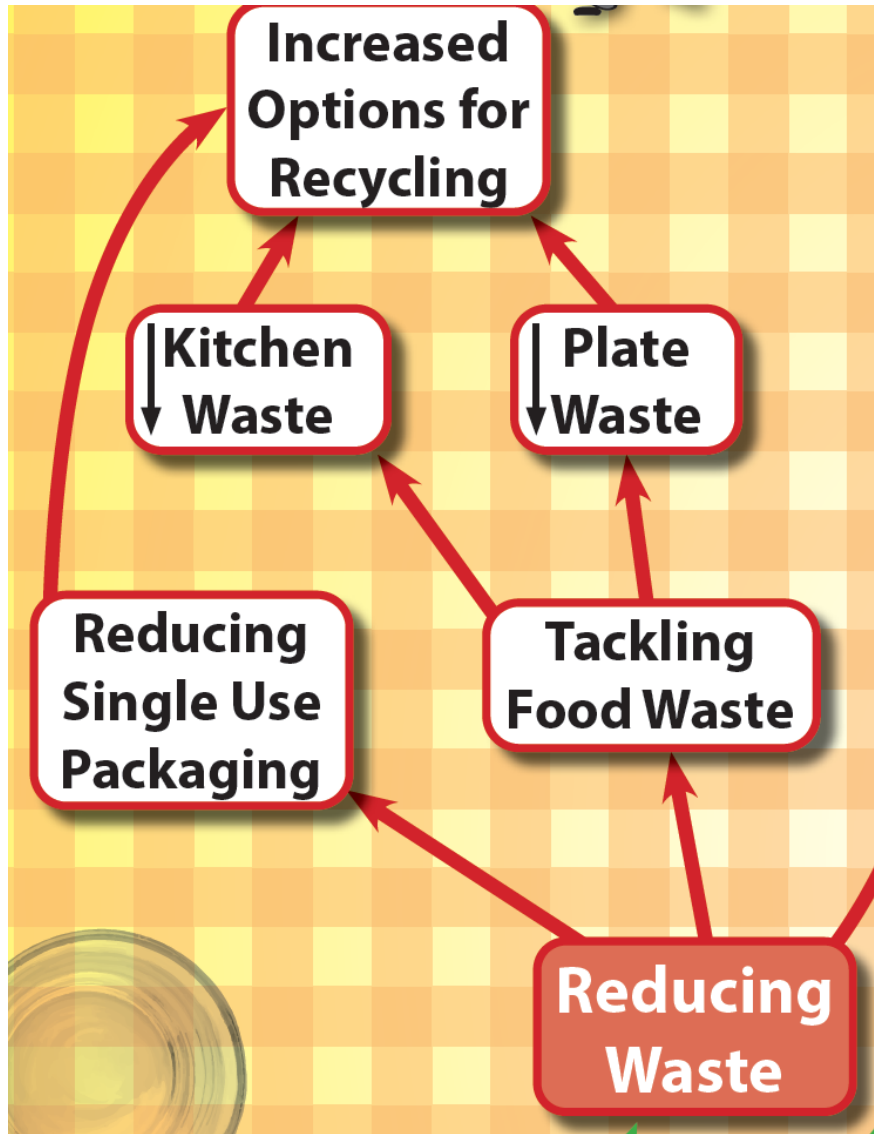
Have you spotted a new logo on our menus?

This symbol highlights the menu choices with lower carbon footprints. Our recipes have been analysed by University of Edinburgh. These meal choices are confirmed as producing 1.5kgs or less CO₂e per kg. For more information on the carbon emissions of school meals scan the QR code.



Key to everything
we do....

Empowering pupils
whilst respecting
individual choice



3rd Annual

Waste Warriors COMPETITION

Could **your** school become this years' champion 'Waste Warriors' in Torfaen?

This is your opportunity to reduce carbon emissions by supporting the reducing of Food Waste

And Have a chance for your school to win a full day healthy cooking session for 16 pupils





Empowering Pupils

What pupils did between weigh in weeks

- Their own research into harm to the planet from food waste
- Delivery of Assemblies with PowerPoint presentations sharing findings
- Creating/displaying posters in the dining hall
- Designing and distributing of questionnaires to ask peers what the issues were
- Selfie Frame Photo Opportunities
- Gallery of Photos of pupils who cleared their plates
- Letters to caterers politely but succinctly explaining the issues in the pupils' own words



WASTE WARRIORS

Did you know?
That when cows
burp or fart they
release a gas
called methane
which is bad
for the earth.



If we get a free win we will
cook a lesson

WE NEED TO STOP WASTE

sheet to record your daily dinner hall waste

sheet to record your daily dinner hall waste

FOOD WASTE MONITORING 1 Day: Tuesday Date: 16.05.23 LOVE FOOD hate waste ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND

Packed lunch waste:
Menu
 Strips of chicken Breast with Sweet and Sour Noodle.
 Strawberry wirl
 Total: 16.80 Kg

Food waste from plates

 Total: 16.80 Kg

Liquid waste

 Total: 3.65 Litres

Your school day - what is happening?
 We had 2x less class in the hall today because 2x class was on a school trip.

Monday 16 May
 Friday 19 May
LOVE FOOD hate waste ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND

1st Weighing

Food waste from plates

13.85	23.15	67.40	78.05
+ 16.80	+ 24.25	+ 30.65	+ 18.70
<u>30.65</u>	<u>47.40</u>	<u>98.05</u>	<u>96.75</u>
11	1	1	1

Total for the week 7 Total: 96.75 Kg

Liquid waste

2.15	2.25	6.80	11.15
+ 3.65	+ 2.10	+ 4.35	+ 3.70
<u>6.80</u>	<u>4.35</u>	<u>11.15</u>	<u>14.85</u>
1	1	1	1

Total liquid for the week Total: 14.85 Litres

FOOD WASTE MONITORING 1 Day: Friday Date: 18.05.23 LOVE FOOD hate waste ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND

Packed lunch waste: Menu

Food waste from plates

FOOD WASTE MONITORING 1 Day: Thursday Date: 18.05.23 LOVE FOOD hate waste ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND

The results – reduction in plate waste in the dining hall

2023 Average reduction (12 schools taking part) 19%

2024 Average reduction (14 schools taking part) 33%

2025 Average reduction (14 schools taking part) 26%

2026 Average reduction (15 schools taking part) 36%

Feedback from school staff

Thank you for involving Henllys in the project, it not only captured the children's attention but also staff. Every day when the children weighed the waste the staff would always try to guess the weight.....there was an improvement, however the children would like to continue the project with a huge launch in September. This will then become part of our Eco board and the school can keep a running record to see how we can improve further". - Henllys CIW School

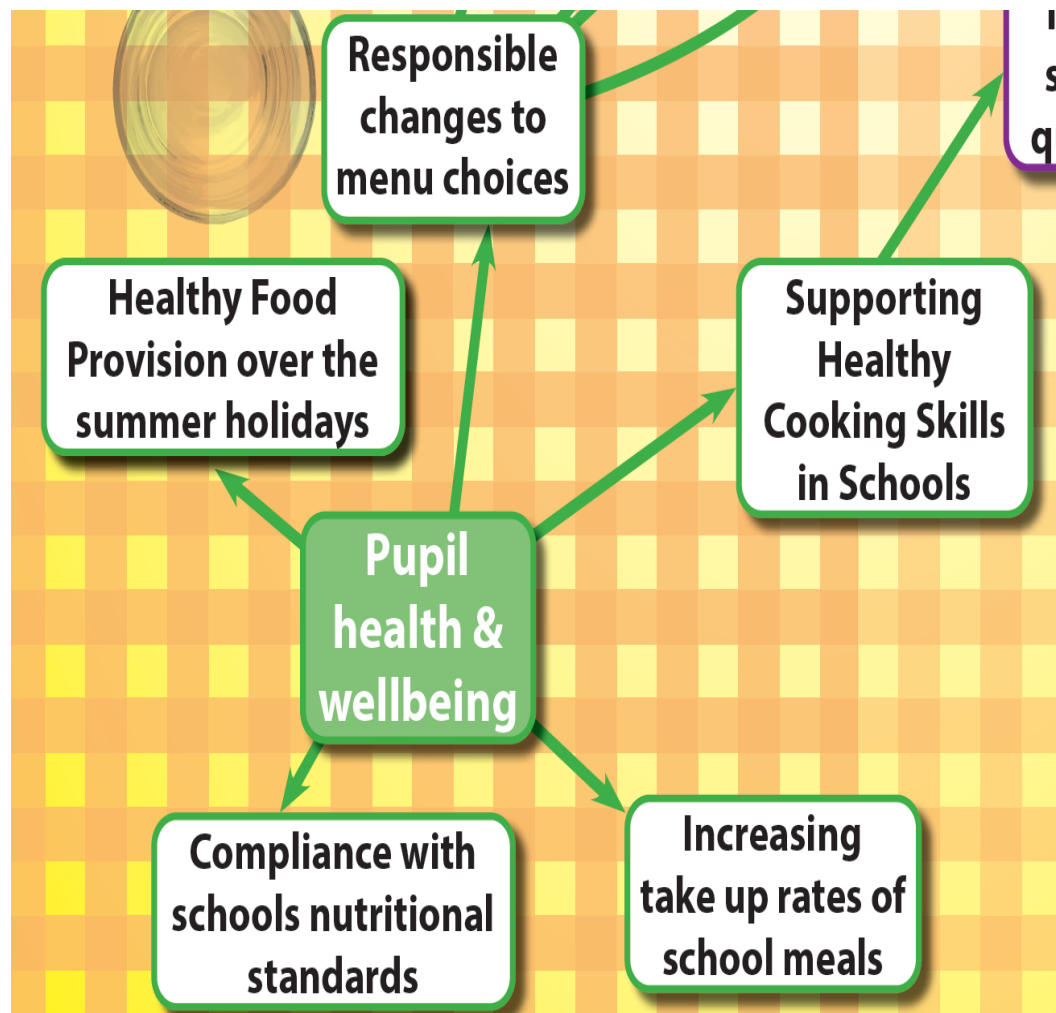
This was exactly the authentic style project we were looking for! It has gone really well. The children have loved it! We weighed a few weeks back and then did our assembly to the school on our findings".

Nant Celyn School

Thank you so much for all your help, support and guidance! We have loved taking part in the 'Waste Warriors' scheme. We are definitely keen to become involved with any further initiatives.... I would personally like to thank you for all your help and support. The eco committee have loved this initiative, they have brought change for every one of our learners which is truly remarkable! Thank you!" - Blenheim Road School

And Torfaen pupils recognised elsewhere for their work in reducing plate waste





**Responsible
changes to
menu choices**

Dietitian in place > 15 years

- Compliance with the Regs whilst ensuring food is eaten
- Reductions in free sugars, increases in fibre whilst Regs catch up
- Managed reductions in red meat – ensuring iron rich recipes
- Plant based milk alternatives where fortified
- Respecting pupil choice





Biggest change as a result of pupil feedback

- We weighed our waste and noted that the majority was from the pre plated salad bar. With your help, we no longer have this problem, instead we have a pasta bar which is incredibly popular! With significantly less waste! At the start of our journey, we were averaging 5.8kg of waste a day. We reduced that to 2.1kg!”

Menu Revisions

- 4 week cycle (rather than 3)
- Pre-plated salad bar switched to a pasta salad bar
- Additional vegetarian or vegan option for all (additional, not instead)
- Lower carbon emission dishes highlighted
- Feedback from pupils is key to designing menus

Menu 2025 to 2026 **Week 1**

TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH
BWRDEISTREF SYDOL TORFAEN

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Bubble Salmon* served with Herby diced potatoes, peas or mixed salad, bread and spread or Vegetable Noodles (v) served with a tortilla wrap ***** Jam and Coconut Sponge with custard	Homemade Beef Lasagne or Homemade Quorn and Spinach Lasagne (v) served with garlic bread and mixed salad ***** Fruit and yoghurt	Roast Chicken and Stuffing or Quorn Fillet and Stuffing (ve) served with dry roast and boiled potatoes, seasonal vegetables and gravy ***** Fruit flapjack and milk	Pork and Carrot Meatballs or Quorn Balls (v) served with mashed potatoes, broccoli, carrots, green beans and gravy ***** Fruit and yoghurt	Cheese and Tomato Pizza (v) served with chips, mixed salad or peas or Cheesy Bean Filled Jacket Potato (v) ***** Chocolate arctic roll

Pasta Bar

Also Available Daily
Plain/
Tomato Pasta
or Baked
Potatoes

Accompanied with
Tortilla wrap/
Garlic bread/
cheddar cheese
with a mixed salad
or baked beans

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Rich Homemade Bolognese	Mac and Cheese (v)	Tuna and Sweetcorn Mayo	Quorn Sausage (ve) in a Rich Tomato Sauce	Chicken and Mixed Peppers

V Vegetarian. All accompaniments to main choices are suitable for vegetarians. Jelly and trifle are not suitable for vegetarians. Ve Vegan. All accompaniments to main choices above are suitable for vegans with the exception of Yorkshire pudding. A fully vegan menu is available on request. Menus may vary in faith schools, please check with your individual school for details.

This symbol highlights the meal choices with lower carbon footprints

Wednesday



Chicken breast fillet served with stuffing, roast and boiled potatoes, vegetables and gravy



Quorn fillet (Ve) served with stuffing, dry roast and boiled potatoes, vegetables and gravy



Basil and cherry tomato nut free pesto (V) (pasta meal of the day)



Why we chose this dish

Our Pupils' Choice

"Really good, 10 out of 10" Isaac, St David's

"I love chicken" Harry, Woodlands

"Yummy" Leo, Woodlands

"Tastes very nice" Jake, Woodlands



Our Dietitian's Choice

Our roast chicken is a naturally lean source of protein, helping pupils feel satisfied throughout the afternoon while providing important nutrients such as iron and zinc, which support normal growth, development and wellbeing.

Every meal is served with a selection of vegetables and a choice of roast and boiled potatoes, helping pupils enjoy a balanced lunch that contributes valuable fibre, vitamins and minerals.

Our popular roast potatoes are oven-cooked without added fat, providing all the flavour and enjoyment of a traditional roast dinner while supporting a healthier nutritional profile.

Wholesome, nourishing and full of flavour, this classic school meal delivers the energy and nutrients pupils need to support a busy afternoon of learning.



Sustainable School Meals

UK Farm Assured Standards

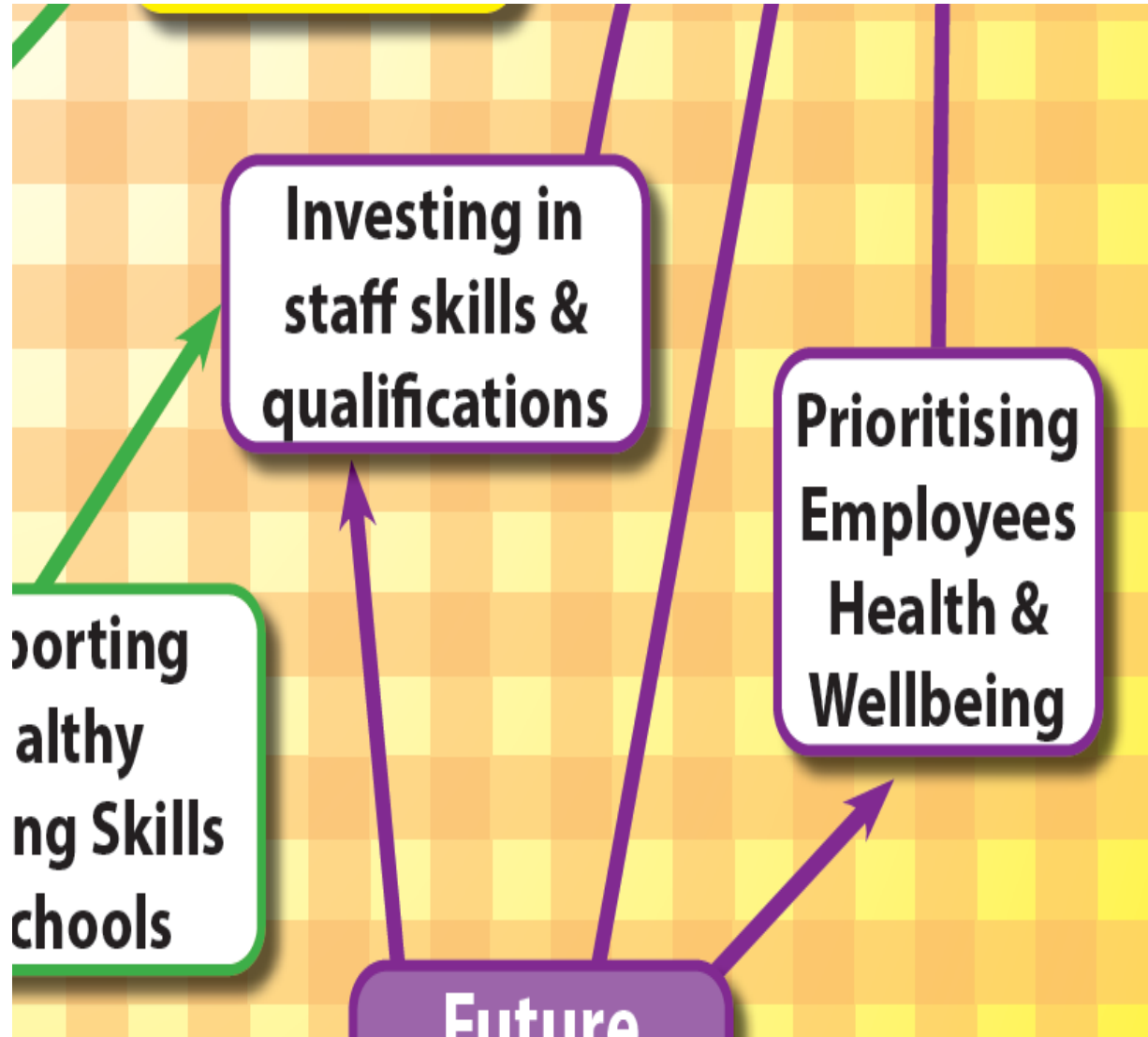
Our chicken fillets are sourced from UK Red Tractor Assured farms, providing independently audited assurance standards covering animal welfare, food safety, traceability and environmental protection. This gives confidence that the chicken served in our schools has been produced to recognised standards throughout the supply chain, while also supporting UK farmers and the wider British agricultural sector.

Supporting Welsh Growers

Wherever possible, we source Welsh-grown vegetables for our school menus. Procuring produce from Welsh suppliers helps support local growers, businesses and jobs, while contributing to shorter supply chains and reduced transport distances. Availability can vary depending on seasonal growing conditions and market supply, but Welsh produce remains our preferred choice whenever it is available and meets our

quality standards.





**Future
proofing
the service**

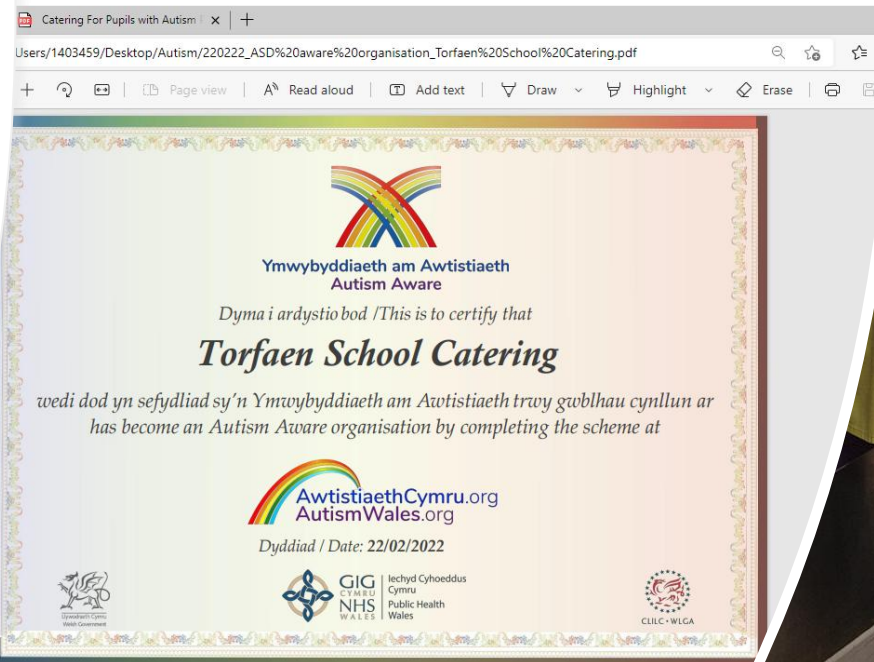


Staff – our best asset

- Skilled, motivated, resilient 100% local workforce
- Investment in training and building specialist expertise
- Prioritising staff health and well being
- Real living wage and above
- Recognising and celebrating the achievements of staff

Training for 250+
staff in Autism
Awareness

1st school
caterers in Wales
to be an “Autism
Aware
Organisation”





Celebrating success...

- **APSE Best Climate Action or Decarbonisation Initiative Award (2025)** for the Sustainable School Meals Roadmap and the service's contribution to environmental sustainability.
- **Welsh Government Recognition of Excellence Award (2023)** for the successful implementation of Universal Primary Free School Meals across Torfaen.
- **LACA Wales Innovation Award (2023)** for the Waste Warriors programme.
- Shortlisting in the prestigious **Waste2Zero Awards (2023)** in recognition of our work to reduce food waste.
- National recognition through publication of our waste reduction initiatives in a UK catering industry magazine.
- **LACA Nan Berger Memorial Award (2023)** for the development of the Sustainable Schools Roadmap.
- **Public Sector Catering Award for Innovation (2022)** for work around Catering for Pupils with Autism

These achievements reflect not only the dedication of our catering teams but also the enthusiasm and involvement of pupils across Torfaen.

Sharing Good Practice via LACA, PSC, APSE

Tortfen School Catering

LACA

An autism-friendly service

Pupils with autism can be put off school meals if the 'eating environment' is wrong. The good news is that staff awareness training and some simple changes can make all the difference, as the team at Tortfen School Catering discovered.

Tortfen School Catering prides itself on 'going that extra mile' for pupils requiring diets other than the standard menu, so when the team found out that school meals were a source of great worry for some parents of pupils with a diagnosis of autism, they wanted to be sure that they were doing all they could to support these pupils. April is World Autism Awareness Month, so in preparation for this year's event, the Tortfen team worked with key partners to ensure they were meeting the challenges of catering for all pupils with a diagnosis.

They then set out for pupils and their parents, what they can expect when participating in school meals.

Autism is known to affect pupils eating and drinking in many different ways. However, the most common concern in Tortfen has consistently been that of selective or restrictive eating.

An initial meeting was arranged with the local authority Children and Young Person's Autism Officer, which threw out lots of suggestions as to what the team could be doing.

Although some adjustments had already been made, they were not formally documented anywhere, and were reliant upon a referral to the team from the pupil's dietitian. There was a real need that parents were not aware that they could access these adjustments, or exactly how they could access them.

It's also the case that not every pupil with autism is under a dietitian. On the advice of the local autism officer, the catering team considered aspects of accessing meals, what adjustments could be offered, and a formal policy was drafted, setting out for pupils (and their parents) what they can expect when participating in school meals. It's now highlighted on the school website.

Among the changes made to the 'eating environment' were meal presentation (eg. foods not touching); repetitive menu offered where required; widened food choices beyond the standard menu; and avoiding unexpected changes to the menu.

Although some adjustments had already been made, they were not formally documented anywhere, and were reliant upon a referral to the team from the pupil's dietitian. There was a real need that parents were not aware that they could access these adjustments, or exactly how they could access them. And not all pupils with autism are under a dietitian. On the advice of the local autism officer, the catering team considered aspects of accessing meals, what adjustments could be offered, and a formal policy was drafted, setting out for pupils (and their parents) what they can expect when participating in school meals. It's now highlighted on the school website.

Among the changes made to the 'eating environment' were meal presentation (eg. foods not touching); repetitive menu offered where required; widened food choices beyond the standard menu; and avoiding unexpected changes to the menu.



What they said ...

Catering staff responded very positively to the awareness training they received.

Mandy Beal, school cook of Blenheim Primary, said: "As a cook in a school, the autism course gave me a better understanding of children living with autism on a daily basis. Particularly in the dining hall where they can on occasion have a complete meltdown."

"Knowing that they are not that naughty child - they are simply someone dealing with lots of issues, and I feel I can be more supportive now."

Paula Thomas, who works as a school cook at Bryn Ormeau Primary School, said: "We all found the training really useful. It was an eye-opener, especially how asking these pupils to do something different, or out of their regular routine, could make a massive difference. It would make me think before asking them to do something that they didn't want to do."

And Mary Rose, school cook of George B Primary, added: "I found the Autism Awareness very helpful for me as we have a little autistic boy in our school who sometimes has dinner."

"He really doesn't like any sort of change even doesn't like sitting in a different table. He has to be in the same place every day. The course helped me to understand how he sees things. The only food he will eat is meat and gravy so when he is down for dinner I make sure this is what he has."

"After doing the online course I now understand more in depth as to how he struggles to cope with things."



PSC AWARDS 2022

Sponsored by:



Innovation Award

Winner: Tortfen School Catering



"Integral to the success of these arrangements was ensuring all catering staff were trained in Autism Awareness and were able to reduce anxieties around school mealtimes."

Runners-Up

SS: Quality Assurance Catering team - East Angles Council
Steve Jones - Newydd Catering and Cleaning
The University of Sheffield

Tortfen School Catering prides itself on 'going that extra mile' for pupils requiring diets other than the standard menu, so when the team found out that school meals were a source of great worry for some parents of pupils with a diagnosis of autism, they wanted to be sure that they were doing all they could to support these pupils.

Autism is known to affect pupils eating and drinking in many different ways. However, the most common concern in Tortfen has consistently been that of selective or restrictive eating.

An initial meeting was arranged with the local authority Children and Young Person's Autism Officer, which threw out lots of suggestions as to what the team could be doing.

Although some adjustments had already been made, they were not formally documented anywhere, and were reliant upon a referral to the team from the pupil's dietitian. There was a real need that parents were not aware that they could access these adjustments, or exactly how they could access them. And not all pupils with autism are under a dietitian. On the advice of the local autism officer, the catering team considered aspects of accessing meals, what adjustments could be offered, and a formal policy was drafted, setting out for pupils (and their parents) what they can expect when participating in school meals. It's now highlighted on the school website.

Among the changes made to the 'eating environment' were meal presentation (eg. foods not touching); repetitive menu offered where required; widened food choices beyond the standard menu; and avoiding unexpected changes to the menu.

Although some adjustments had already been made, they were not formally documented anywhere, and were reliant upon a referral to the team from the pupil's dietitian. There was a real need that parents were not aware that they could access these adjustments, or exactly how they could access them. And not all pupils with autism are under a dietitian. On the advice of the local autism officer, the catering team considered aspects of accessing meals, what adjustments could be offered, and a formal policy was drafted, setting out for pupils (and their parents) what they can expect when participating in school meals. It's now highlighted on the school website.

Among the changes made to the 'eating environment' were meal presentation (eg. foods not touching); repetitive menu offered where required; widened food choices beyond the standard menu; and avoiding unexpected changes to the menu.

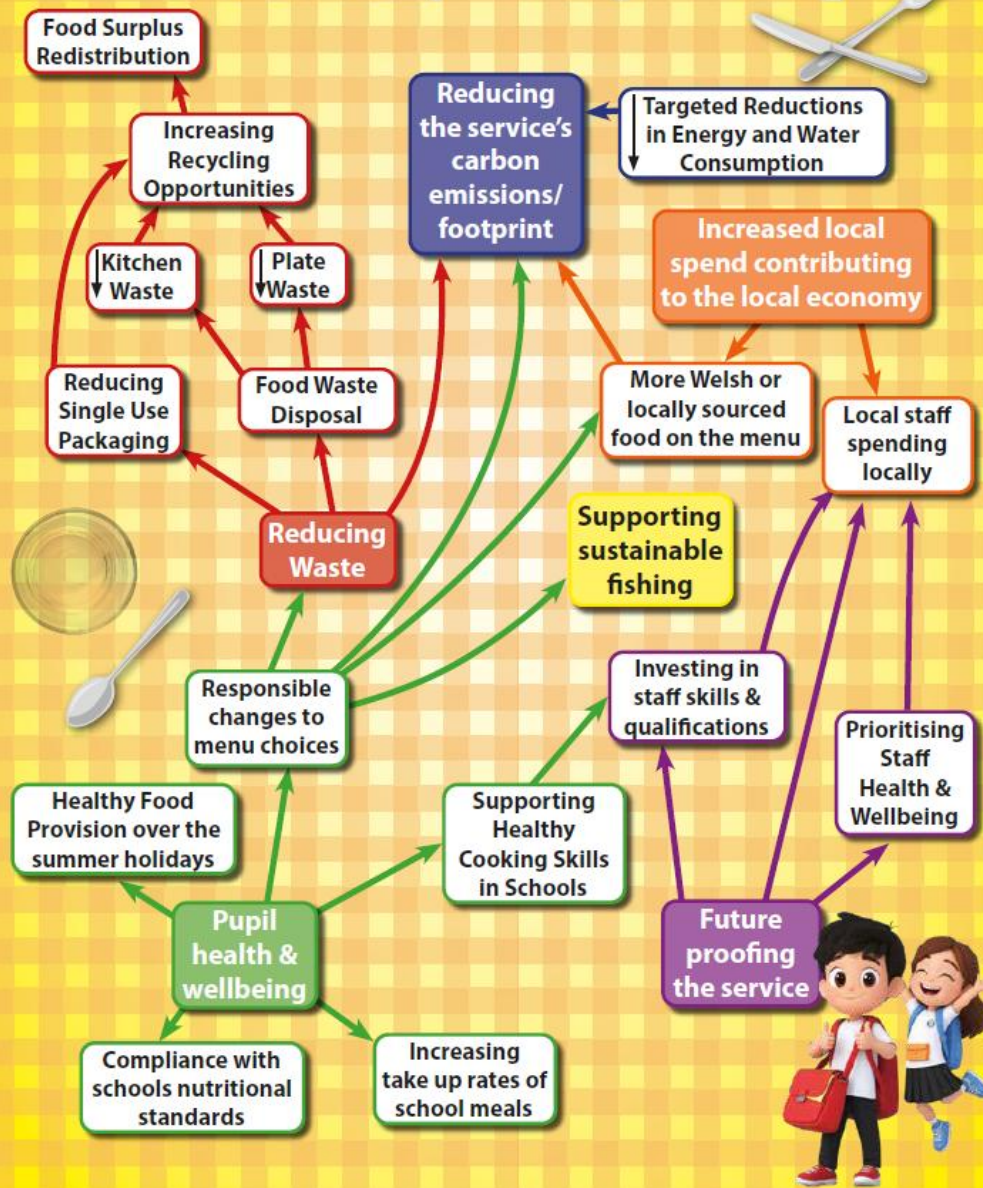
www.publicsectorcatering.co.uk

47



TORFAEN SCHOOL MEALS

Sustainability Journey Roadmap



22 areas of work

Today we have just touched on 4 of the windows of opportunities in our map

Other areas of work





SERVICE
AWARDS
2025

Best Climate Action
or Decarbonisation
Initiative
-WINNER



Our Sustainable School Meals Roadmap/Journey

Louise Gillam LLB DCA BSc (Hons) RD

louise.gillam@torfaen.gov.uk

TORFAEN
COUNTY
BOROUGH



BWRDEISTREF
SIROL
TORFAEN