



Healthy Food for All

access | availability | affordability



Strategic Plan 2014-2016

Foreword

Welcome to Healthy Food for All's 2014 – 2016 Strategic Plan. This document is the result of concerted engagement with a wide range of stakeholders as we recognise this is the best way to achieve a lasting impact.

A multi sectoral focus on improving access to and availability of healthy foods has never been more urgent. Our straightened economic times, combined with the easy availability of highly processed foods means that food poverty is a growing public health concern.



Healthy Food for All exists to end food poverty across the island of Ireland: working with local communities from West Cork to Antrim, we are exploring and documenting what works to promote healthy eating for low-income communities in both rural and urban settings. We are also working with schools to demonstrate how we can use the school setting to combat food poverty and establish healthy eating habits among our school children. We work to ensure that practice and policy is informed by what we learn. We do this through the strategic dissemination of our learning to a wide spectrum of stakeholders and through constructive engagement with policy makers in the many relevant sectors, including education, health, agriculture, social protection and environment. Our new look website is just one recent initiative which aims to promote easy access to a wealth of information on our initiatives in tackling food poverty.

Over the life of this plan, we aim to ensure that all new policy initiatives are informed by a concern to end food poverty and that such policy is underpinned by the highest quality evidence. To achieve the challenging goals set out in this plan, we've strengthened our Board and our governance structures – we've also developed a results oriented monitoring plan to track our progress. We look forward to working with you in achieving our goal.

Mary Van Lieshout

Developing and supporting evidence based research and policy making



Enabling all children and young people to achieve an affordable nutritious diet

Supporting communities to access an affordable nutritious diet



Strengthen organisational capacity and governance

A photograph showing two women in a meeting or conference setting. They are looking at a book titled 'Food for All' which has a green cover. One woman is holding a pen and a piece of paper. The background is blurred, showing other people.

Developing and supporting evidence based research and policy making

To do this we commit to:

Using evidence from our programme activity to inform our policy position on food poverty

Supporting the development of an enhanced Food Poverty Indicator to monitor trends on the island of Ireland

A future where food poverty is taken into account in social welfare rates and is recognised in all other relevant policies

Food poverty reflects a form of social exclusion and social injustice. Healthy Food for All's policy activity focuses on addressing the structural barriers that prevent low-income households from accessing a healthy diet. Healthy Food for All advocates for the development of a national food strategy for Ireland that would ensure the affordability, accessibility and availability of nutritious food to all members of society, in line with Ireland's international human rights obligations. Influenced by our inaugural National Conference in 2013 Healthy Food for All has developed the above strategic objectives to raise awareness about the multi-dimensional nature of food poverty and to ensure that food poverty is a priority issue on the political agenda. Through our programme activity we seek to build the evidence base around positive solutions to addressing this issue. Using a partnership approach we will continue to support the development of research, to identify policy influencing opportunities and to make relevant policy submissions.



Enabling all children and young people to achieve an affordable nutritious diet

To make this a reality we will:

Lead on the development of a holistic approach to the provision of food in schools

Engage key partners in the implementation of healthy food guidelines for all youth only settings

Support the development of an enhanced School Meals Programme

Food poverty has a particularly detrimental impact on children. Lack of a nutritionally adequate diet can negatively affect a child's health, behaviour and cognitive functioning. This can lead to poor school performance, non-school attendance and leaving school early and without qualifications. Poor nutrition disproportionately affects children from lower socio-economic groups. One in five children in Ireland go to school or to bed hungry because there is not enough food in the home (HBSC, 2012). One in four 9 year olds are overweight or obese. The Growing Up in Ireland study (2011) found that there is a strong socio-economic gradient to obesity. Schools and youth settings are key sites to promote healthy behaviours. Healthy Food for All works with relevant government departments and key partners in the education sector to consolidate activities in relation to the provision of food to children and young people. We are committed to using this learning to identify policy influencing opportunities.



Supporting communities to access an affordable nutritious diet

To do this we will continue to:

Strengthen a network of Community Food Initiatives across the island of Ireland

Develop a national strategy to designate land for Community Food Initiatives

Work with food retailers to promote healthy food in local outlets

Healthy Food for All recognises that communities are key settings for a holistic approach to addressing food poverty. Community Food Initiatives are projects that improve the availability, affordability and accessibility of healthy food for low-income groups using a community development approach. Examples of Community Food Initiatives include community gardens, community cafés and nutrition education programmes. Healthy Food for All will manage the Community Food Initiatives Programme 2013-2015 which funds 10 Community Food Initiatives from West Cork to Antrim and Dublin to Mayo. The programme approach encourages the sharing of learning between the 10 CFIs and with a wider network of Community Food Initiatives across the island of Ireland. We aim to support the development of a strong network of Community Food Initiatives which address local food needs and empower people to make healthier food choices. Further to the CFI Programme Healthy Food for All will also engage with local authorities and local retailers to promote the availability and accessibility of healthy food in low-income areas.



Our Board and staff commit to:

Consistently striving to be the centre of excellence on food poverty related issues on the island of Ireland

Meeting and exceeding the principles set out in the Governance Code for Community and Voluntary organisations

Establishing a sustainable funding stream to enable HFfA meet its strategic objectives

Maintaining a supportive working environment for all involved in our actions

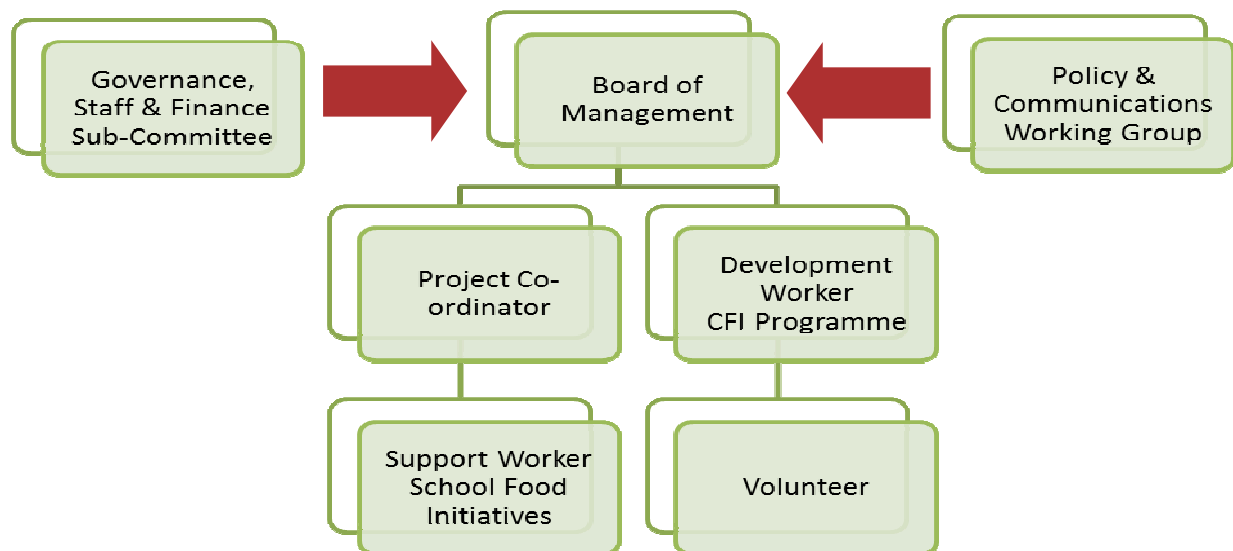
Healthy Food for All sets out to act as a information hub of issues relating to food poverty. We strive to be the authoritative voice on all things relating to food poverty and to offer positive solutions to this issue. We will share information on good practice initiatives which have addressed food poverty. Having recently expanded our Board of Management we will meet the highest principles set out in the Governance Core for Community and Voluntary organisations. We are committed to a supportive work environment for our staff and Board so that they can fulfil their duties to the best of their ability. We will work towards obtaining a sustainable funding stream to ensure that Healthy Food for All can fulfil the objectives set out in this Strategic Plan 2014-2016.

About Healthy Food for All

Healthy Food for All (HFfA) is an all-island charity seeking to address food poverty by promoting access, availability and affordability of healthy food for low-income.

Food poverty is the inability to have an adequate and nutritious diet due to issues of affordability of and access to food. One in ten people in Ireland are living in food poverty. Since 2006 we have set out to demonstrate the relationship between food poverty and other policy concerns such as health inequalities, welfare adequacy, educational disadvantage, food production and distribution, retail planning and food safety. We believe it is necessary for all sectors of society to work together to positively impact on health inequalities and reduce the number of people at risk of food poverty.

Healthy Food for All employs 3 full-time members of staff and is supported by a Board of Management consisting of representatives with research and policy expertise in the areas of social justice, welfare adequacy and health inequalities as well as those with a background in community development, communications, HR and financial governance.



HFfA's vision is that no person is denied a nutritious diet for reasons of affordability or accessibility on the island of Ireland



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