

Ms Lesley Griffiths MS
Minister for Rural Affairs
Welsh Government
5th Floor
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Lesley Griffiths MS,

Re: Food as a Public Good

We write to seek clarity on whether the Welsh Government continues not to view food as a public good. According to the Welsh Government's [Brexit and our Land: Securing the future of Welsh Farming](#) document, "the Welsh Government maintains food production is not a public good in and of itself."

Before this, during Plenary on the 11th of July 2018, you appear to have gone a step further than this when you stated that "[food is not a public good. It has a market and so it cannot be a public good](#)". In documents submitted to the 2nd Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee on the 21st of October 2021, this point was reiterated: "The Welsh Government has argued that as food has a market value, it should not be classed as a public good, and should not receive direct state funding."

The Welsh Government currently does provide direct state funding for food purchase and distribution through the Free School Meals programme and provided further similar support to shielding groups during the pandemic, despite food 'having a market price'. In this context, does the Welsh Government stand by its view that 'food is not a public good' and if so, do you not consider free school meals to be a public good?

More generally speaking, in relation to the Welsh Government's climate targets, do you agree that food produced locally in Wales is more sustainable than food being produced overseas and shipped to Wales and consumed here, often to poorer animal welfare and environmental standards? If so, would the Welsh Government then accept that food production itself can be a public good in terms of carbon emissions, animal welfare and environmental impact when produced and consumed locally and sustainably in a way that the market price simply does not reflect?

As supporters of the Right to Food campaign, we believe that everyone should have secure access to quality, nutritious food. For this to be achievable, it is imperative that food is classed as a public good. The examples provided above show that in elements of the Welsh Government programme, food already is a public good. In light of this and our shared desire to see a Wales without food poverty, we would welcome your commitment to revising the Welsh Government's formal view that 'food is not a public good'.

Yours Sincerely,

Carolyn Thomas MS



Luke Fletcher MS

