

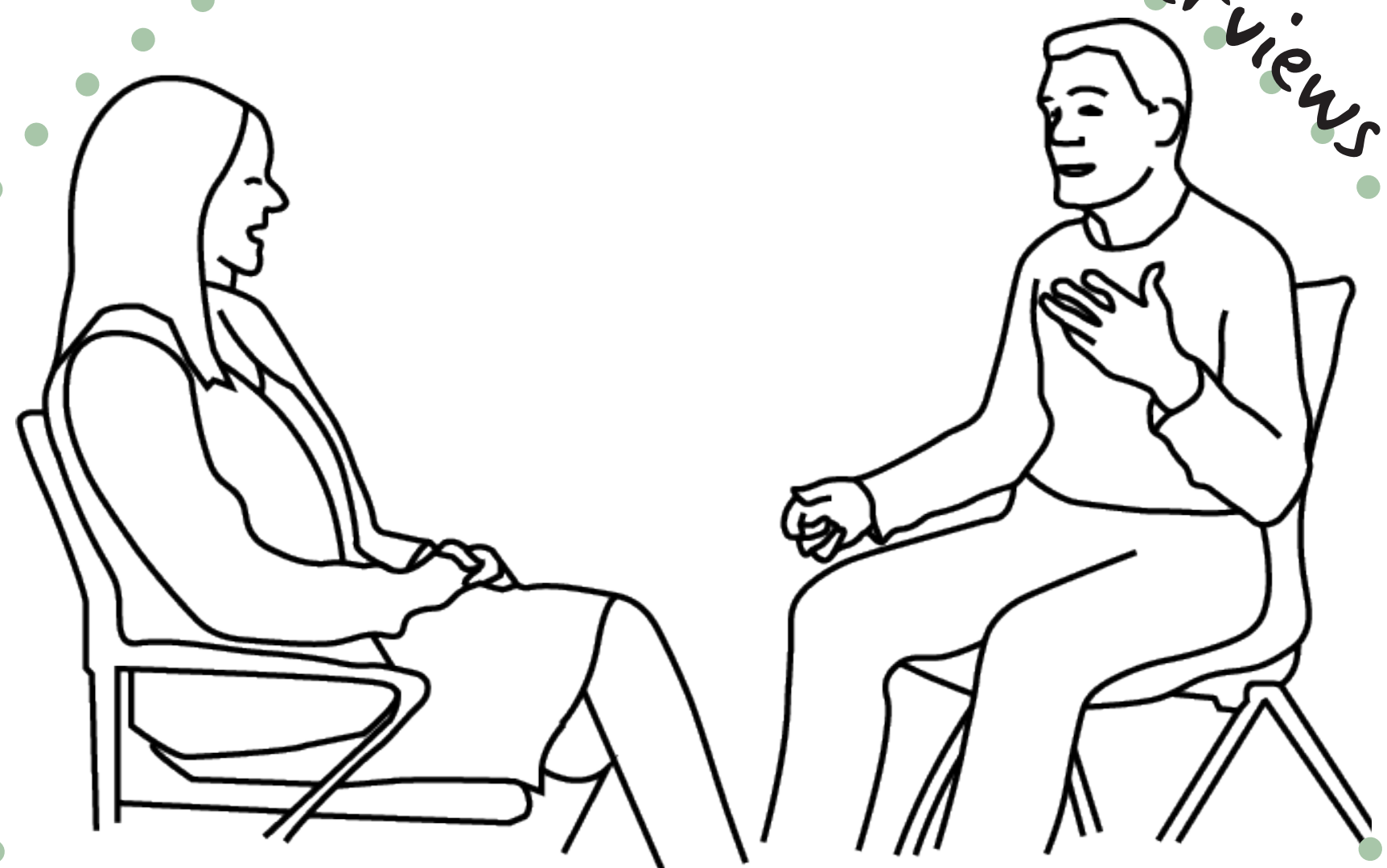
A Qualitative Study Exploring Catering Staff's Perceptions of School Meal Provision and 11-13 year olds Eating Behaviours

INTRODUCTION

Wales' younger generation currently does not meet the Governmental recommendations of fruit and vegetable consumption, with only 52% of children consuming vegetables on a daily basis (Welsh Government, 2016). During adolescence, individuals experience increased autonomy and freedom of choice (Neumark-Sztainer, et al., 2010). Upon starting secondary school, many find the vast options available in the canteen novel and attractive (Brannen and Storey, 1998). However, individuals are vulnerable to making choices based on those in "cool" social groups that they aspire to belong to (O'Donnell and Wardlow, 2000). Consequently, individuals may conform to pervasive social norms concerning their food choice and intake (Higgs, 2015).

METHODOLOGY

Catering Manager Interviews



Informal Interview about the Catering Manager's experiences.

School Canteen Observations



Observed pupils at break time and lunch time. No interaction with pupils.

Catering Staff Focus Groups



20-30 minute Focus Groups.
3-8 participants per group.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What foods does the school provide for pupils and what options are more popular?
2. What do catering staff perceive to be Welsh adolescents' attitudes and behaviours concerning vegetables and healthy eating?
3. What do catering staff believe are the main factors that influence what Welsh adolescents' choose to purchase and consume in the school canteen?

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Extrapersonal Factors that drive Food Choice
Peers, Parents, Education, Social Media

"It's up the parent"

"They like to be seen to be eating the same as everyone else"

"I just think it's down to discipline and education"

"They didn't want the dinner no more because they had to sit there with a plate"

"They don't like their veggies"

"They have options as well, the cheapest they are going to go for..."

RESEARCH IMPACT

- Design and develop a vegetable-based food product, packaging and marketing in collaboration with Puffin Produce.
- Novel findings and an understanding of how to improve the eating habits of Welsh adolescents.
- The potential to improve the health of Wales' younger generation and future generations, in line with the Future Generations Act.

Perceived Quality of School Foods
Fresh and Homemade, Choice, Popular Options, Stealth Vegetables



"Everything is fresh"

"I think they are spoilt at this school!"

"It's all freshly done and made from scratch"

"Cauliflower is good in gravy, if you blend up cauliflower in gravy, it's lovely"

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Higgs, S. (2015). *Social Norms and their Influence on Eating Behaviours*. Appetite, 86, pp. 38-44.
Neumark-Sztainer, D.; Larson, N.; Fulkerson, J.; Eisenberg, M. and Story, M. (2010). *Family Meals and Adolescents: What have we Learned from Project EAT (Eating Among Teens)?* Public Health Nutrition, 13(7), pp. 1113-1121.
O'Donnell, K. and Wardlow, D. (2000). *A Theory on the Origin of Coolness*. Advances in Consumer Research, 27, pp. 13-18.
Welsh Government. (2015). *Welsh Health Survey 2015: Health of Children*. Statistics for Wales.

