



Results of Survey on Vegan Provision in Scotland

Introduction

In 2017 Go Vegan Scotland carried out an online survey to find out what issues Scotland-based vegans were facing, in terms of their ability to live vegan when dependent upon the state / government. This arises when we are in hospital, school, prison, care homes and other contexts.

The responses from some 480 Scotland-based vegans highlighted a lack of understanding of the moral conviction that vegans live by, what it means to be vegan in terms of avoidance of all forms of animal exploitation and killing, and how vegan convictions should be taken into account by our state entities.

Key Issues

Currently our hospitals, schools and other state entities do not consistently provide for the needs of vegans; indeed, many do not provide at all. Vegans report instances of:

- hospital stays for serious conditions/operations/child birth, during which they were not provided with suitable food; instances of vegans not eating for days, becoming very weak and having to discharge themselves early so that they could go home to eat; many relied on family to bring them food but not everyone has this option and in some cases they were not permitted to bring food in.
- opposition to veganism from medical professionals, including pressure on new parents to feed their children cow's milk based on misinformation regarding plant-based nutrition and compounded by the lack of baby formula suitable for vegans;
- vegans suffering from anorexia being denied access to vegan food, told veganism was not permitted and being pressured to eat animal products; in one case reported to have been force-fed animal products against their fundamental moral convictions;
- derogatory comments from medical professionals and inaccurate information regarding nutrition, leading to poor advice and wrong diagnoses;

- serious difficulties with medication, as all medicines must be tested on animals under UK law, which means vegans must participate in the exploitation and killing of non-human animals whenever they require medication; many medications also contain gelatine and/or milk products, and the limited alternatives are often denied to vegans due to a lack of understanding of the status of veganism in law and the expense of these alternatives;
- lack of food that is suitable for vegans in schools, colleges and universities; children in school missing out on free meals due to lack of vegan options; lack of understanding that vegan needs should be catered for to the same extent as religious needs, such that providing vegetarian options is not sufficient;
- having to participate in unnecessary experiments on animals, bred and killed or captured for that purpose;
- opposition to veganism from teachers including undermining the moral convictions of vegan students, mocking them in front of the other students and misinformation regarding plant-based nutrition;
- vegan children and the children of vegan parents exposed to schools, teachers and fellow students directly participating in the subjugation and exploitation of living animals in school, contributing to the killing of animals, for example where eggs are hatched in school. There is no effective way to protect vegan children from such activities in a way that would accord with their rights or the rights of vegan parents;
- private parties are invited into schools to promote the breeding, subjugation, exploitation and killing of animals for meat and dairy, with no measures put in place to protect the interests of vegan children or ensure the rights of their parents.

There are, unfortunately, many such examples, a number of which are very serious in terms of the position the individual was placed in, which are narrated below.

Government Responsibilities

What our government and individual state entities may not appreciate, or appreciate fully, is that veganism is a protected conviction under United Kingdom (UK) and European law, and has the same legal status as religious beliefs. That is not to say that veganism is like a religion (it is not), but rather that we have as a society recognised the importance of protecting people's right to hold and live according to fundamental convictions to the same extent as we respect their right to hold and live according to religious beliefs.

Convictions are protected if they are serious, cogent, important, worthy of respect in a democratic society and do not conflict with the fundamental rights of others. Applying this test, veganism has been recognised as protected by the European Court of Human Rights, the UK Government, the UK Equalities and Human Rights Commission, and the UK Employment Appeals Tribunal. As the vegan conviction

that it is wrong to subjugate, exploit and kill non-human animals unnecessarily is protected:

- vegans have the right to live according to that conviction;
- vegan parents have the right to have their children educated in accordance with that conviction;
- our government has a positive obligation to secure to us these rights;
- all state entities must act in accordance with these rights;
- the government must pass such laws as are necessary to secure our rights in the private sphere;
- state entities have a positive duty to advance equality and remove or minimise disadvantages faced by vegans on account of their protected convictions;
- we are protected against discrimination on account of our vegan convictions, including indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation, by government entities, public and private employers and private service providers.

Steps to be Taken

In order to comply with its obligations under European and UK law, the Scottish Government must take the following steps, as a minimum:

- ensure that good vegan options are included in all state entities, on menus and in canteens and cafes. The options should be equivalent to non-vegan options in terms of quality and quantity, for meals, snacks and drinks;
- educate our public sector on the meaning of veganism, its legal status and what is required to meet the needs of vegans;
- educate in particular on the distinction between the vegan moral position and a “restrictive diet” in the context of support for anorexia;
- support/encourage the production of vegan infant formula;
- promote plant-based nutrition education for medical professionals and in our schools;
- educate school staff in the wider implications of veganism beyond food so that they understand that vegans avoid all forms of animal use and ensure that good alternatives are made available for vegan children whenever animal use / promotion of animal use is involved; ensure schools do not participate in non-essential activities that reinforce speciesism in a way that makes it impossible for vegan children to be adequately protected (e.g. live animal use in class);
- incorporate education on veganism into the core curriculum to ensure that all children understand it and are aware that it is possible to live without exploiting non-human animals;
- support alternatives to animal testing and challenge the requirement that all medicines be tested on animals; support the development of animal-free research including the work of charities such as Animal Free Research UK;
- put in place policies that encourage pharmaceutical companies to produce versions of medication that are free of animal products; this would lead to

greater availability of animal free alternatives, which should in turn lead to the price coming down (the animal ingredients in medication are not generally essential elements of the medicine, they are binding agents and capsules, which could be plant-based);

- educate medical staff including GPs so that they are aware that they do have a good basis for prescribing alternatives that are free of animal ingredients. The more that are requested the greater the demand and the more pharmaceutical companies will provide alternatives.

We are requesting a response from the Scottish Government and we are submitting a copy of this report to the Equalities and Human Rights Commission in Scotland, which is responsible for monitoring the implementation of relevant international and European law.

Other Matters

This survey focused on state entities, as we know from reports made to the International Vegan Rights Alliance and to us that vegans often experience real issues when relying on state entities, such as hospitals and schools. Our government can implement the necessary steps to ensure that all state entities are acting in accordance with vegan rights, without having to pass any new laws. Further steps can and should be taken to ensure that vegan rights are respected in the private sphere as well, so that vegans can live according to their convictions.

This survey did not look at the important issue of the ability of people in particularly difficult circumstances to live according to their vegan convictions, including people who are homeless, who do not have cooking/food preparation facilities, refugees, and people who rely on foodbanks and other unofficial assistance. Work needs to be done to find out from people in these circumstances what particular issues they face in order that appropriate steps can be taken. Go Vegan Scotland is a voluntary vegan advocacy group, with volunteers devoting their limited non-work time to the promotion of veganism and so there is a limit to what we are able to do.

Limitations

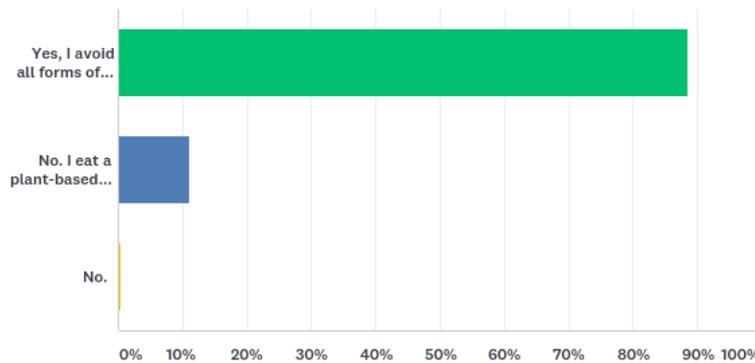
This was a survey intended to collect a snap-shot sample of the issues being faced by vegans in this country's state entities. We believe it has served that purpose. We make no claim that this was a study carried out under controlled conditions such as would be necessary for a study producing data that it is intended will be peer-reviewed.

Survey Results

Composition of Respondents

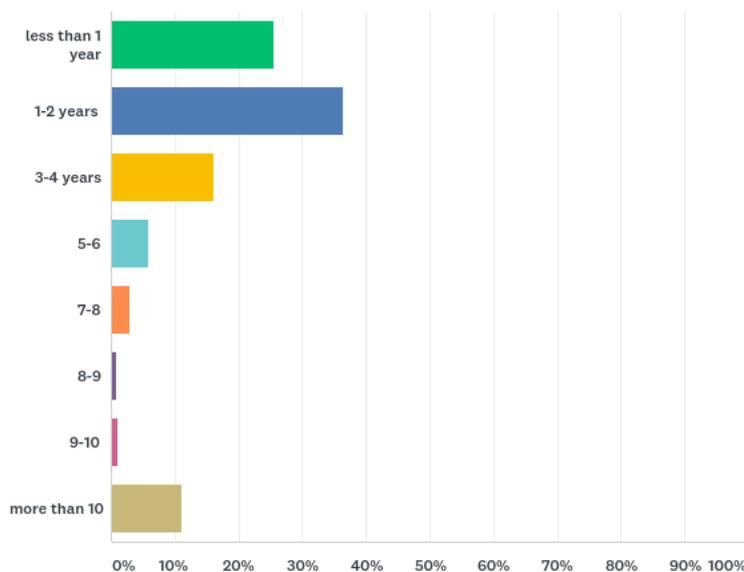
We received 546 completed surveys. 483 of the respondents confirmed that they were vegan (which we defined as avoiding all forms of animal exploitation). 61 confirmed following a plant-based diet. 2 confirmed they were neither vegan nor plant-based and those two responses can be disregarded.

Q1 Are you vegan?



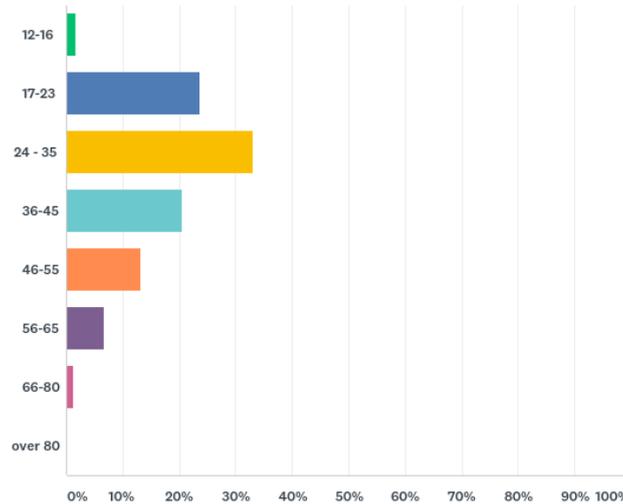
Most had been vegan 1 – 2 years (36.52%, 195), or less than a year (25.09%, 137), however some 11.17% had been vegan over 10 years (60) and 16% (86) for 3-4 years. The total % who had been vegan for over two years was 38.17% (205).

Q2 How long have you been vegan?



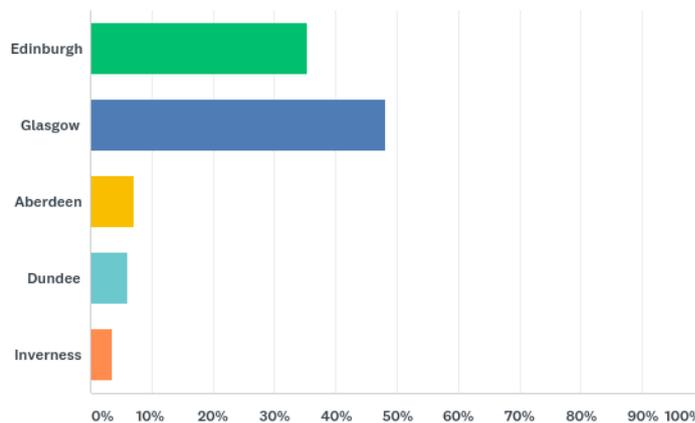
In terms of age, most respondents were in the 24-35 age range (33.15% / 181), while 23.63% (129) were 17-23, 20.51% were 36-45 (112), 21% (115) over 45 and 1.65% (9) 12-16.

Q3 Which age category applies to you?



539 confirmed living in Scotland, based on the nearest town or city:

Q5 Which town do you live in?



Questions Regarding Vegan Provision

The respondents were asked 19 questions in total, covering the above details and a series of questions focused on the respondents' experience of vegan provision in state hospitals, schools/colleges/universities, prisons and other state employers. We have set out below the specific questions and a selection of the responses (anonymised).

NHS

Respondents who had experience of vegan provision in Scottish hospitals highlighted the following issues:

- Lack of awareness of what vegan means
- Opposition to veganism / dismissal and disapproval of veganism / plant-based eating
- Lack of any food that was suitable for vegans
- Having to go hungry for days due to failure to provide suitable food
- Having to rely on family to provide suitable food
- Having to eat crackers for days as nothing else suitable to eat
- Very poor quality food where there were options
- The fact that it is not possible to pre-book vegan food, even where the hospital stay is scheduled. Once in hospital the patient is often not strong enough to be able to have discussions about what veganism is and what might be suitable from the available food options;
- The fact that even where vegan menus exist, they are often not provided / the options are not available.

It should be noted that there were also responses that highlighted good vegan food provision in particular hospital wards, with some providing full vegan menus. It is therefore not the case that all of our hospitals are failing to recognise the needs of vegans all of the time; some are doing an excellent job, at least on some wards and at some times. The varying experiences of respondents in the same hospitals indicates a lack of consistency depending on the ward, the length of stay and whether or not the hospital happens to have vegan options in stock.

There were also a number of responses noting the efforts made by nurses and other staff to try to provide for vegan patients, although the processes were not in place for this and although they are under a lot of pressure. Examples include a nurse going to a hospital shop for soup, using their own jam from their locker, and offering professional non-judgemental support. The issues that vegans face in our hospitals are not the responsibility of individual staff who are doing their best in the circumstances, but without the process in place to support them. If a hospital does not have any vegan options, or has them only on paper while in practice they are never available, a nurse who is asked to provide vegan options cannot magic them into existence. The purpose of highlighting these issues is not to suggest any failure on the part of individual public service staff, but to call on the government to put in

place the necessary steps to ensure that adequate provision is made for vegan patients.

A number of responses reported instances of hospitals referring to limited resources and the fact that vegans are a minority and the priority of the hospital must be to provide for the majority. Aside from this approach failing to acknowledge the rights of vegans, who have a protected moral conviction with the same status as religious beliefs, it ignores the fact that vegan options on a menu are not exclusively for vegans; vegan food can be consumed by everyone.

There are intersecting benefits to be gained from improving the availability of plant-based food, suitable for vegans, which supports other Scottish Government objectives related to health, the environment, sustainability, the Good Food Nation objectives and efficiency and budget objectives. We set out some of this in more detail in our submission to the Food and Health Consultation, which is available here:

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/d95b36_829289de59484917b8b3adf1917d3a07.pdf

We have invited representatives of the government, particularly those involved in the Good Food Nation project to attend the conference on Plant Based Nutrition for Medical Professionals in Glasgow on 30 June 2018, but have yet to hear from them indicating if they will attend.

In addition to issues of availability of suitable food in hospitals the following concerns were highlighted related to health care:

- specifically denying patients with anorexia access to vegan food on the basis of an assumption that veganism was being used to mask an eating disorder rather than being a moral conviction;
- lack of support / opposition to raising children vegan;
- lack of vegan infant formula and pressure put on vegan parents to feed cow's milk;
- misinformation regarding nutrition / pressure put on vegans to eat animal products by medical professionals;
- lack of trust in knowledge and commitment to provide vegan options, based on past experience;
- lack of vegan options for visitors in cafes and shops at hospitals;
- lack of plant-based nutrition advice;
- complete lack of vegan medication on account of requirement that all medicines be tested on animals;
- failure to provide versions of medicines that are free of animal products, where available.

The following specific questions were asked and we have noted some of the responses:

Have you or has any of your family experienced difficulty obtaining vegan food in hospital? If yes, please provide details including identifying the hospital, if possible.

Responses included:

Lack of suitable food

- Yes. After delivering a baby, the only food available to me was potatoes, salad and toast. This was very difficult as I had anaemia following childbirth, and needed to discharge myself to get a healthy balanced meal at home. (Princess Royal in Glasgow).
- Yes. I was in for two weeks when my son was born and they said they couldn't cater for me. My partner had to bring in all my meals. I wasn't allowed to use their fridge or microwave or bring in hot food and he was only allowed to come twice a day at visiting hours. It was 30 degrees so any fresh food was spoiling. It was truly awful! (Queen Elizabeth University Hospital).
- I was in hospital for three days recently. I asked a number of times for vegan food options and was told they could not provide anything vegan. I had to arrange for my wife to bring in food for me. Some people will not be able to rely on family. (Hairmyers, Lanarkshire)
- I had problems at the QEUH maternity unit when they offered me the vegan menu but often the food was unavailable. This included pieces of fruit. I was given a halal chicken curry at one point. I was so tired and hungry and weak after my labour experience and had nothing to eat. My husband brought me snacks to keep me going but I desperately wanted to leave the hospital and go home and get proper meal so told the staff I was ready to leave when I didn't feel ready to leave at all.
- Yes. My mum recently had an overnight stay and they had no vegan options at all. They didn't even have soya milk! She had to make do with a bit of dry toast after her operation and porridge made with water in the morning. (Kilmarnock).
- Yes. After an operation I was given the same plate of food as everyone else in the room. Even after stating multiple times that I am vegan. All I had to eat in 12 hours was a banana. (Dunfermline, Queen Margaret hospital).
- Yes. Can't remember options but I chose closest to what I thought was vegan and they didn't even have any left so I ended up eating a garden salad. I needed more sustenance after my long traumatic labour. (Edinburgh Royal Infirmary).
- A family member in hospital while pregnant had only dry baked potato, lettuce, fruit and salted crisps. This was a week-long stay.
- Yes. No vegan meals on menu. Missed meals. When I got a meal very poor quality. (Glasgow Royal Infirmary).

- Yes I was in hospital for 2 weeks and all I ate from the hospital was baked potatoes and vegetables. My mum had to bring me food and soya milk. I actually discharged myself as soon as I could as it made my admission more difficult and felt unhelpful. (Queen Margaret Hospital).
- Yes. The Royal Infirmary during 4 week stay for my husband and the Glasgow Children's hospital during 3 night stay for my son. Gartnavel when I had surgery also struggled to provide toast without butter and overheard the nurse saying I was being difficult refusing the buttered toast.
- Yes. I've never obtained vegan food in hospital and have had to rely on family and friends bringing food in for me. In one case where I was told this was not allowed I was unable to eat until I left the hospital.
- Yes, the hospital in Wick doesn't provide vegan food. I had to bring all my own, where I was allowed.
- A particular issue is that it is not possible to pre-book dietary requirements and once in the system, you are at their mercy (and presumably not well enough to deal) Not everyone has friends and family to help out. (New Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh).
- Yes. Golden Jubilee in Glasgow has no vegan options. Only meat, dairy, milk. Fried processed crap.
- Refused vegan option, given meal with cheese and I have anaphylaxis to milk! Family brought food. (Ayrshire and Arran NHS trust)
- Yes. The chef at Nine Wells hospital said he was under no obligation to provide me with my dietary requirements. Veganism is a lifestyle choice, not a dietary requirement were his exact words.
- My daughter was an inpatient. Poor choices, which they conceded was not good enough. She got a personal apology. (Ninewells hospital, Dundee).
- Yes. I couldn't be discharged after an overnight stay with stomach issues until it had been shown that I could keep food down, but they were having trouble finding a vegan friendly meal. Eventually found one that had clearly been a frozen ready meal - was absolutely disgusting and I could only eat the crust around the top. They decided that was enough and sent me home. I ate a proper meal at home and was readmitted to hospital 12 hours later. (QEUH in Glasgow).
- Yes when I was having my children. As I was in for two weeks before my section my husband brought my food and the nurses let me keep soya milk, yoghurts and dairy free margarine in their fridge. They also did try to get me something to eat from the menu when possible.
- Yes - there is none!
- I was there to give birth but didn't trust them to feed me so had my own food brought in by family. I had to stay there again for one night and was only given some fruit and a dry salad with salt and pepper but no dressing. That was in the evening and so after the kitchen had closed. (Glasgow Royal Infirmary).
- I work in the catering department of a hospital and vegan food isn't easily available. There are separate cards that you order from. The vegan options are very limited. They do provide oat milk and the

porridge is made from water, so breakfast is ok. They used to have soya yogurts but I've not seen them for a while.

- No they have a vegan menu in all the hospitals but some staff don't know about it so you have to tell them.....but the vegan food is disgusting mush.
- Yes. Was given a very dry roll and jam as no vegan food available. Staff were lovely, kind and apologetic. Non-judgemental and professional. (Hairmyers, Lanarkshire)
- Yes. Had an overnight stay a few weeks ago. Toast with jam was all I was offered. (RAH Paisley – children's ward).
- Yes. No vegan option after operation. Nurse had to go to cafe for me to get soup.
- Been in hospital a few times over the past 7 years. Aberdeen Royal Infirmary don't have a clue what to feed vegans. Cream/butter/ham all offered. Usually have a plain baked potato and bring food with me. Not good.
- Had hospital stay last year and had to have baked potato only.
- Absolutely. You get total crap and resort to getting food brought in. Plus I don't trust them.
- Brought own food.
- During a stay in hospital, I had a little difficulty. My dietary requirements were not understood (they sent me an omelette the first time).
- Yes. Took days to identify there were vegan options and then they were ready meals that all tasted the same. No fresh food, no plant milk etc. (RAH in Paisley.)
- Had own food brought in because they only had vegetarian options. (Dr Grays, Elgin).
- Yes, spent a few days in the Queen Elizabeth University's hospital and couldn't get any vegan options
- Yes, Royal maternity, no vegan options. All my partner was provided free of charge was dry toast.
- Yes. Menu usually has one vegetarian option containing dairy or egg but no vegan option. Staff seemed to struggle with the request for something without animal products. The go to was plain baked potato or with beans if available. Even in the hospital cafe / vending machines / restaurant, vegan options are extremely limited or simply not available. (Wishaw General Hospital).
- No - I was in hospital for 4 months as a vegan at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow. The choices were amazing and the dietician was great. Whole vegan menu with several choices and a couple of desserts. Dietician personally ordered Alpro yoghurts/custards and soya milk in for my cereal and whole kitchen department was supportive.
- A friend had dreadful problems on Biggart Hospital, Prestwick. Her son had to bring in tins of soup which the nurses willingly heated up.
- Yes I have. No vegan menus or options. Had to wait a day before I got offered very poor quality bean stew. No guarantees it was vegan. Happened on 3 occasions.

- Yes I have found that there is rarely a vegan option available in hospital. (Borders General Hospital and Royal Infirmary Edinburgh).
- Provision poor - dry versions of main meals, though some choices better than others. Option not listed on menu, had to detail and hope for the best. (St John's Hospital).
- No options for the two day stay in the Aberdeen hospital.
- Yes, sandwiches all made with butter and soup all made with milk/cream, limited vegan food available in WHS Smith. (Ninewells Hospital).
- Yes- RAH in Paisley and Glasgow Royal Infirmary where experiences were variable- a vegan menu existed and was usually sorted eventually but it took a lot of nagging staff to remember to ask about it on my behalf and get it ordered on a daily basis, which I found very stressful and was often made to feel like a nuisance. But if I didn't make sure to ask, then it was often forgotten about and I had to rely to asking visitors to bring me something in.
- In Arbroath maternity unit I just brought my own food in.
- Nothing suitable available in the evening on admission and menus offered very little or nothing nutritious. (Stirling Royal Infirmary and Ayr Hospital).
- Forth Valley Hospital in Larbert. Staff were very understanding and accommodating but all they could provide was a basic salad.
- I was sometimes brought food I didn't ask for due to there being no vegan option (the food brought wasn't vegan). Perhaps when someone is moved to a ward it should be marked that they are vegan, and not only tick on the menu the vegan dinner options. I understand the staff have a lot of other things to deal with. (Edinburgh Royal Infirmary)
- Yes in a maternity unit. No vegan option and the "vegetarian option" was fish cakes.
- Very much so! Baked potato and beans every single meal for every single day!
- Soup had milk in it but they said it didn't. Couldn't get tea with soy milk. No vegan marg. (Queen Elizabeth Glasgow).
- Yes, in Raigmore vegan food was very hard to come by and there were no vegan options. I was in the GI ward (the last place dairy should be an option) and every meal had dairy in it. I eventually got a salad but had to rely on my family bringing me food once I was able to eat again.
- My husband was in Succoth Ward in Lochgilphead (a mental health unit) and was pressured to eat meat as it "contained things good for his mental health". He was offered lettuce leaves, cheese toasties, chips for meals. He gave in and ate meat. It is very difficult to stand up to the staff when you are depressed. I brought in food for him, but distances meant I could only go at weekends.
- Yes. Recently, at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. Almost only soup available.
- Maternity unit, Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh - a couple of years ago a family member was in with threatened premature labour. The vegan option was a dry baked potato and lettuce leaf, or a salad that had

clearly had the egg and ham taken off. And she was 3/4 hours away from any family who could have brought anything in.

- No - actually I recently had an operation and the nurse got me jam from her own locker for the toast that I had to eat before being released.
- I had a difficult time getting food at Larbert hospital. They didn't even have sunflower/vegetable/vegan spread for using with toast.
- Yes. When I gave birth the only vegan option I was given was a plate of lettuce and apricots. I had to bring in my own spread and milk for toast and tea. They had advance notice I was coming as it was a booked induction. It was appalling in my opinion. (Elgin Hospital).
- Yes, in the RAH the food was so bad the nurses put in a complaint.....if the kitchen is well stocked they will make a large vegan salad with pasta and or rice and fruit and veg
- Not allowed to have family bring food in for you or keep stuff in fridge on ward. The hospital food is disgusting when it should be nutritional and tasty so that ill people eat and get better.
- Hospital food in Edinburgh is sadly awful at the ERI. My mother was in hospital for months so I have seen the quality and variety of food, which was poor. Usually there is fruit but the main courses would have been useless.
- After a colonoscopy there was no sandwiches that were vegan, so didn't have anything. (Glasgow Gartnavel Hospital)
- Yes there was no vegan option on the menu and staff were not interested that I was going hungry
- At first told could not supply vegan but insisted on human rights and the St Johns Hospital provided good food.
- Yes. During a hospital stay I was offered 1 dry baked potato. No salad as they advised there was none. (St John's Hospital surgery unit).

Patients suffering from anorexia refused vegan food

- Yes. Although I was in for an eating disorder, my veganism is separate and for ethical reasons. They force-fed me animal products against my will and made the whole thing much worse for me. I explained this to them but they said nobody in the unit was allowed to be vegan as it was "unfair" and too difficult. (The YPU in The Royal Edinburgh).
- Yes, inpatient for an eating disorder at the age of 14 and then 21. Veganism was not permitted.
- Yes, myself as I've been inpatient for an eating disorder. Hospitals don't support veganism for people with eating disorders. (Crosshouse Hospital).
- Yes, during eating disorder recovery there was an attempt to make me go back to eating meat again. Vaguely understandable given the circumstances but they continued to promote this even after I explained that I was vegan for ethical reason and not for restriction.
- My sister has been a passionate ethical vegan for 12+ years. She went through a terrible time at one point in her life suffering from anorexia and was admitted to a clinic where she was forced to eat animal products as they incorrectly believed that she was avoiding animal

products as a way to control her food intake. This put tremendous stress on her at a horrible point in her life. I believe they should have worked with her belief system and morals rather than force her to act against them. I worry now that if she was to relapse in the future she would be reluctant to seek medical help on case they force her to consume animal products again.

Student Medical Staff

- Working as a student nurse I have to bring a pre-packaged lunch as there are limited vegan options in hospitals.
- Yes - as a medical student I use canteens in the new Southern and Dumfries and Galloway RI and have had very limited options in both - chips or maybe a baked potato with beans

Food for Visitors

- Yes! Ninewells cafes had nothing suitable other than a pot of fruit and a cereal bar. Couldn't get coffee either as all out of a machine that also had milk in.
- Yes, hospital canteen manager was not aware of veganism.
- I myself was not in hospital but my father was for many months. The food available from the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary cafe was pretty much completely non-vegan and sandwiches/panini at least contained cheese if they didn't have meat. The food provided to patients was again barely vegan friendly except for things like vegetables.
- The public eating areas for visitors had very limited vegan options in Edinburgh. The main canteen only regularly stocked salad, chips, and fruit. It did not stock plant based milk. I have visited Oban Hospital, Lochgilphead Hospital, and Campbeltown Hospital as a visitor. Campbeltown sometimes has a vegan veg soup. The hospitals generally don't have vegan options for visitors. No soya milk is usually available.

Have you or has anyone in your family experienced any other issues related to their veganism in hospital or otherwise from our health service? If yes please provide details.

Lack of awareness/understanding of veganism / its status

- Quite a lot of ignorance, sadly. Even a doctor asked me if it meant I can't have gluten.
- Yes staff unaware of what it is. Don't consider it important the way they do religious choices
- My gran was not asked her dietary requirements and was given beef, so she did not eat as she did not like to say she was vegetarian. They should really ask this when you are admitted.

- I had to explain to my doctor what veganism is because she got it confused with vegetarianism. Then she told me that veganism may not be the healthiest choice.
- Doctors and other staff are normally ignorant of veganism. Some of them make derogatory comments, clearly discrimination.
- General lack of understanding/awareness from staff.
- Just lectures from the go about being vegan.
- Being mocked by specific staff members but only one or two

Resistance/opposition to veganism

- Had a doctor make a face when I said my diet was vegan (I was saying how I didn't think stomach problems I had been having were related to diet as I didn't consume meat or dairy and ate lots of fresh fruit and vegetable and made sure to consume fibre and lots of water).
- Slight judgement from doctors on the choice. Some were more open to the idea and some suggested I should still eat cheese but I just said no.
- I have had complex health conditions since 2011 with generally positive responses from hospitals and GPs, however have noted a large amount of ignorance about, and disapproval of, vegan (plant-based) diet at GP level persists. Also outcome depends entirely on how pushy and determined you are as an individual.
- GP's haven't been respectful of my diet but dentists have been critical
- I received judgement from my GP who didn't think it was a healthy diet.
- I was diagnosed as anaemic last September, and had a really positive experience with the GP, I explained that I was vegan and wanted to avoid iron supplements containing animal derivatives and ingredients, she advised me to ask the pharmacy and she would then prescribe me precisely the product I wanted. Local pharmacy was fantastic and helpful, advised me about Spatone, and all was sorted.

Lack of support for raising children vegan

- When struggling to breastfeed I was told to eat ice cream and full-fat milk. This was at a really vulnerable time and they tried to make me think that would help. In reality I had hypoplasia and was never going to make enough milk. I asked about donor milk and vegan options but was given no help at all. It was the worst time of my life; the overwhelming guilt for not being able to feed my baby and for having to use formula.
- My doctor insists that it's not healthy to be vegan and has expressed these views strongly in front of my child, despite having little nutritional knowledge when questioned.
- Some attitude from one Health Visitor asking about my daughter's vegan diet despite her being very healthy.
- I had disparaging comments made by many doctors and nurses and was told numerous times to give my baby formula or that he would need meat and dairy to be healthy.

- Baby, now 6 Months old was in NICU and we had to raise a formal complaint and threaten legal action after a Doctor tried to say she would force Bovine Milk Fortifier on our son.
- Midwives tried to pressure me to bottle feed my son cow's milk.
- Some health visitors and nurses are excellent in terms of respecting and understanding our choice for us and our son to be vegan. However, others are uninformed and have misconceptions around what vitamins they may need, which can lead to conflicting advice.
- I've not been made to feel that being vegan is a safe way to bring up my baby and although I plan to, it's left me worried.

Misinformation regarding necessity of consuming animal products / lack of understanding of plant-based nutrition

- Yes. My husband was told by a consultant at an ENT clinic following problems with polyps in his nose, and following a discussion unrelated to his symptoms about diet, that meat was required for a healthy balanced diet and that he should not be following a vegan diet as it is deficient in enzymes required by the body.
- Got lecture about not eating enough protein, and said that is what contributes to my ill health
- Yes, suggesting health problems are to do with my veganism and not my mental health/ stress
- Requested to take additional blood tests while seeing a diabetic nutrition team - they were surprised to find my vitamin and nutrient levels were as they should be
- Had a period of anaemia following a sterilisation op and from donating blood too soon after but my GP told me it was my vegan diet causing the anaemia despite my diet not being an issue before then or now
- Some of my hair fell out after a fall where I injured my head (most likely due to the glue used to seal the wound). I was told by a psychiatrist that my hair loss was due to protein deficiency from my diet. My hair grew back a few months after the fall despite no change in my protein intake.
- General scepticism about my lifestyle and advice that this was not healthy.
- Son who eats plant based and has autoimmune conditions helped by avoiding animal substances, gets no recognition or approval for this and has it noted on his records that his food choices are 'restrictive'.
- Yes, they don't understand where I get protein b12 from. One even suggesting b12 could only be obtained by eating meat.
- Yes, dietician was ill informed to assist when referred due to IBS
- My MIL was convinced by her Dr to start eating fish as she needed the protein at her age. They actually wanted her to eat meat again but she wasn't prepared to do that.
- Just a general lack of understanding about veganism nutritionally.
- Yes. Doctors are not interested in hearing about it or benefits. They assume your diet is deficient.

- Yes- I've had doctors suggest my anaemia- caused by gastric bleeds- may be because "vegan diets are low in iron"- this doctor did not appear to know what heme and non-heme iron was when I tried to discuss it further and I felt their attitude was dismissive and I was more knowledgeable and had done more research on the subject myself.
- I had a doctor insist I was tested for b12 levels as soon as he read that I was vegan on my notes (they were fine)
- People suggesting my being vegan is responsible for my ill health! I was vegan long, long before my health issues began
- Was advised by GP that veganism was an extreme diet and nurse advised she thought it was why I felt run down. It wasn't I was just working too hard and stressed at work. I feel that any medical issue I raise is associated with being vegan.

Have you experienced any difficulty obtaining prescribed medication / medical items which are not made from animal products (all medicines are tested on animals but it is possible to avoid gelatine / dairy lactose etc. for some prescriptions depending on availability / GP) from a GP or in a hospital? If yes please provide details including identifying the GP or hospital if possible. (Please note that vegans currently have no option but to take medications that have been tested on animals and often that contain animal products. Where there is no alternative vegans have no option but to take these medicines. That is precisely what the "in so far as practicable" part of the definition of vegan is intended to cover).

Responses included:

- Yes, I just abandoned some medication in the past as I couldn't get an alternative.
- Yes. I've been given gelatine-cased antibiotics even though I requested non-gelatine cased. I've also been given allergy medicine with lactose and because I have never been exposed to lactose (being vegan from birth) it makes me really ill.
- Have Vitamin D deficiency problems. The G.P. can only offer animal sourced vitamin D supplements. The plant based vitamin D is not available through my G.P.s
- Yes, but my GP checked and there were no alternative forms of the medication. I ended up taking the gelatine capsule off and just taking the powder, which is safe to do for that medication.
- I am on long term maintenance medication for health issues. At this time I'm still struggling to find alternatives that aren't made in gelatine capsules. I wish so badly there was a way to make it that all prescription medications had to be made with gelatine free capsules.
- Yes because I'm asthmatic I need to have the flu jag which is grown on eggs so there is no other alternative for vegans or for any doctor to prescribe instead.

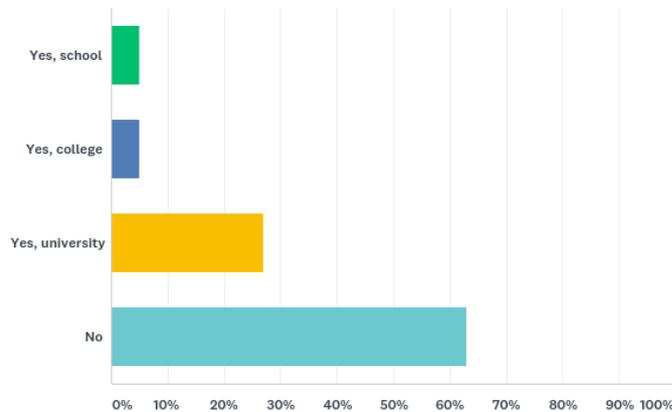
- I told my GP that I am vegan and she changed my prescription (antibiotic) to one that didn't contain gelatine or dairy.
- Yes I and family avoid any meds where animal proteins in it or tested on them. Have managed to get alternatives for vitamins I need that are vegan. However I do not know what I would do if one of us needed a drug that there was no alternative vegan product for.
- As a transplant patient, I am on a number of medications, specified in such a way that even generic substitutes are not approved. One or two contain lactose or gelatine. The last time I enquired, there were no options.
- Gelatine-containing pills. Most pharmacies only stock one brand of each type of medicine so it's like it or lump it.
- Yes it has been hard to get gelatine free antibiotics and in one case they discontinued the liquid form so I had to take gelatine ones.
- One of my doctors calls me awkward when I refuse to have gelatine capsules. I refuse point blank to have gelatine, and there is usually an alternative for those, however a lot of my medication still had lactose in and they have not been able to find an equivalent yet, so I have to have those.
- I always ask for alternatives to gelatine capsules and so far have not had any objections to those requests (in both hospital setting and GP surgery), although my GP did point out how much the liquid form of the medicine I was asking for costs in comparison to the gelatine capsule. I said, "well, if they put them in vegecaps, I would happily take it that way"!)
- As a vegan GP I know a lot more about medication than most vegans and my priority would always be their health, many vegan products are much more expensive and unfortunately, the NHS being a free service, our hands are often tied as to what we are allowed to prescribe (and pharmacies can also refuse to supply). Services are regularly audited and GPs are punished for scripts for the more expensive drugs, including being named and shamed at local meetings, and by the local health board. I know certain religions can get drugs they are allowed to take but unfortunately veganism is still seen as a lifestyle choice so cannot be used to justify.
- Yes a couple of my medications contain gelatine in the capsule and the doctor seemed unconcerned when I asked if they come in another form.
- I have requested liquid forms of medication to avoid lactose but was advised by the GP that this was not available due to it being prohibitively expensive.
- I used to take anti-depressants and I was advised there was no alternative that didn't contain gelatine.
- Medication is lactose based. Doctor said no alternatives available.
- I was aware that all are tested on animals but wasn't aware that there might be vegan options for medicine out there. I have never found basic pain killers without lactose. I need to use ketoconazole shampoo but they were only able to prescribe one with animal collagen.
- Have refused to take gelatine coated capsules

- My GP tried looked up a vegan version of my medication, however it was only available in the USA
- It is impossible to tell what is in medicines as GPs do not have good information on options. When you are ill you want to get better so you take what is necessary. It would be helpful if vegan options were flagged up for GPs.
- I currently take the contraceptive pill, and have been unable to find another contraceptive pill which does not contain lactose.
- My mum who is vegan has angina and some of the tablets she has to be on contain gelatine but there is no alternative and she has to take it.
- yes! This is a major issue. My mum and I both take iron tablets from Holland and Barrett but require stronger doses. Nurse gave us both various iron tabs which contained lactose and gelatine after having our vegan notes in her system. She told us straight they were fine for us to take. My mum is persistent and called local pharmacist and he said immediately they are not suitable. He also said no iron tabs they supply are free from. I also recently had a chest infection and had to take antibiotics with gel cases, also need inhalers which has lactose in them which I have no idea why it is needed. I now do my own homework on medicine and bring my questions to them which is often answered with the problem is the suppliers and NHS deals with the suppliers not willing to change or request other companies
- None of the medications I take are possible to obtain vegan. I asked even before becoming vegan for lactose free prescriptions as I have a dairy allergy and was told there were none available. As my medications are life-saving I have no choice but to take them.
- I have to take thyroxine, due to thyroid cancer treatment. The tablets contain lactose. When I was being treated for cancer I had to take radioactive iodine in a gelatine capsule. When I raised the issue they would not even discuss it with me.
- Yes, my doctor finds it silly that I try and avoid medications that I need
- Vaccinations for my son have been an issue. Plus the adult flu vaccine has animal ingredients and I believe you have to pay for the 'vegan' version.
- I have to take capsules every day & would obviously prefer if gelatine-free were available
- Yes, I've been left with no alternative than to take medication containing animal ingredients, in the past.
- I requested gelatine free fluoxetine tablets which I take every day from my GP. This was prescribed but whenever I call for a repeat prescription they always forget and prescribe me the capsules that contain gelatine.

Education

Out of the respondents, 27% were in university, 4% in college and 5% in school.

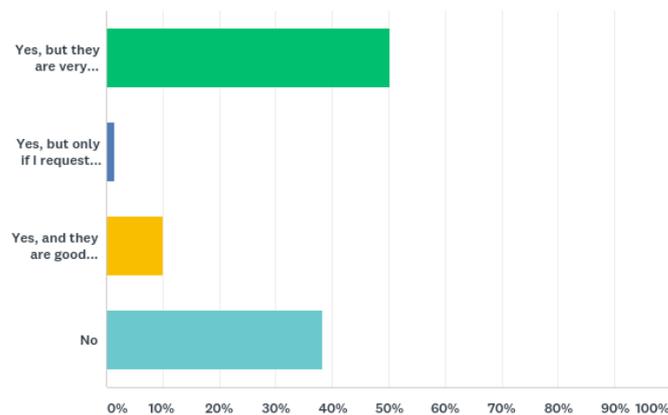
Q6 Do you attend school, college or university?



When asked: “Does your school/college/university provide vegan food options in the canteen?” of those who responded, as the question was applicable to them:

- 38.33% said no
- 50% said yes, but they are very limited
- 10% said yes, and they are good options
- 1.3% said yes, but only if I request them in advance

Q7 Does your school/college/university provide vegan food options in the canteen?



Almost 40% of the vegans attending educational institutions who responded said there were no vegan options at all. Of the 50% who said there were options, but very limited, many respondents added comments which elaborate on what they meant by “limited”, including:

- it's only snacks like crisps they have available
- a few vegan things like fruit but no main meals
- only chips and unclear/inaccurate allergy information
- chips and soup only
- baked potato and beans every day
- accidentally vegan soup only
- salad and fruit only
- no clear labelling
- vegetarian options but nothing vegan
- rarely any non-dairy milk options
- only one café out of 5 provides soya milk
- very few meal options as the vegetarian options usually contain animal products
- sometimes an option nearby. Otherwise a 5km walk to the vegan food bar in a separate, non-central school building.
- every veggie option is prepacked with cheese/eggs/butter
- asked my college if more vegan options could be available in their canteen - got the reply of that there are chips or salad, that they need to cater for the bigger audience and that vegans are a very small part of the college population (like meat eaters are allergic to vegan food)

Have you had to carry out experiments on animals/dissection for academic credit? If yes, did you request an alternative and if so what was the response?

Responses included:

- We were allowed to abstain and obtain results from a friend to write up report. On a frog dissection it became apparent that the gassing hadn't worked and the frogs' hearts were still beating upon dissection. Students were removed from the lab so the frogs could again be euthanised.
- Expected to dissect lungs of a sheep. Wasn't actually necessary for course, lecturer just thought it would be interesting. I refused to even observe others do it and was excused for that part of class.
- Yes. I sent an email to the lead laboratory demonstrator asking about alternatives but they weren't much help other than explaining where we would be using animals and what would happen to them after the lab. In the end I observed/will observe the experiments (dissection of a chick embryo and, in a few weeks, a lobster) and only do the parts that do not involve actual dissection.
- Yes. I had to watch a rat dissection and a sheep heart dissection. I requested alternatives and was told there aren't any.
- I had to do dissections of invertebrates and one fish (bought from local fishmongers), I did them as I wanted to achieve the best possible

marks in my degree and without completing these (which was an option) my grades would have suffered significantly.

- I had to do an experiment on water fleas. I did not request an alternative because I knew from experience my teacher would refuse.
- Yes, I was told I didn't have to participate in dissection, but I had to observe.
- I was once required to dissect a lamb's liver. I was told there were no other alternatives as it was part of the curriculum but that later on in the trimester I could partake in an alternative lab. However this was reluctantly offered.
- Not for credit but as part of the course, requested an opt out and was allowed not to take part
- Lung dissection in high school. I did not attend. They sent me to the library (where detention takes place), and carried on with the class dissection.
- Back in first year, there was a dissection of a mussel, however we worked in pairs and those running it said that if you didn't want to do it (either from being squeamish or for ethical reasons), then your partner could do it. So I just had to sit and watch/not watch. There are already many diagrams of labelled mussels out there, so don't know why they are still doing this.
- Some experiments on a lamb's liver. No alternatives
- Friends have but they were given an alternative. It was not well received as "only one" animal was used for the whole class
- My class was dissecting sheep's lungs and I asked if I could step outside and not take part. This was allowed and there was no issue.
- We were made to examine dead, frozen birds for an avian unit. We were not given an option
- Having refused to be part of dissection in my biology class I was told I would be marked down. I was also subjected to films of animal experimentation without being given notice or any choice in viewing.
- At university I was asked to carry out a dissection as well as animal experiments. I refused. No alternatives were ever offered. One lecturer told me that my veganism would have a very negative effect on my studies and my life!
- Yes, I wasn't allowed to
- I study forensic science and we had one exercise which involved studying blood pattern analysis by chucking cows' blood around a room. I spoke to my lecturer about it and she was happy for me to be as involved/not involved as I wanted. However, it wasn't graded so I'm not sure how it would have differed if it was.
- Yes, I requested not to watch or carry out the experiment and was given a textbook to copy from.
- Yes - I was able to do 4 dry practicals instead of dissections but they were not prepared as we just had to google the answer and they were actually a bit passive aggressive giving us the practical guide including

a section which said we should feel privileged being able to dissect. I have had to do labs looking at dead animals or looking at blood/tissues though. Was no offer of doing an alternative for those.

- Yes, several in fact and I started a petition against it. I was told I had to attend but didn't have to participate - I had to watch everyone else do it though.
- At secondary school we had to watch a cow lung and heart dissection. I was allowed to sit out of the room the first time but was made to sit in the room the second time. People didn't understand and thought I was squeamish about blood.
- Dissecting sheep's lungs and chickens' wings. I got to leave the room.
- Yes. Dentistry practise on pig heads.
- a few years ago in high school woodlice were used in an experiment. I requested not to participate and it was accepted.
- We observed ciliary beating in live mussels. Was not able to be excused. Mussels were fed to starfish in aquatics research centre when experiment was finished.
- I was asked to carry out an experiment on live crickets. Measuring how far they could jump. I refused. No alternative was offered. Lecturer was fine with me missing it but said I was jeopardising my degree
- Yes (animal products in growing cell lines and used to produce antibodies in experiments) - no alternative possible

As some of the respondents pointed out, it is unclear why students are still required to carry out dissections when all of the information has already been so well documented. Any necessary learning can surely be done using video and other available information. Whether or not there is necessary learning to be obtained in this way is another question; unless a student is studying veterinary medicine or another related subject, we would have thought it totally unnecessary and even then there will be very good alternatives now that will mean it is not necessary to breed and kill animals for this purpose.

We wonder if experimentation on animals has become a feature of our school curriculum, seen as an interesting activity that students will find a pleasing change from the norm, such that we no longer critically assess the necessity, value or suitability of these activities for students in this day and age. We know animals are sentient, including land animals, fish and insects. If we are teaching our children respect for the interests and feelings of others, the unnecessary breeding and killing of living, feeling beings would appear to be in direct conflict with that.

We recommend that use is made of the information already available in order to avoid the breeding and killing of non-human animals for unnecessary experiments and procedures.

If experiments continue, we should at a minimum ensure that there is full awareness that veganism is about living according to the moral conviction that it is wrong to use and kill non-human animals unnecessarily, and that an alternative activity is expressly offered to students in recognition of this in every case.

Have you had to take part in any other activities that were not compatible with your veganism, at school, college or university? If so what, did you request to be removed, and what was the response?

Responses included:

- visiting farms
- I have been asked to cook with eggs, milk, and honey during Home Economics. I have not been given any alternatives and had to miss out on cooking. This meant I could not pick the subject next year, which I wanted to do as I enjoy cooking.
- I have been given Quorn meat to cook with although I have to cook with cheese, eggs and dairy still and also for my exam I will have to use real animal flesh which is annoying
- Yes, the response was very hostile but I did not have to take part
- Cooking demonstrations from outside agencies. Scottish Beef, Milk marketing board and a fishmonger came to show how to cook their wares, no vegan or even vegetarian demos.
- Home Economics at school - had to provide my own ingredients
- yes, disdain and mocking
- Creating promotional materials for fishing + dairy companies for live briefs. Was told I could not change my project to something else.
- Yes, I did fashion and we did a full unit that involved using wool. When I requested to use alternative fabric I was met with hostility and then spent over £200 for alternative fabrics when everyone else got theirs for free. I have complained to the learner inclusion department as my department has no intention of being inclusive and said I would be expected to use leather next year.
- Lots in school my parents were able to support me as they are vegan. The school wasn't always best at listening.
- eggs used in chemistry experiments, did not take part
- Yes, university and college hadn't heard of veganism and said I had to use products to pass class e.g., shellac, hog hair brushes, etc. When I opted out I was made to feel silly for such a small thing.
- As a textile design student I do not use animal products in my work.
- In college we went to Morocco for a trip. When we were there the teachers had organised a tour around a tanning factory; they knew I was vegan and allowed me to sit out the activity.
- I have had to cook for exams and my veganism was catered to as far as possible, making substitutions for meat and dairy but I had to use eggs in one dish (I was not made to taste this one for the exam). In my current class my teacher encourages me to take part in cooking lessons by finding me vegan alternatives.
- Our ball is themed A Day at the Races so I am not attending.

- Being told during lectures that the only way to survive healthily is to eat animal products
- as a pupil at school we had to wear blazers with wool and were not allowed to not wear them
- Training to be a chef I have to deal with all meat. It's my choice and as saddening as it is, it's what I have to do now to eventually being able to open my own vegan restaurant.
- we have been on a dairy and a beef farm visit - this is a course requirement and there is no alternative

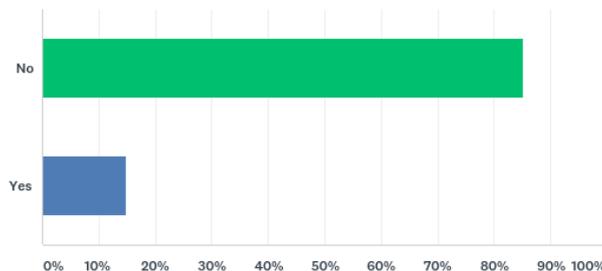
Attitudes

- Science teacher was very anti-vegan to the point of mockery.
- I had a lecturer in college ridicule me in front of everyone because I was vegan, saying "if it has a heartbeat barbecue it" etc.

Vegan Parents

Out of the respondents 14.98% had children in school, college or university.

Q11 Do you have children in school, college or university?



They were asked if their children had “experienced any of the issues referred to in questions 7-10 above? (Food provision, animal experiments, activities involving live animals, other issues)”, and the responses included:

Food provision

- Yes, school is useless no options
- Yes. No vegan option on school dinner menu.
- only vegan school dinner option is dry baked potato with beans. They do not do school dinners for this reason. This means that my youngest misses out on the free school meals for p1-3 and is therefore the only child out of 7 classes who is packed lunch.
- Daughter was made to prepare a meal containing tuna. Reason given "one day you are going to have to prepare a meal for someone"
- So far just poor food provision.
- Yes lack of vegan options so eats a baked potato and salad each day as his free meal for children P1-P3 despite me contacting the caterers and sending details of vegan options.
- Food provision very poor
- Food options limited
- Food has always been an issue in her previous primary school. Plus I worry it will be worse now in secondary with possible science experiments and dissections.
- Few or no vegan options only vegetarian.
- No vegans options on standard school menu.
- Yes. Mostly food and understanding what the boys can/will eat.
- Yes, school lunches limited and basic.
- Primary school - no specifically vegan options on the lunch menus. My child takes a packed lunch (when he was in p1-3 with free school meals, he was the only packed lunch child). 'treats' in class for good behaviour or at Xmas etc is always a non-vegan chocolate of Haribo,

so my child doesn't get, and they wouldn't allow me to provide an alternative.

- I contacted the council to ask what was vegan on the school menu. Their initial response was to say that veganism was a lifestyle choice and not a belief system so they would not provide vegan meals. I responded to that by clarifying that I wanted to know what on the existing menu was suitable for vegans - to which they responded "Soup".
- Food provision for vegans is non-existent other than bread or chips or salad.
- Our local primary has vegetarian but not vegan options. In order to obtain 'other' dietary requirements you have to prove medical need.
- There were no vegan food options available at my secondary school and the idea of it was never considered
- Overall it is the food, school did not provide any vegan options.
- At the school we've had very few issues. They've been great making vegan food in class when baking for everyone. He has packed lunches at his own request, and our youngest is also coeliac so we decided to provide our own food.
- My eldest daughter is in high school and makes vegan alternatives during her cookery lessons in Home Economics. Her class teacher has been incredibly supportive and has found alternative recipes etc for her. I bought her a book on food substitutions and she has been very interested and has used the book to help my daughter. She was also supported in primary school by her P7 teacher who supported and encouraged her choice to be vegan, again, despite not being so himself. If all teachers had this outlook it would be refreshing.

Activities involving using animals / speciesism

- Eggs and hatchlings were brought into my nursery for the children to observe and handle
- The primary school my kids attended took part in hatching incubated eggs, a cruel waste of life, chicks born with no mother into chaos - none survived and I was disgusted at the time and explained why to my kids, that these were living beings not toys or experiments
- When children were younger at nursery groups would bring live animals in for kids to see
- I filled out a form to exempt my children from all safari park, zoo etc visits and to exempt them from class mini zoos, living eggs projects etc after finding out the kids were hatching chicks in school (a teacher took the females home and the males were returned to be killed). Head teacher treated me like I was over reacting when I explained how upset I was that school funds were being used to invest in animal abuse such as Living Eggs. It is irresponsible to teach children that animals are disposable and their lives aren't worth respecting/protecting. I feel the head teacher mocked my beliefs. In their role they should be non-judgemental and should be promoting equality for all families involved with the school community.

- Yes, annual trips to zoo/safari park etc
- I anticipate many issues regarding snacks, school visits to zoos, use of shells and feathers in crafts and so on.
- Child had to take part in animal experiments in science
- Health week involved talks from milk groups on the benefits of cows' milk which we refused to let our boys take part in.
- School trip to a fish factory; live farm animals brought into school with no advance warning so that I could take them out/arrange other to be taken out.
- Nursery - there have been live animal handling sessions (rats, snakes, Guinea pigs, centipedes etc), farm and zoo trips - my child just stays off on those days as the nursery do not understand.
- In primary school we had an issue with a trip to Sea Life Centre. I received a call from a teacher explaining that I was depriving my child of the experience of going with the rest of the class. In secondary we've only a small issue so far with Home Economics class, after a talk with the teacher a vegan food option was provided although it was very basic.
- I just said no dissection and they had to read about the dissection in a separate room. They do not do a separate cookery option for vegan though.
- Yes live animals in school, farm visits, food info with meat
- My kids - did not attend the zoo trip or the city farm trips. Response - "the kids would enjoy it" or lack of understanding of the ethical implications of these places.
- My daughter was asked to dress as a Spanish bullfighter for Spanish day.

Attitudes

- Child's teacher has been overheard being critical of vegan children in class - "that'll explain why she's so pale".

State Employment

If you work for a government owned institution (school, hospital, prison etc) have you experienced any issues in relation to veganism, for example difficulty obtaining vegan alternatives for uniforms. If yes, please provide details including the place of work if possible.

Responses included:

- Yes they will only provide leather safety shoes that I have to have. So I have to buy my own
- Yes - food selection in canteen and staff being rude regarding my lifestyle choices
- Difficulty being catered to at events so I don't really go
- My colleagues take the piss out of me frequently. But it is though genuine concern that I am deficient in B12 etc
- Vegans not catered for at weekly coffee mornings other than grapes.
- Yes, no vegan food provided when other staff were fed e.g. parent's evening.
- Finding vegan nursing shoes was pretty hard but not impossible. I wear black trainers at the hospital.
- We are provided with hand sanitiser which isn't cruelty free so I buy my own.
- I work in a school and there are no vegan food options, not even the soup.
- Work In a College - food terrible, bring my own.
- Yes. Boots and gloves
- Work for NHS - catered meetings/events almost never have adequate vegan options, and options in the staff canteen are limited
- Most hospitals provide limited food options, although there's usually soup that's suitable. Nothing is ever labelled vegan.
- I work in a high school. No vegan options in the school canteen not even soup.
- Yes, sadly the kitchens Boss had no idea what veganism was.
- Yes, I work for Scottish Ambulance Service, there's no vegan/vegetarian alternatives for working boots
- Yes. My company failed to provide non leather safety boots
- Only in terms of the rare times when catering is provided at training events. Rarely vegan options.
- I work for the City of Edinburgh Council. Vegan options in my particular building are improving, but lunches on training (often external) can be totally variable, from excellent, to a few lettuce leaves, to...non-existent.
- I'm in the military. Vegan diet is almost impossible to adhere to when deployed
- I work in Hairmyres Hospital where they provide a vegetarian option for patients and staff but no vegan option

- I work in the City of Edinburgh Council. They do not provide and vegan food in the canteens
- I work for the Police and we have a vegetarian but not vegan option on the canteen menu everyday
- No vegan food at all where I work. I gave up, I bring my own food
- The only vegan options in the staff canteen are raw vegetables for salad and fruit. (Forestry Commission)
- Yes Leather boots as work issue, no alternative
- Yes. SNBTS insisted on uniform but unwilling to provide non leather footwear.
- Working in a school they had very limited vegan options - baked potato and beans or sometimes vegetable soup
- I was asked as a registered nurse to get vaccinations prior to seeing patients for research questioning. I refused as they have animal products (egg / pig) in them (and have been tested on animals). I was allowed to continue without them.
- Offered flu jabs each year. Refusal accepted.
- On NHS training days I specify in advance I am vegan but they usually do not cater for me. I usually take my own food although my office has paid for training and lunch.
- NHS...afraid canteens don't cater for vegans and staff do not understand vegan...they direct me to gluten free
- Very little choice in hospital for staff for healthy vegan meals
- I attend NHS run courses (administration of medication, first aid, moving and handling etc.) and have been told they cannot provide vegan options for lunch.
- When I worked for the NHS I was verbally harassed by a colleague for being vegan
- Events and training often has no vegan option for food and dairy free milk for tea/coffee. A minor issue but still.

Prison

Have you spent time in prison or a similar institution as a vegan and, if yes, did they provide you with vegan food? Please provide as much detail as possible, including the name of the prison, if possible.

- Yes, HMP Cornton Vale, very few vegan options
- No but my sister has and said the vegan option was "salad" if you could call it that
- Spent a night in police custody at Motherwell police station (was released the following day and never convicted of any offence). There were no vegan options and police at the station scoffed and laughed when breakfast was served to others in cells and I requested a vegan option when offered food (at this point I believed I may be held for the full weekend). I was repeatedly offered a bacon roll by laughing officers and referred to as "the vegan" in childish, mocking tones by officers outside my cell and others over the cell intercom. Fortunately I got out later that day as I hadn't had anything to eat or drink for almost 24 hours.
- Police custody (so just police cells, not actual prison). They had one meal - chilli I think it was - which was apparently the one meal "free of everything" eg vegan, gluten free, soy free, nut free etc. This was Dundee police station. I didn't try the food myself but my partner did and he enjoyed it. They delivered it to him sealed which is what they are meant to do. However, friends of mine had police complain about "f*ing vegans", giving them unsealed food packets, trying to give them tuna sandwiches etc.

Any other issues

Have you experienced any other issues related to your veganism in state institutions (hospitals / NHS, schools, prisons, DWP benefits, social services etc.)? If yes please provide details.

- Yes DWP expect vegans to work in areas such as food prep, butcher shop etc. because only religious requirements respected.
- Yes, being told that providing healthy, vegan food was low priority
- There was hostility toward me in the council job I was in 2 years ago and this was one of the reasons
- A social worker was referred to deal with me as I was temporarily homeless during pregnancy. She and my health visitor were talking between themselves about the fact my son was vegan as though it was cause for concern.
- When unemployed some years ago, refused to take work in any animal industry but ended up in an abattoir office.
- Jury Duty was terrible for vegans! I had to eat a baked potato with beans every single day I was there as it was the only vegan thing on the menu.
- In a court building. Cafes only vegan option has been crisps.

Please provide any other comments here.

- I wish that there was a better understanding of why we are vegan and better choices within society for us especially when it comes to medication
- Main personal experience has been a lack of knowledge re what veganism is
- Hospitals are improving with vegan options but I have still never seen soya milk or any non-dairy milk offered in any hospital. It's disappointing.
- I make no secret of being vegan, but this is not regarded as relevant with regard to my health. Medical examinations will always ask about smoking and alcohol while ignoring the massive health risks of dairy, egg, flesh consumption, whether 'red', 'white' or processed. This is hugely frustrating.
- I live in a semi-rural area and my local co-op has a very poor selection of not only shelf products but fresh vegetables. I have contacted head office to advise them. I have a lung condition and can't travel too far.
- Vegan must be toughest for the homeless. All the cheapest food is meat/dairy. People can say that veg is cheap, but homeless can't wash or prep veg. So the only option for them is Greggs etc
- Annoyingly my main problem is when on the rare occasion I'm sent on training I always state that I'm a vegan and only once has this information resulted in getting suitable food. Tea and coffee facilities

never provide soya. I'm really worried about my next visit to the dentist. Knowing what torture my treatment will have caused.

- These days it's unacceptable for police, health care staff, teachers etc to speak disrespectfully or mockingly towards individuals due to their religious beliefs. This is taken very seriously. This needs to include veganism. Veganism may not be a religion but it is a moral belief we have the right to be treated fairly and not persecuted for this. Vegetarians are catered for in schools, prisons, hospitals, work canteens and vegans should be too.
- I find it extremely difficult to get health providers to understand. They assume my diet is lacking in nutrients therefore my health is suffering. Especially protein!
- At work training events, I have often been provided with a vegetarian meal (cheese-based). There seems to be a general lack of understanding about veganism outside vegan-friendly circles.
- Hospitals are a joke serving fried processed foods that got the patients in there in the first place. Schools should educate pupils. Doctors don't spend enough time studying nutrition. My doctor even told me "don't be vegan, you need meat to be healthy" absolute joke.
- There's a lack of vegan baby formula (have been informed soy baby formula contains animal products) and a lack of breastfeeding support left me confused as a new vegan and first time mother
- Vegan foods are very difficult to find in the Galashiels area - also the stigma of being vegan can make living with my choices difficult.
- In both university and hospitals, food options have been very limited and never labelled. They often provide 'healthy' alternatives as an option, but as we know animal products are far from healthy.
- I hope that you can work towards making soya milk and vegan options more available in these institutions as traveling with your own plant milk / vegan options are very difficult, especially in warmer times of the year. It also fits with WHO health guidelines to prevent long term / terminal health conditions.
- So far my experience being a vegan has been fairly straight forward apart from my dilemmas with medication. If I didn't have my animal based medication just now I wouldn't be alive so very conflicted.
- The benefits of being vegan need to be recognised by Drs, medical staff dieticians and nutritionists so that they can instruct patients and do preventative health care. It's the same as how smoking was regarded. If Drs eat meat they are less likely to tell patients not to
- Would like to see vegan options in child's school canteen, currently none so packed lunch it is.
- People are generally ignorant of veganism, what it is and the many benefits. Some people are not very nice about it and there is discrimination. I am cautious about telling people I am vegan. Luckily due to social media, the recent availability of vegan magazines and last year's big vegan survey I know there is a lot of vegan activity out there. It is now much easier to get vegan food and drinks when out and

about. I really wish the health service and pharmaceutical industry would catch up and train their staff, stop discriminating, and provide vegan medication.

- Doctors generally will tell vegans they're deficient in various things and it's unhealthy not to eat what they call a balanced diet including meat and fish. For this reason I seldom go to the doctors and if I do I don't mention being vegan as they become dieticians as well. I find it nearly impossible to get vegan medication and when I had surgery on my foot last year I discharged myself the same day so I wouldn't have to stress about meals.
- Non-dairy milk needs to be provided in schools as well as many more vegan options. I worry about my vegan daughter starting school and not being able to join others eating in the canteen.
- I would love to go to a GP where I felt my veganism was accepted and treated as normal rather than an extreme diet. It would be good to get guidance on how to ensure I'm getting all my vitamins rather than the attitude of just eat meat.
- Thankfully neither I nor vegan family members have needed to stay in hospitals recently, or gone to prison but I would very much like to see compulsory vegan options introduced into these institutions. I would be very angry if I or a relative were staying in hospital and we had to buy extra food when everyone else is getting their meals provided. Same applies for schools for future nieces, nephews, children and grandchildren! Vegan children should be able to have school meals and participate in cooking classes just as easily as non-vegan kids.