



Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

**Paper for information: Government Updates on Nutrition
Related Activities
Devolved Health Departments**

Agenda Item: 6

Please see attached paper for information.

**Update from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
(Northern Ireland)**

Fit Futures – Focus on Food, Activity and Young People

- 1) The Fit Futures taskforce was established by the Ministerial Group on Public Health (MGPH) in response to increasing concerns about the health implications of rising levels of overweight and obesity in children and young people in Northern Ireland. The role of the taskforce was to examine options for preventing overweight and obesity in children and young people and to make recommendations to MGPH on Priorities for Action. The membership of the taskforce is attached at Annex A for your information.
- 2) The taskforce was also given the role of undertaking an extensive engagement/consultation process with stakeholders to stimulate action to tackle overweight and obesity in children and young people. This included direct engagement with a range of health and education professional, community/voluntary group, and children & young people and their Parents.
- 3) The final report of the Fit Futures taskforce to MGPH was published in March 2006. The report includes a detailed analysis of the nature of the problem, with levels of overweight and obesity among five year olds in Northern Ireland being reported as having increased from around 16.5% in 1997 to almost 23% in 2003/2004 and significant inequalities emerging in relation to nutrition and physical activity. The report also contains a detailed review of the evidence base for preventing overweight and obesity and for improving childhood nutrition and increasing levels of physical activity in children. Based on this review the taskforce report identified a number of priority approaches and made over 70 recommendations in relation to six priority areas:
 - Joined-Up Healthy Public Policy;
 - Providing Real Choice;
 - Supporting Healthy Early Years;
 - Creating Healthy Schools;
 - Encouraging the Development of Healthy Communities; and
 - Building the Evidence Base.
- 4) At the time of the reports publication the Health Minister gave a commitment to producing a response to the report, including a cross-departmental implementation plan. This response has since been developed and the implementation plan, which is available online at <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/showconsultations?txtid=22125>, was been issued for consultation on 01 February 2007.
- 5) This implementation plan seeks to clarify Government's long-term commitment to this agenda and in particular the commitment of Department of Health, Social Services, and Public Safety, the Department of Education and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, to work together to deliver on our joint Public Service Agreement commitment to stop the rise in levels of obesity in children by 2010.

- 6) There has been a very positive response to the work of the Fit Futures Taskforce by Government Departments. The implementation plan therefore outlines some of the major policies and programmes that have been already established or amended as a result of Fit Futures recommendations. These include:
- The Department of Education, in conjunction with the Education and Library Boards, has supported the implementation of New Nutritional Standards for School Meals in September 2005 with an investment of almost £3 million. The Department of Education has also just concluded a consultation on the standards that should be applied to all food provided in schools, including through vending machines.
 - Under the Extended Schools element of the Children and Young People funding package £10m is available each year in the period 2006-2008 for allocation to schools in disadvantaged areas. The focus of Extended Schools will include healthy lifestyles and tackling childhood obesity.
 - As part of the Sport in Our Community Programme, the Sports Council for Northern Ireland is making a major investment to encourage more children to develop the basic physical movement skills required to facilitate sustained involvement in sport and a healthy and active lifestyle.
 - Health and Social Services Boards and Investing for Health Partnerships have developed joint plans to help tackle the rising levels of obesity in children and young people.
 - School Development Regulations now require all schools to consider the arrangements for promoting the health and well-being of their staff and pupils as part of the school development planning process. The guidance on the regulations makes specific reference to the need to consider the issue of food in schools when reviewing arrangements to support health and well-being.
- 7) The consultation period on the Fit Futures Implementation plan closed on 16 March 2007, the implementation plan is now being reviewed in light of the responses with a view to publishing the final plan shortly. Further information on Fit Futures can be found at: <http://www.investingforhealthni.gov.uk/fitfutures.asp>.
- 8) Consideration is currently being given to how Fit Futures can be extended to the adult population.

Nutrition Matters

- 9) In October 2005, the Health Promotion Agency, with the support of local community dietitians, published updated guidance on feeding children under 5 in childcare settings. The new guidance aims to assist child minders and childcare staff to support the children in their care to eat a healthy balanced diet and to encourage children to develop healthy eating habits. "Nutrition Matters" includes nutrition advice, meal ideas and suggestions to encourage "fussy eaters" to try healthy options. A seminar training programme, based on the guidance in Nutrition Matters, was delivered during 2007 to child minders and staff working in childcare and early years settings. The seminar programme included presentations on

nutrition for the under fives, the importance of being physically active and promoting good oral health.

Food in Schools

- 10) The implementation of nutritional standards for school meals is being rolled out across Northern Ireland. The food based standards are currently being finalised and it is expected that they will be implemented in all schools by September 2007. The implementation of the standards is being supported by the provision of additional funding to increase the minimum expenditure on the food content of meals. In addition, one Nutritional Standards Co-ordinator was appointed in each of the Education and Library Boards to support the implementation of the standards. Their role will include the provision of training, guidance and support to school meals staff, to support the development of a whole school approach to food provision. The Health Promotion Agency in partnership with Community Dietitians from the health and Social Services Boards are involved in providing level 3, Diploma training in Nutrition and Health for senior school meals staff to support the implementation process. Associate inspectors have also been appointed to carry out inspections of food in schools as part of the school inspection process.
- 11) In line with developments in other parts of the UK, the nutritional standards will be applied to other forms of food provision within schools, such as tuck-shops and vending machines. Also in line with developments elsewhere in UK, the Department of Education consulted on nutrient based standards for school meals and these will be applicable in September 2008.

Cook It!

- 12) The 3-year Big Lottery funded programme is due to end later in 2007 and has been subject to a detailed evaluation throughout. A report of the evaluation will be available on the HPA website (www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk) at the end of May.

Diet and Nutrition Information

- 13) The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has been engaged in discussions with other government departments and agencies, including, in particular, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland and the Health Promotion Agency, about options for satisfying the Department's information needs in relation to diet and nutrition from 2007 onwards.

Healthy Start

- 14) In November 2006, in line with developments elsewhere in the UK, the new Healthy Start Scheme was introduced in Northern Ireland.

Update on Nutrition Work in Wales

Quality of Food Strategy

- 15) As a result of the minority party debate held on the 17 October 2006, the proposal to produce a Quality of Food strategy to improve the quality of food consumed in Wales was approved. The remit for the strategy is broad and cross cutting and it will look to integrate policies from key areas across the Assembly Government such as agriculture, education, social justice, health etc.
- 16) To date the following has been completed:
- A review of existing Assembly Government policies that influence the quality of food consumed in Wales;
 - The engagement of internal and external stakeholders to identify areas for action;
 - The review of national and international evidence base and best practice, including mid term external review of Food and Well Being, the nutrition strategy for Wales.
- 17) A task and finish group has been established which includes representatives from a number of Assembly departments such as agriculture, education, social justice etc as well as external partners such as the Food Standards Agency Wales.
- 18) A draft strategy has been produced which, subject to the approval of the new government in Wales, will be released for consultation over the summer.

Food in Hospitals

- 19) A Food in Hospital Task and Finish Group, chaired by the Chief Nursing Officer for Wales, Its objectives are to scope current promising practice across Wales; to link in with wider UK practice; to map existing practice with current guidance and to provide advice on the way forward. The group has produced a report which will input into the Quality of Food Strategy.

Food and Fitness – Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Children and Young People Implementation Plan 2006

- 20) To ensure this plan can be delivered the Assembly Government has allocated funding of some £20m to support new and existing actions. A number of programmes are underway to implement the actions outlined in the Five Year Plan. These include:
- Additional funding has been released to fund additional co-ordinators to support the expansion of the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes to all LEA maintained schools (WNHSS);
 - Grants have been made available for food and fitness projects in WNHSS schools e.g. playground games, bike racks, fruit tuck shops, school gardens, water coolers, healthy vending, out of school cookery classes;
 - Case studies of action in schools in support of food and fitness has been published;
 - Guidance on whole school food and fitness policies has been developed;
 - Guidance on packed lunches has been developed;
 - A 5 x 60 programme has been introduced to help increase the percentage of secondary school pupils that do 5x60 minutes of sport and physical activity

per week, currently at 24%, by targeting children and young people who drop out of or do not take part in sport or physical activity;

- A Cooking Bus has been sponsored by the Welsh Assembly Government, through Design Dimension Educational Trust. The Bus visits schools and provides practical cooking lessons for pupils and one teacher training session at each school. One session at every venue will also be used to help parents of young children to develop their cooking skills;
- A pilot scheme to look at ways of introducing or increasing healthy food options within leisure centres;
- The Healthy Families Initiative, a new Big Lottery Fund £20 million funding programme, which aims to promote healthy and active lifestyles amongst children and families by creating a joined up approach. The Healthy Families Initiative is made up of two programmes, Child's Play and Way of Life. Child's Play will provide grants for the strategic development of play opportunities across Wales. Way of Life aims to promote a joined up approach to healthy eating and physical activity.
- A grant has been awarded to ContinYou to provide training and support for the development of cooking clubs for children and young people to enable schools and other organisations to develop a strategic and co-ordinated approach to delivering and promoting cooking skills. The awareness raising and training sessions will be delivered in all Local Education Authorities in Wales and will link to the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes out of school hours learning and community focussed schools.
- A grant to the Urdd Eistedfodd will provide funding to establish a national cooking competition culminating in finals on the Welsh Assembly Government's Cooking Bus, which will be sited on the Maes. The cooking competition will be piloted at the 2007 Urdd with a view to a full-scale competition the following year. Chef Dudley Newbery is supporting the development of the competition and he will deliver cookery sessions either side of the competition finals. On non-competition days local primary schools will be invited for organised sessions on the Cooking Bus. Links are also being established with Caffi Mr Urdd to ensure that healthy eating catering options will be available on the Maes.

Appetite for Life

21) Last year, the Welsh Assembly Government set up a Food in Schools Working Group, to examine how to improve the quality and nutritional standards of school meals, and how to ensure a consistent and coherent approach to driving forward improvements in food and nutrition in our schools.

22) Their report Appetite for Life sets out the Group's review of food and drink provided to children during the course of the school day and their proposals on how to continue to drive forward our whole school approach to improving all food and drink available during the school day. The results of the consultation, which took place between June and October 2006, have been considered and an action plan is being developed which will be launched summer 2007.

23) To support the implementation of the proposals for Appetite for Life a number of initiatives have been launched. A £4.3m funding package for the three-year period 2006/07 to 2008/09 will:

- enable local authorities to provide training to school catering staff which deliver recognised qualifications in healthy eating and practical cookery skills;
- enable local authorities to purchase equipment to improve existing school kitchen/dining room facilities so that they are fit for purpose;
- enable the WLGA to appoint a co-ordinator to provide practical support to local authorities, caterers and schools on improving the provision of food and drink in our schools;
- enable the WLGA to procure software to enable caterers to generate with support and training for all catering organisations providing meals to maintained schools in Wales.

Infant Feeding

24) A Breastfeeding Peer Support Grant Scheme has been launched and 23 local Schemes have been awarded funding to provide training and other support to mothers across Wales.

25) A Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme in Wales was launched last year and the first awards made. The scheme is open to local businesses that provide food or drink, hairdressers, shops, libraries and museums, community centres and health centres, in fact anywhere open to the general public. Several small local schemes have been set up in Wales and the Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme will bring them together with one symbol. Once local businesses have agreed to the conditions of the scheme, they can display an eye-catching sticker, and demonstrate to mothers that they are valued and that they will find an easy, comfortable welcome. There are 40 participating premises across Wales and interest is growing. The scheme will be assessed by mothers in their own areas with annual monitoring to ensure compliance.

26) All Wales Infant Feeding Guidelines have been developed which will provide a reference resource for primary care practitioners such as health visitors and midwives across Wales. The guidelines are for use by health professionals within Wales, who provide information and advice on infant feeding. It is envisaged that local Trusts and LHB areas will work jointly to deliver a training package to present the guidelines through their key professionals groups and monitor their use.

Exercise Referral Scheme

27) The Welsh Assembly Government is rolling out exercise referral across Wales. A good practice guide has been produced building on best practice in Wales. This will complement the programme which will carry out a randomised controlled study to investigate the effectiveness of this intervention in increasing physical activity and improving health together with a health economics study; a national

training programme for exercise instructors and support for the development of schemes in local areas.

Update from the Scottish Executive Health Department

Hospital Food

- 28) Work is currently underway with the Food Standards Agency Scotland and other partners to develop catering standards for the wider NHS Catering Service covering all aspects of menus, food provision and procurement for hospital meals and staff and visitor catering services. The Scottish Executive has also appointed a Food and Nutrition Advisor from within the NHS to develop these nutrient standards and nutrient specifications and also to develop guidelines on their implementation. The final draft was produced at the beginning of April. Work will be taken forward at regional level to help identify challenges and support needs for health boards with a final document to be published during 2007. These will support the QIS Clinical Standards for Food, Fluid and Nutrition that are already in place in all Scottish hospitals.
- 29) A research exercise to determine the potential financial implications that might arise from implementing the NHS Catering and Nutritional Specifications is also underway.

SGF Healthy living Programme

- 30) An evaluation on the first two phases of the SGF Healthyliving Programme, an initiative aimed at improving the quality and availability of healthy choices in neighbourhood shops was published by NHS Health Scotland in February. Hard copies are available now while an electronic version can be downloaded from <http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/1738.aspx>. The programme is now into its third phase with around 250 shops signed up to the programme.

Scottish Nutrition and Diet Resources Initiative

- 31) SNDRi develop diet leaflets for the primary, secondary and tertiary prevention areas. A business plan has been agreed for 07/08 with objectives which include resource development, developing educational resources for continuing professional development and education of pre-registration students and developing a marketing strategy.

Scottish Food and Health Alliance

- 32) On 27 February 2007, the Alliance held its inaugural public event for members: 'Looking Back and Moving Forward: A Celebration of the Successes of the Scottish Diet Action Plan (SDAP)'. A short film was produced for the event – *Recipe for a Healthier Scotland*, showcasing progress to improve Scotland's diet over the past 10 years. Copies of the DVD are available from the Food and Health Alliance Coordinator at fha@health.scot.nhs.uk. Further information on the Alliance is available at www.fhascot.org.uk. This website will be further developed to include up to the minute food and health information and a new member's area due to be launched by the end of May.

Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act

33) This Act was passed by Parliament on 14 March 2007. The Act will require local authorities to make sure all schools are health promoting; make sure food provided in schools complies with nutritional regulations; have regard to the nutritional regulations when placing pupils in an independent school; promote school lunches, protect the identity of pupils receiving free school lunches, have respect to Scottish Executive guidance on sustainable procurement when purchasing food or catering services for schools. The Act will also give local authorities the power to provide nutritious snacks either free or with a charge throughout the day. Advice on commencement will follow. More information is available at:
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Schools/HLivi/schoolmeals/schools_bill

Healthy Start

34) Healthy Start children's vitamin drops and women's vitamin tablets are now available. NHS Boards are currently putting procedures in place to distribute them.