



**Paper for Information: Update on Activities
related to Maternal and Child
Nutrition**

Agenda Item: 5

Please see attached paper for information.

Update on Activities related to Maternal and Child Nutrition

Department of Health

Healthy Start

- Following positive reports from the evaluation projects carried out during Phase 1 (Devon and Cornwall) Healthy Start was extended across the UK on 28 November 2006. From this date, the upper age limit for qualifying children to participate in the scheme changed from the 5th birthday to the 4th birthday throughout the UK.
- To coincide with the UK-wide launch of the scheme, the Department of Health sent information packs to every midwife and health visitor registered with the Royal College of Midwives or Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association in England. Other UK countries did similar mailings.
- A Healthy Start launch event for England was held on 2 November, involving key NHS staff nominated by SHAs.
- Approximately 28,000 individual retail outlets across Great Britain now accept Healthy Start vouchers, with further outlets in Northern Ireland.
- New Healthy Start Children's Vitamin Drops became available for Trusts to order from NHS Supply Chain in January 2007. Healthy Start Women's Tablets became available to order in March 2007. Over the coming months, we aim to actively promote both products to women and families getting Healthy Start vouchers.
- Work is underway to scope longer term evaluation of Healthy Start. A small-scale qualitative study has also recently been carried out to assess whether there are any reasons why the small number of women and families eligible who have not applied chose not to do so. A report is being prepared and will inform development of the scheme, but draft results suggest that there are no clear themes.

Welfare Food Scheme

- The Welfare Food Scheme still exists to the extent that nurseries and other childcare providers may claim the costs of daily milk provided to children under 5 attending for 2 hours or more per day. This element of the scheme will remain in place for the foreseeable future.

Infant Feeding

- National Breastfeeding awareness week was held from 13 - 19th May 2007. This year DH provided a range of materials such as posters, leaflets, weight conversion chart, obstetric wheel, and post-its to support the week. For the first time, the Department has launched a TV and radio 'Filler' advertisement during the NBAW week, which will continue throughout the year.

- In collaboration with UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative, the Department has published a new leaflet “Off to the best start” to assist health professionals in implementing best practices and informing parents about breastfeeding.
- A review of the Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula Regulations (1995) is continuing alongside the work being undertaken by Department of Health and FSA to press for further restrictions in the EU directive on the advertising of formula milk.

Children’s Centres (DH/DfES lead)

- Children’s centres are a key mechanism for improving outcomes for young children, reducing inequalities in outcomes between the most disadvantaged and the rest, and helping to bring an end to child poverty. Each Sure Start Children’s Centre offers a range of services depending on the level of deprivation in the area, with all expected to offer the following core services: integrated childcare and early learning aged 0-5 and a base for childminder networks; family support and parental outreach; child and family health services; parental involvement and links to training and support through Jobcentre Plus.
- There are currently 1260 children’s centres designated, reaching around 1million children. There is a target to develop 2500 centres by March 2008, and 3500 by March 2010 - a children’s centre serving every community.
- Children’s Centres Planning Guidance suggest that the following health services should be provided from centres or have strong links with centres:
 - Antenatal advice and support for mothers & fathers/carers.
 - Child Health Promotion Programme.
 - Information and guidance on breast feeding, hygiene, nutrition and safety.
 - Promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing, including identification, support and care for those suffering from maternal depression, antenatally and post-natally.
 - Speech and language and other specialist support.
 - Support for healthy lifestyles.
 - Help in stopping smoking.
- The Department supports this policy and the White Paper on Community Health Services *Our Health, Our care, Our say* (January 2006) mentions that “*We would expect to see more community health services for young children and parents being provided from children’s centres.*”
- The Children’s centres are expected to transform the way services are delivered to young children and their families. Local authorities are responsible for developing the centres and for working with partners including PCTs to ensure all the services are fully integrated at the point of delivery for children and their families.

- This is supported by legislation. The Childcare Act 2006 places a statutory duty (from April 2008) on local authorities to work with NHS and Jobcentre Plus partners to reduce inequalities and improve outcomes for young children, through the planning and delivery of integrated services. This will be formally agreed in Children's Trust arrangements and form part of the local Children and Young People's Plan.
- The Government has invested £1.8 billion over 2006-08 – up from £1.3 billion in previous two years [2004-06]
- Sure Start Local Programmes (precursor to children's centres) funding included costs of health services. The universal children's centres delivery model entails local authorities, PCTs and other delivery partners planning together, to reconfigure existing, already funded, services. Health services are now to be funded direct by the NHS for children's centres. Local authorities will be covering costs of administration, finance.
- The Department of Health will shortly be issuing best practice guidance to local PCTs about delivering health services through children's centres. This will include case studies showing how working through children's centres helps achieve PCT targets.

Obesity

- The Department organised a series of regional conferences, from February 2007, around the country to set out what action the Government is doing to achieve the PSA target and to support local areas to develop local strategies and action plans to tackle childhood obesity.
- From April 2007, additional funding will also be provided to each Region to increase their capacity and capability to deliver the PSA target and work on obesity, physical activity and nutrition within their respective populations.
- Work is also underway to establish a National Support Team for Obesity, which will be piloted from Summer 2007.

National Child Measurement Programme

- The programme to weigh and measure all reception year and year 6 pupils in English primary schools, is now referred to as the 'National Child Measurement Programme'.
- We published a leaflet for parents, *Why your child's weight matters?*, in April 2007, which will raise parents' awareness of the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP), to weigh and measure all primary school children in Reception and Year 6 in England, and also provides advice on making healthier choices with their diet and physical activity.
- *The National Child Measurement Programme: Guidance for 2006–07* school year was published in April 2007. The guidance has been revised to improve

clarity and address issues arising from last year's exercise. To view the guidance visit www.dh.gov.uk/healthyliving.

- A cross-Government ministerial letter (DH, DfES) was sent to primary school head teachers, in April 2007, highlighting the importance of the NCMP.
- An online BMI calculator is being developed that will allow parents to calculate their child's BMI and will provide appropriate information to help them to interpret the result and act on it if necessary. This online tool will be available at www.dh.gov.uk/healthyliving.

Obesity Social Marketing Programme (formerly Healthy Living Social Marketing Programme)

- The campaign, part of a programme of initiatives to be rolled out in Spring 2007, is informed by our work with academic experts and a coalition of public, private and non-government organisations, who have worked together to develop a deep understanding of the drivers of families' food and physical activity habits.
- This work includes a report by the MRC Nutrition Research Centre, *The 'Healthy Living' Social Marketing Initiative: a Review of the Evidence*, which was commissioned by DH and published in March 2007.
- Qualitative research will enhance the household profiles and generate an understanding of the effectiveness of a selection of interventions. Further research has also been commissioned to gain an understanding of ethnic minority groups in relation to food and activity. An exit strategy for the Obesity Social Marketing Programme has been agreed.

Publications

- The second edition of Obesity bulletin will be published in May/June 2007.
- Publication of Foresight's report, *Tackling Obesity: Future Challenges*. The report is a compendium of the science and research of obesity, from all the work the Office of Science and Innovation's Foresight Obesity Project. It contains reviews and recommendations for a long-term vision of how we can deliver a sustainable response to obesity in the UK over the next 40 years.
- The National Heart Forum updated its toolkit "*Lightening the Load: tackling overweight and obesity*", for developing local strategies to tackle overweight and obesity in children and adults, in March 2007, in association with the Faculty of Public Health. The toolkit is available to order from DH Publications Orderline (dh@prolog.uk.com or 08701 555 455) and can be downloaded from (http://www.heartforum.org.uk/Publications_NHFreports_Overweightandobesitytool.aspx)

Update from Food Standards Agency (FSA)

Recasting of the current European Legislation on Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula

- At the end of May, the Agency expects to be in a position to formally consult with all stakeholders, including SACN, on new draft Infant Formula and Follow on Formula (England) Regulations which will implement European Commission Directive 2006/141/EC. The new Regulations will revoke and replace, in England, the existing Infant Formula and Follow on Formula Regulations 1995. The Agency will consider stakeholders responses to the consultation in relation to the new Regulations. Stakeholders will be notified should any amendments be made to the draft Regulations before they are finalised. The Regulations will be subject to Ministerial approval and should come into force on 1 January 2008.

Goat milk protein infant nutrition products

- The Agency has secured the withdrawal of all known infant nutrition products based on goats' milk protein which had been marketed in breach of the UK Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula Regulations. Manufacturers have taken action to ensure compliance with the infant formula legislation either by repositioning their products as foodstuffs for general consumption or by removing the products from sale in the UK. The UK Health Departments continue to advise that health care professionals inform mothers that infant milks based on goats' milk protein are not suitable as a source of nutrition for infants and are not available in the UK.

Update from the Welsh Assembly

Infants

Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme

- 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.

Baby Friendly Initiative

- Currently Wales stands at 9 Full Awards, 4 Certificates of Commitment and 4 Registrations of Intent in Maternity Services, with 4 Certificates in Community Services. Subsidised places were provided for Baby Friendly courses and workshops in Wales during 2005 and 2006.

Breastfeeding Peer Support Grant Scheme

- A Breastfeeding Peer Support Grant Scheme has been launched and 22 local Schemes have been awarded funding to provide training and other support to mothers across Wales, with particular focus on the youngest mothers.

Infant Feeding Survey

- Wales is participating in the UK wide infant feeding survey. This is the first time that Wales has been included in the survey and the questionnaire was sent to all mothers of babies born in Wales during a five-week period August/September 2005. First wave: babies aged 4-10 weeks, then second wave 4/5 months and third wave at 9 months.
- First results key findings for Wales:

Initial incidence of breastfeeding

- Breastfeeding rates showed an initial incidence rate of 67%. This was less than in England (78%) and Scotland (70%) but more than in Northern Ireland (63%).
- The highest incidences of breastfeeding were found among mothers from managerial and professional occupations, those with the highest educational levels, those aged 30 or over, and among first time mothers. These variations were evident in both Wales and the other UK countries.

The final report will be published in May 2007.

All Wales Infant Feeding Guidelines

- 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.

School-aged Children

Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS)

- The Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes was launched in September 1999 to encourage the development of local healthy school schemes within a national framework. These schemes in turn support the development of health promoting schools in their areas. The Welsh Assembly Government has provided funding and guidance to help health and education services working in partnerships to set up and run local healthy school schemes in all areas of Wales - many of these schemes include actions to encourage physical activity and improved nutrition.
- The Welsh Assembly Government accredits local schemes as part of WNHSS. All 22 local schemes have been accredited. Currently over 1300 schools are actively involved in local healthy school schemes. One of the key actions in the Food and Fitness 5 year implementation plan is to extend the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes to three-quarters of maintained schools by March 2008 and to all of them by March 2010.

Water Coolers

- The Welsh Assembly Government Water Coolers scheme ran between January and March 2004 and provided coolers to over 300 schools in Community First areas. As part of the scheme, the Assembly agreed to cover the maintenance costs for the first year, until 31 March 2005, with on-going maintenance costs being the responsibility of the school. Guidance on the benefits of water consumption, *Think Water*, produced in partnership with Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, was initially made available to schools receiving water coolers in 2004. This guidance has since been updated and distributed to all schools in Wales. Over 500 schools in the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes currently have at least one water cooler provided for use by pupils.

Fruit Tuck Shops

- The Assembly Government has encouraged the running of fruit tuck shops, on a cost-recovery basis, as part of the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes. This has been shown to be a sustainable way of providing fruit in school. It is also

a good way of involving pupils in decision-making as they are usually actively involved in running the tuck shop, including making decisions about what is sold. Fruit tuck shops are currently being run in over 600 schools involved in the WNHSS in Wales. The encouragement of fruit tuck shops was supported by guidance on Fruit tuck shops in primary schools, which was produced in partnership with the Food Standards Agency Wales in 2000 and reprinted in 2006.

Healthy Vending

- An initial pilot scheme in 3 Pembrokeshire schools investigated the feasibility of selling healthier options from vending machines in secondary schools. The machines were controlled by in-school caterers who filled the machines with freshly prepared items agreed with a pupil panel. The pilot programme showed that vending machines could make an important contribution to the school meals service, as the machines offer a valuable additional service point for items. The pilot programme also demonstrated that it is possible for schools to make a profit from incorporating healthy vending into their whole-school food provision. Guidance, *Think Healthy Vending*, has subsequently been distributed to secondary schools and catering contractors in Wales via local healthy school co-ordinators and contains advice learnt from the pilot project.

Primary School Free Breakfast Initiative

- The Welsh Assembly Government made a commitment to provide for all children of primary school age registered in maintained primary schools in Wales to have a free, healthy breakfast at school each day. This initiative is intended to help improve the health and concentration of children to assist in the raising of standards of learning and attainment. It will seek to involve parents but is not intended to replace breakfast already provided. It will allow all those that, for whatever reason, have not had breakfast, to have one in school. All primary schools have been offered the opportunity to participate in the initiative. The provision of free breakfasts is optional. Feedback from those participating in the initiative has been extremely positive with schools seeing benefits to pupils and to the school as a whole.
- Based on the most recent information available from LEAs almost 50% of the total number of primary schools in Wales are providing free breakfasts under this programme.

Implementation of Appetite for Life

- 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 Welsh Local Government Association 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;

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

- 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 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.

Cooking Bus

- A Cooking Bus has been sponsored by the Welsh Assembly Government, through Design Dimension Educational Trust, as part of its programme of work outlined in the Food & Fitness - Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity For Children and Young People in Wales implementation plan. The Cooking Bus is a specially designed mobile trailer that provides 4-fully fitted kitchens complete with qualified teachers. 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. It will focus on visiting primary schools in Communities First areas which are part of the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes, and which are already working on healthy eating and physical activity.

Cymru Cooks

- 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.

Urdd Cookery Competition

- 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.

Dragon Sport

- This project, run by the Sports Council for Wales, focuses on the development of extra curricular and community opportunities for 7-11 year olds in seven sports, and includes the training of volunteers to deliver sporting opportunities. To date over 93% of all primary schools in Wales are involved in Dragon Sport, and over 4500 leaders are currently delivering opportunities. The scheme is currently being conducted to run in secondary schools in order that extra curricular sport and physical activities are provided to 11 to 16 years olds.

PE and School Sport Initiative (PESS)

- This initiative was developed as a result of a Report of the Physical Education and School Sport Taskforce, which was set up to advise the Welsh Assembly Government on how to strengthen the position of physical education and sport in schools. The central element of this work lies in the establishment of Development Centres (DCs) in every local authority area to pilot innovative approaches to the raising of standards of PE in schools. This funding encourages schools to meet the Climbing Higher target of two hours of quality curriculum PE and school sport each week for all pupils. The development centres bring together schools and a range of local partners to promote the sharing of staff expertise, facilities and good practice. Guidance and resources covering health related exercise (a key element of the National Curriculum requirement for PE) have also been developed which will enable health-related exercise to be delivered throughout the whole school, both inside and outside curriculum time. Central projects are improving opportunities for continuing professional development in PE for all teachers, and supporting improved opportunities for those undertaking Initial Teacher Training.

The Class Moves!

- The Class Moves!® programme helps primary school children and teachers to discover the pleasures and benefits of movement and relaxation.
- Developed and used widely in the Netherlands, The Class Moves!® consists of a set of illustrated activity calendars and accompanying manuals for every primary school year group. The Welsh Assembly Government has provided The Class Moves! materials to all primary school throughout Wales, via local health and education personnel, who have also provided training on its use.

Safe Routes to School

- The Welsh Assembly Government's Safe Routes to School initiative has been enthusiastically welcomed in Wales. It was introduced in 1999, and £18 million has been made available to local authorities, benefiting over 350 schools with capital infrastructure in and around their school areas. Each year the Welsh Assembly Government working with its local authority partners spends around £1 million on schemes allowing national and local cycle routes to safely cross or connect to the trunk road network.

5x60

- The new 5X60 programme intends to make significant inroads into the Welsh Assembly's target of 90% of secondary pupils achieving 60 minutes of physical activity five times a week by 2020. Based on the success of initial pilots, the Welsh Assembly Government is investing some £7.6 million over the next 3 years and aims for every secondary school in Wales to be involved in the programme by 2009. 5x60 is set to change the face of provision of sport in schools and transform playing fields and sports halls into hubs of bustling activity from daybreak to nightfall. 5x60 officers will be based in secondary schools and it will be their role to consult with the pupils, listen to their needs and the barriers which prevent them from participating in activity. They will timetable a programme of activities that suit the pupils' needs. These activities can take place before school during lunch after school and at weekends. The activities will be mainly targeting individuals that currently do not participate or who are in danger of losing interest.

Update from the Scottish Executive Health Department

- A report of the consultation exercise in response to "Infant Feeding Strategy for Scotland' will be published on the Scottish Executive website by the end of May 2007.
- Breastfeeding is considered as the optimal way of embedding good health in infants and fostering positive eating behaviours for the future. However, this needs to be viewed in the wider context of eating behaviours throughout life.
- In view of the recent review of the Scottish Diet Action Plan, wider evidence and discussion by the Food and Health Council, Health Ministers have agreed that the Scottish Executive Health Department will develop a Food and Health Delivery Plan to signal where the Health Department, NHS and key partners will focus efforts over the next 3 to 4 years.
- Although proposals are at a very early stage, it is likely that the plan will include an emphasis on improving maternal and infant nutrition, integrating the current work to develop an Infant Feeding Strategy.

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

Fit Futures – Focus on Food, Activity and Young People

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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>.
- Consideration is currently being given to how Fit Futures can be extended to the adult population.

Nutrition Matters

- 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 childminders 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 training programme, based on the guidance in Nutrition Matters, will be delivered during 2006 to childminders and staff working in childcare and early years settings.

Food in Schools

- The implementation of food-based nutritional guidelines for school meals, developed following a pilot scheme conducted in Northern Ireland during 2004/2005, has been rolled out across Northern Ireland. The implementation of the guidelines has been supported by the provision of additional funding to increase the minimum expenditure on the food content of meals. In addition, nutritional standards co-ordinators have been appointed in each of the Education Boards to support the implementation of the guidelines by the provision of training, guidance and support for the development of a whole school approach to food provision.
- In addition, in line with developments in other parts of the UK, the Department of Education consulted last year on the issue of new, updated, nutritional standards for school meals and on standards to be applied to other forms of food provision within schools, such as tuck-shops and vending machines. The Education Minister, Maria Eagle, announced on 26 January that nutritional standards would be extended to all sources of food in schools from September 2007. The Department will also continue to work towards the introduction of nutrient-based standards for primary schools in September 2008 and post-primary and special schools in September 2009 in line with England.

Diet and Nutrition Information

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