



10TH MEETING
23 February 2004, Wellington House, 135-155 Waterloo Road, London SE1

FINAL MINUTES

Chairman	Professor Alan Jackson
Members	Professor Peter Aggett Professor Annie Anderson Professor Sheila Bingham Professor John Cummings Miss Gill Fine Mrs Christine Gratus Dr Tim Key Professor Peter Kopelman Dr Anita Thomas Dr Anthony Williams Professor Christine Williams
Government Observers	Mrs Maureen Howell (Welsh Assembly) Dr Lesley Wilkie (Scottish Health Executive) Dr Naresh Chadha (Northern Ireland) Mr Tom Murray (FSA)
Secretariat	Dr Sheela Reddy (DH) Dr Alison Tedstone (FSA) Ms Parminder Nijjar (DH) Ms Mamta Singh (FSA)

Chair's Introduction

1. The Chair welcomed Members of the Committee to the tenth Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) meeting. Dr Lesley Wilkie, the representative from the Scottish Executive Health Department and Dr Naresh Chadha the representative from Northern Ireland were especially welcomed to their first meeting.
2. Apologies were received from Professor Andrew Rugg-Gunn, Mrs Stella Walsh, Dr Ann Prentice, and Imogen Sharp. Apologies were also received from Professor Peter

Kopelman who would have to leave the meeting at lunchtime and Dr Anita Thomas who would arrive late.

3. There were no declarations of changes in interest from Members.

Agenda Item 1 - Minutes of Last Meeting (22 October 2003) (SACN/03/Min03)

4. Members were invited to comment on the minutes of the previous meeting (22 October 2003).
5. It was noted that Mr Tom Murray had attended the previous meeting as the FSA observer but had not been listed.
6. Agenda Item 3, paragraph 26, proposals on the regulation of nutrition and health claims and nutritional profiling of foods: clarification was sought on the degree to which SACN would have any input before the proposals were agreed. The secretariat agreed to check the procedure.

Action: Secretariat

7. Under Agenda Item 3, paragraph 29, it was agreed to amend the 7th bullet point by inserting the word “*intervention*” or “*strategies*” after “*behavioural change*” in the interests of clarity.

Action: Secretariat

8. Pending the amendments, the minutes were agreed as a correct record of the 9th meeting of SACN in October 2003.

Matters Arising

Matters Arising Action Check List (SACN/04/01)

9. The Chair reported progress on matters arising from previous meetings and Members were invited to comment.
10. SACN/03/08 – *It was agreed that more information would be given to Members on whether nutritional guidelines had been considered when funding 'breakfast club' schemes:* Members were informed that a number of projects had been funded under the Food in Schools programme and that guidelines had been drawn up for individual projects on breakfast clubs. In Wales, although a consultation document was in preparation a decision had been made to commence pilot projects in December 2003. Food based guidelines are to be developed in the pilot. In Scotland, Good Practice Guidelines on what the constituents of a healthy breakfast had been drawn up.
11. SACN/03/08 – *It was agreed that Members would receive more information on Scotland's consideration to fortify alcoholic drinks with thiamine, as this was at odds with EU legislation:* It was reported that the Scottish Executive wished to consider thiamine fortification further. Members expressed reservations about thiamine fortification of alcohol. Dr Lesley Wilkie informed Members that the issue will be discussed with FSA and when more information was available, a paper setting out the issues would be prepared.

Action: Scottish Executive

12. SACN/03/20 – *Members requested the report on the Healthy Living Campaign from the Scottish Executive:* Members were informed that this would be discussed under Agenda Item 13 (paper SACN/04/11) – Scotland, Chair and the Secretariat would be preparing a briefing document for the FSA on nutritional safety issues and would report progress to SACN in due course.

Action: Secretariat

13. SACN/03/22 – *Secretariat to develop letters to employers noting members' contribution:* It was noted that this issue was relevant to all Members of the Committee, whether they came from academia, industry or other walks of life. Currently, the contributions made to Committee work were viewed differently by different employers, and not all

employers appeared to appreciate that the efforts of Members represented an important service to government. This uneven recognition was not desirable and it was agreed that it would be helpful if Government were to state their expectations clearly and to emphasise the value placed on the impartial advice provided by the individual members. It was important for employers to be kept informed of the valuable contributions made by the individual on an annual basis and be notified of the amount of time that had been spent by individuals on SACN work including meetings and preparatory work, much of which was done in their own time (not just their employers time). Members felt that it should be stated clearly that Committee membership was a mark of esteem, represented a significant contribution to an individual's continuing education, an important contribution to learning, a critical element in the formulation of policy by government and therefore a major public service.

14. It was agreed that the matter would be raised formally as a generic issue with the Chairman of FSA and with Chief Medical Officers. It was also agreed that it would be useful to raise this concern as a matter of considerable importance with Universities UK so that all universities might develop an agreed considered position on this issue. It was noted that there is a Memorandum of Understanding between the NHS and Higher Education Institutes on the contributions made by individuals to the health service.

Action: Secretariat

15. It was agreed that the letters to Heads of Universities should be redrafted to embrace the broader range of concerns that had been expressed so that heads of organisations would recognise the value placed on the efforts of Members.

Action: Secretariat

16. SACN/03/23 – *Annual Report 2003*: Members were asked to give their preferred option on two different styles of the report. At the last meeting Members had agreed that the report needed to be more user-friendly and easier for non-scientists to understand. The Committee were of the view that there was little difference between the two versions. Members felt that as the main function of the Annual Report was to communicate their work, it was essential to use language that made this possible. It was agreed that the

Secretariat, in consultation with Christine Gratus, would redraft the Annual Report in light of these comments and members will be asked to comment on draft reports.

Action: Secretariat

17. *Consumer representative needed for Iron Working Group*: Members were informed that Christine Gratus had joined the group.
18. SACN/03/25 – *Promotion of foods to children, report of the Food Advertising Unit of the Advertising Association to be forwarded to Members*: The report had been provided to Members. Members noted that the report had only covered direct advertising, whereas the Committee's concern related to all promotional activities, including advertising. The Committee was informed that reports produced by advertising agencies from time to time claimed that advertising does impact on child behaviour. It was noted that the evidence of effectiveness of advertising is available publicly from The World Advertising Research Centre.
19. Members noted the reference in the minutes regarding an academic seminar being organised on promotion of foods to children and requested further information.

Action: Secretariat

20. Members were informed that a draft action plan would go to the FSA Board in March, which would be followed by a three month formal consultation period on proposals for action. After the consultation, the FSA Board, will consider how to proceed.
20. *Re-appointments of Members and Chair*: Committee Members whose current term of office was due to end had received letters of re-appointment.

Agenda Item 2 – Fish Inter-Committee (FICS) Subgroup

21. The Chair gave an oral report on the progress of the SACN/COT Subgroup. FICS had last met on 30 June and agreed tasks. SACN had agreed to undertake a risk assessment of the effects of fish consumption on cardiovascular disease (CVD) and on early human

growth and development. COT had agreed to reconsider methyl mercury in the light of Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) revised Provisional Tolerable Weekly Intake (PTWI) for methyl mercury. The two groups are due to meet again once the respective assessments have been completed to develop suitable dietary advice on fish consumption for the public.

22. The SACN members had met on 21 November 2003 and further information had been requested regarding a recent publication on the effects of fish consumption on CVD risk. With regard to the risk assessment of the effects of fish consumption on early human growth and development, members had requested advice from Anthony Williams. Members are due to meet again on 3 March 2004 to finalise their assessment. The next meeting of FICS will be held on 14 April where it is hoped that an agreed conclusion between the two committees will be reached.
23. It was agreed that the views of the full Committee would be sought by post following the April meeting. Members will be sent a summary of the recommendations for their comments.

Action: Secretariat

Agenda Item 3 – Vitamin A Subgroup

24. The Chair gave an oral report on the progress of the Vitamin A Subgroup. The Subgroup had met once in 2003 and was presented with background information on retinol intakes from NDNS data, the numbers of people exceeding the Expert Group on Vitamins and Minerals (EVM) guidance value of 1500µg per day, the sources of vitamin A in the diet and the potential for reducing retinol in animal products through animal feeds. The application of several models from the NDNS data gave an indication of the effect of removing food sources of retinol on its intakes. As a result of the meeting the Subgroup requested information on a number of issues, including:
 - prevalence of low intakes of retinol
 - how lowering the level of retinol in foods would affect intakes of low consumers

- comparison of intakes of nutrients relating to bone health between the UK and Scandinavia and the US (where most of the work indicating increased risk of bone fracture with high retinol intakes has been carried out)
 - a breakdown of the sources of retinol in those with high intakes
 - retinol metabolism in animals
 - magnitude of overage in the manufacture of vitamin and mineral supplements
 - supplement use in the UK
25. In response to an enquiry about the vitamin A content of liver and animal feed, the Chair informed Members that advice had been sought from Dr Bruce Cottrill in the area on the extent of vitamin A fortification of animal feed and of any opportunities to reduce amounts used for fortification.
26. The Subgroup meets again at the end of March and will report its findings to SACN at the end of the year.

Agenda Item 4 – ACNFP/SACN - Nutritional Assessment of Novel Foods (AFNNOF) Subgroup (SACN/04/02)

27. The Chair gave a brief outline of the background to the Subgroup, which comprises members from SACN and the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP). The aim of the Group being to consider the criteria for assessing nutritional safety, to form a structured approach to evaluation, and to examine GM and other novel foods.
28. In response to a question of whether there was a role for lay members on the Subgroup, Members were informed that Jill Brand from ACNFP was a lay member of the Subgroup.

29. Members agreed that the main concerns were regarding components used to enrich functional foods, as well as GM foods, and that the whole issue related to health claims and substantiating evidence for these claims.

Agenda Item 5 – Iron Working Group (oral update)

30. Professor Peter Aggett gave an oral update on the progress of the Group.
31. The Iron Working Group had met most recently on 14 January 2004. Further meetings have been planned for 23 March and 18 May 2004. Two drafting group meetings have been arranged for 20 April and 25 May 2004.
32. The Group had recently held a telephone conference to discuss biochemical indices of iron status and agree indices and cut-offs to be used in the re-analysis of NDNS data. The aims of the re-analysis are to describe the iron status of the British population using haematological outcomes and defined cut-offs for iron deficiency.
33. In response to an enquiry on the issue of dose and functional thresholds, Members were informed that the toxicity effects of iron had been considered by the Group.
34. It is hoped that a draft of the final report will be presented to the main Committee at its meeting in June 2004.

Agenda Item 6 – Maternal and Child Nutrition (SMCN) Subgroup (SACN/04/03)

35. Dr Anthony Williams informed Members that the minutes of the Subgroup meeting of September 2003 had been published on the website and the next meeting will be on 21 May.
36. Members were informed that in January the CMO had issued advice on soya-based infant formulas, reiterating SACN's advice that there is no particular health benefit associated with the consumption of soya-based infant formula by healthy infants. This had generated queries from the GPs and health professionals about the circumstances in

which these products would be used. Members were also informed of the publication of Government's response to Healthy Start consultation.

37. Dr Christopher Owen from St.George's Hospital Medical School was introduced and members were informed that he would be working with SMCN on the consideration of the influence of maternal, fetal and child nutrition on the development of disease in later life. Dr Anthony Williams gave a brief outline of the structure of the proposed report which was set out in the paper SACN/04/03. The Chair invited Members to comment on the proposed structure of the report.
38. Concern was expressed on the lack of available evidence and the challenge of dealing with the number of uncertainties and confounders in this area, such as socio-economic issues. The decision to include cancer as a relevant disease outcome in the Chapter on the 'Burden of Chronic Disease' was also questioned as the causes are not singular and this area of work may represent duplication of effort with other organisations such as the World Cancer Research Fund.
39. It was noted that the use of the word *opportunities* in the second point of the terms of reference could be misinterpreted. It was suggested that the word *opportunities* should be replaced by *the case*. The Chair informed Members that the terms of reference could not be changed but it would be important to articulate how they are being interpreted.
40. It was suggested that the effects of calorie restriction very early in life, which had been shown to have effect on longevity in animal studies, should be added under section 6, *Aspects of nutritional status in early life*.
41. The Chair noted that Members were in agreement with the general outline of the proposed report and thanked Dr Christopher Owen for attending the meeting. It was noted that it was hoped that a draft of the report would be ready for the meeting in October 2004.

Agenda Item 7 – The National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS) Report (SACN/04/04)

42. Gillian Swan, FSA, gave a summary of the report which highlighted some of the main findings and the possible areas of concern.
43. Members welcomed publication of the NDNS findings and emphasised the value and importance of this evidence in understanding the diet and nutritional status of the population, to inform decisions on interventions by Government and others, and in identifying future research priorities.
44. Members agreed that at a general level the findings were not very encouraging and that it was clear that there had been little improvement since the last NDNS in 1986/7. A number of important issues were raised in the discussion of the NDNS, which included:
- the issue of under-reporting and whether it would be possible to use urinary total nitrogen or urea as a marker for reliability with the possibility of making a suitable correction
 - the low Vitamin D status of young people was of concern and members sought clarification whether confounding by season could have contributed to the low values, particularly if measurements had been made in winter. The Secretariat agreed to check whether this was possible but in general samples had been collected throughout the year and the season of collection would have been taken into consideration

Action: Secretariat

- the apparently poor riboflavin and homocysteine status, measured biochemically, in the majority of samples and the proportion of samples with high homocysteine levels, appeared to be of concern. It was noted that the findings for riboflavin may result from highly sensitive assay and the homocysteine results may have been effected by the handling of the blood samples. The Secretariat agreed to check the procedures and assays used and their validity

Action: Secretariat

- the lack of comparability between dietary data and biochemical indices

Action: Secretariat

45. Members agreed that it would be useful to consider the data more than simply as the average values for the population. Cluster and principal component analysis would be useful in the interpretation of the data. The examination of variability across the group and factors contributing to this would be informative.
46. The Chair suggested that the NDNS could be the focus of this year's Horizon Scanning meeting. This would allow time to reflect on data and enable the FSA to carry out further secondary analyses.
47. The Chair thanked Gillian Swan for her presentation and emphasised the importance of the NDNS data as a basis for affective risk assessment.

Agenda Item 8 – Folic Acid and the Prevention of Disease (SACN/04/05)

48. The Chair reminded Members that at the Horizon Scanning meeting in 2003, SACN had requested an update on any new evidence relating to folic acid and disease prevention through fortification of flour with folic acid.
49. The paper (SACN/04/05) proposed a way forward from the suggestions made at Horizon Scanning meeting. The paper suggested a number of headings for the collection of evidence.
50. In order to progress this issue, the Committee agreed to set up a Folic Acid Subgroup to consider if sufficient new evidence has emerged, since the COMA report *Folic Acid and the Prevention of Disease* to justify a revision of the risk assessment done by COMA. It was agreed that the Folic Acid Subgroup should comprise the following Members: Professor Sheila Bingham (Chair), Professor Alan Jackson, Dr Anthony Williams, Mrs Christine Gratus, and Dr Anita Thomas.

52. The Chair proposed that the Subgroup report back to SACN on the timescale for a risk assessment.

Agenda Item 9 – Food and Health Action Plan (SACN/04/06)

53. Members had been provided with a copy of the discussion paper on Food and Health Action Plan (FAHAP), which had been prepared by DH in consultation with other Government Departments and Agencies, for a stakeholder event being held at the same time as the SACN meeting. The paper had set out the Government's nutritional priorities and the purpose of the stakeholder meeting was to consult with a wide range of stakeholders to consider these and other priorities, and action on them. Members were informed that their comments could be fed into the process.
54. Members noted that changing people's behaviour was important, but it was equally important to enable change at the level of production/manufacture and to ensure common ownership of the plan.
55. The Chair noted that although the Committee's role was not to comment on risk management policy issues, there were some points pertinent to SACN. eg under section 5, *Some Cross-Cutting Issues* there was a sub-section on the importance of monitoring and evaluation to provide a sound evidence base for focused action.
56. Members noted that the evidence base for suitable interventions to effective action which brought about the desired change, was of the greatest importance. Members stressed the importance of adequate resources being committed to the processes of monitoring and evaluation. Members were interested in how the FAHAP would allow for monitoring and evaluation of the first two objectives (increase access to the wider range of food choices contributing to a healthy diet, and improve the availability and awareness of nutritional and dietary information).
57. Members felt that it was important for all the devolved administrations to be involved in the FHAP. Members were informed by Dr Sheela Reddy that the devolved administrations had been consulted and were aware of the plan. Ms Gill Fine declared an interest as a retailer and stressed the importance of overlap between all the devolved

administrations which should be clearly identified because of the difficulties involved with carrying out four separate campaigns. The importance of involving the whole food chain in making it possible for the plan to go forward, was recognised.

58. Members acknowledged that the FAHAP was a valuable and important step forward in trying to develop a rational approach and take on board the range of players involved.

Agenda item 10 – Horizon Scanning Workshop and Work Programme (SACN/03/26A)

59. Members agreed that the revised paper (SACN/03/26A) summarising the discussions that had taken place at the workshop was an accurate reflection of the proceedings. Members were also invited to comment on the planned work programme outlined in the paper. The work plan was amended and agreed.

60. *DRVs for Energy*: A WHO/FAO expert consultation on energy is due to be published and report on DRIs for macronutrients has recently been published by the US National Academy of Science. Members agreed that it would be sensible to wait for the publication of the major review by WHO as it would be a useful starting point for discussions.

61. With regard to obesity, the Chair reminded Members that the Committee had previously agreed to wait until publication of the Royal College of Physicians report. It was agreed to put the report on the agenda of the next meeting in order to identify any specific issues in terms of risk assessment. Data from the NDNS might also usefully inform the debate on obesity.

Action: Secretariat

62. Members gave their consent for the paper to be placed on the website.

Action: Secretariat

63. In response to an enquiry on whether people from outside the Committee could be invited onto SACN subgroups, the Chair reminded Members that many of SACN's tasks this

year had involved joint working with other expert committees. Members agreed that involving a much broader range of skills would be very helpful for the work of SACN.

64. It was agreed to move some of the planned work programme over to next year as the Committee already had a full and defined work programme for 2004 eg DRVs looking at the framework for considering evidence for each nutrient. The Secretariat was thanked for putting together the paper in a way that helped to clarify thoughts.

Action: Secretariat

Agenda Item 11 - Nutrition and Health Claims Proposal (SACN/04/07)

65. This paper (SACN/04/07) was provided for information. The Regulation Proposal on Nutrition and Health Claims was discussed at the previous meeting and Members were asked to forward any further comments to the Secretariat. The paper represents SACN's final response to the proposal and was passed to FSA Food Labelling Standards Division in October 2003.
66. Members expressed the hope that their response would have an impact. Timescales for the process were not known. Tom Murray agreed to provide information to the members at the next meeting.

Action: Secretariat

Agenda Item 12 – Promotion of Foods to Children Update (SACN/04/08)

67. *Does Food Promotion Influence Children*, published in September 2003, examined the evidence on the way that foods are promoted to children and the possible link between promotional activity and child eating patterns. The report was discussed at the last SACN meeting and a telephone conference call was held in December between the Chairman and five members of the Committee. Further comments were emailed to the Secretariat. A summary of the views expressed in the conference call was provided in Annex 1 of the paper (SACN/04/08). Comments from SACN had been forwarded to colleagues in the FSA.

68. Concern was expressed with regard to the paragraph on positive messages, which gave the impression that no other interventions with positive messages have had positive effects. Examples of positive message interventions that have been shown to work need to be listed.
69. It was noted that the drafting note on page 4 regarding baby milk promotion was accepted.

Action: Secretariat

Agenda Item 13 – Government Update on Nutrition Related Activities

FSA (SACN/04/09)

70. Mr Tom Murray gave an update of recent FSA initiatives.

Whole School Approaches to Food and Nutrition

71. In response to whether details regarding evaluation of work in schools, eg *Out-of-Hours Learning Cookery Clubs*, were on the website, Members were informed that details would be provided to interested Members.

Action: Secretariat

Dedicated LGA/LACORS Food and Vision Website

72. Members were informed that the website had been launched in January.

DH (SACN/04/10)

73. Dr Sheela Reddy gave an update of recent DH initiatives and Members were invited to comment. Members were informed that the Secretary of State had announced the White Paper on Public Health. A consultation document would be published shortly with the White Paper being published later in the year.

5 A DAY Programme: Development of Compositional Criteria for Composite Foods (Annex I).

74. Members commented on the problems associated with including composite foods in the 5 A DAY programme. It was not clear how some of the nutritional criteria for inclusion had been reached. Members were informed that the methodology used so far was set out in the Annex and the issue of nutritional criteria would be on-going, particularly in the context of Nutrition Profiling proposed by the European Commission.

Healthy Start Consultation

75. Members were informed that Government's response to Healthy Start Consultation was published. The proposals included the introduction of fixed value vouchers that can be exchanged through any participating retail outlets. The mothers-to-be will register for Healthy Start through an early ante-natal booking visit. Health Professionals will have an important role in advising beneficiaries about health and nutrition, including breastfeeding. More information was requested regarding the evaluation of the scheme and the setting up of the proposed expert group. Members were informed that the process had not yet been initiated. Draft Regulations will be published for consultation in spring 2004 and it is anticipated that phasing in of Healthy Start will begin at the end of 2004.

Action: Secretariat

76. Members were informed that vitamin supplements will continue to be available in addition to the vouchers in the Scheme. The uptake of vitamin supplements will be actively promoted under the new Scheme.

Health Select Committee

77. Members were informed that officials from a number of Departments had provided evidence and Ministers will be giving evidence, after which the report will be published.

Devolved Health Departments (SACN/04/11)

Scottish Executive

78. Dr Lesley Wilkie gave an update of recent initiatives in Scotland.

Free Fruit in Schools

79. It was noted that in contrast to the report in England, which outlined evaluation and range of foods, very little information was provided regarding this scheme. More details were requested for the future.

80. In response to an enquiry on the source of the fresh fruit in Fruit for Schools Campaign, Members were informed that there was still no guidance on the sources of fruit and the decision was left to Local Authorities. It was agreed to check whether information on sourcing was available.

Action: Scottish Executive

Healthy Living Campaign

81. It was noted that there had been a lot of criticism of the Healthy Living Campaign. More information was requested, including the numbers that had responded from low-income groups, the objectives of the Helpline, whether they had been met, and the costs.

Action: Scottish Executive

Wales

83. Mrs Maureen Howell gave an update of recent initiatives in Wales.

Food Co-operatives

84. In response to an enquiry, Members were informed that parts of the Food Co-operatives project would link into Healthy Start.

Northern Ireland

85. Dr Naresh Chadha gave a brief update of recent initiatives in Northern Ireland and stated that there was much more activity in the nutrition area in Northern Ireland, than reflected

in the paper. Members were informed that the Nutrition Strategy was in the early stages of development.

Health Development Agency (SACN/04/12)

86. An update on the work of the Health Development Agency was provided for information.

87. It was agreed to incorporate HDA activity in Scotland (NHS Health) into the Scottish update for future meetings. Members also wished to look at the HDA activity in Northern Ireland.

Action: Secretariat

Any Other Business

88. Members were asked to note that the WHO Draft Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health had been provided for information and the deadline for any comments was 29 February 2004.

88. Attention was drawn to the Research & Survey Programme 2003 from FSA which had been tabled, and to the Working Group Report on Future Foods for Well-being which was available on the website (www.igd.com/default.asp).

89. Members were reminded that the next meeting of SACN would take place at the FSA on 18 June 2004 and would be an open meeting.

90. The Chair thanked Members for their attendance.