



11TH MEETING
18 June 2004, Jurys Great Russell Street Hotel, 16-22 Great Russell Street

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 Ann Prentice Professor Andrew Rugg-Gunn Mrs Stella Walsh Dr Anthony Williams Professor Christine Williams
Government Observers	Mrs Maureen Howell (Welsh Assembly) Dr Lesley Wilkie (Scottish Health Executive) Mr Tom Murray (FSA)
Secretariat	Dr Sheela Reddy (DH) Dr Alison Tedstone (FSA) Mr Jeff Alder (FSA) Ms Emma Peacock (FSA)

Chair's Introduction

1. The Chair welcomed Members of the Committee and interested parties to the eleventh Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) meeting.
2. Apologies were received from Dr Anita Thomas, Dr Naresh Chada and Ms Imogen Sharp
3. There were no declarations of changes in interest from Members.

Agenda Item 1 - Minutes of Last Meeting (23 February 2004) (SACN/04/Min01)

4. Members were invited to comment on the minutes of the previous meeting (23 February 2004).
5. Pending minor drafting amendments, the minutes were agreed as a correct record of the 10th meeting of SACN in February 2004.

Matters Arising Action Check List (SACN/04/13)

6. The Chair reported progress on matters arising from previous meetings and Members were invited to comment.
7. SACN/04/01 – *Employers letter*: A letter is to be forwarded to employers by the Secretariat concerning members' contribution to SACN. The Chair noted that Universities UK stated they had no formal mechanism to recognise the contributions made by members of the academic community to the work of government committees but intended to take this forward.
8. SACN/04/01 – *Annual Report 2003*: Copies of the annual report were made available to members.
9. SACN/04/04 – *NDNS and riboflavin and homocysteine levels*: The Secretariat noted that the Agency recognised that in some groups of the population reported in the NDNS survey, there was a high incidence of marginal riboflavin status as indicated by biochemical indices. Clarification was sought on the assays for riboflavin and vitamin D, and procedures for collecting and storing blood prior to measuring homocysteine and vitamin D. Members were assured that the procedures were appropriate.

Action: Secretariat

10. SACN/04/11 - *Source of fruit for schools in Scotland*, SACN/04/12 *Health activity in Scotland*. The attention of members was drawn to the report from the Scottish Health Department at SACN/04/19.
11. The Committee were informed that the process for appraisal of members had been completed. The Chair thanked members for their constructive comments.
12. Progress was reported on the review being undertaken by the Maternal and Child Subgroup on the influence on maternal, fetal and child nutrition on diseases in later life. It was noted that a draft report should be available for the Committee to review at the October meeting.

Action Secretariat

13. Members asked about progress being made by the panel which was convened by the MRC to review nutrition during early life and later health. It was noted that publication of the report was due shortly.

Agenda Item 2 –Vitamin A Subgroup

14. The Chair gave an oral report on the progress of the Vitamin A Subgroup noting that the report is likely to be available for the meeting of SACN in February 2005.

Agenda Item 3 – Iron Working Group

15. Professor Aggett gave an oral report on the progress of the Iron Working Group. Members asked if issues concerning ethnic minorities would be addressed in the report. Assurances were given that such issues were to be considered. The paucity of survey information on such groups was noted.
16. Members sought clarification on the methods used by the Working Group to model iron intakes. Professor Aggett confirmed that a total diet framework is being used in conjunction with the measured status of the individual taking into account possible modulating factors such as vitamin C.

17. Members sought confirmation that the report would cover areas such colorectal cancer. Professor Aggett confirmed that adverse effects of iron were being covered in the report.
18. It was agreed that members would receive a copy of the draft report prior to the report being made available for public comment.

Action Secretariat

Agenda Item 4 – Nutritional Assessment of Novel Foods (ANANF) Subgroup

19. The Chair gave an oral report of the work of the ANANF Subgroup. The approach and the process by which the group would proceed had been agreed based upon the need to develop guidance which was straightforward, using broad principles. The Chair noted the valuable working relationship with the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes.
20. The Chair commented that the outcome of the subgroup would be available at the February 2005 Committee meeting.
21. Members noted that it would be important to examine novel foods irrespective of the technology that produced them.

Agenda Item 5 – DRVs energy: FAO/WHO/UNU Expert Consultation Report on Human Energy Requirements Interim Report (SACN/04/14)

22. The Chair provided background to the Interim Report from the Expert Consultation on Human Energy Requirements from FAO/WHO/UNU. The progressive changes in the current report compared with the report from FAO/WHO/UNU in 1985, and the Dietary Reference Values derived by the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy (COMA) in 1990/91 were noted.
23. In 1985, estimates of energy expenditure were used as the basis for determining energy requirements, and the average requirement of energy used as the basis for

recommendations. The formulation of the Dietary Reference Values in 1991, was based on measures of energy expenditure using doubly labelled water where possible, and the estimates of energy requirements recognised variability in relation to body size and physical activity, but were not prescriptive. The current recommendations from FAO/WHO/UNU are based on the Estimated Average Requirement (EAR) for energy for groups of individuals, but they presuppose a prescribed level of physical activity to maintain health. Members were advised that the physical activity level prescribed is relatively high compared with that achieved by most population groups in the UK. Therefore, the inclusion of this factor represents a fundamentally different consideration in the new recommendations, compared with the recommendations given by FAO/WHO/UNU in 1985 and that set out by COMA in 1991.

24. In discussion, members raised a number of considerations in relation to the report which will require further detailed discussion:

- The potential exists for the FAO/WHO/UNU report to be misinterpreted by policy makers and by those using the recommendation in practice, without further clarification. For example, school meal providers would, on the basis of the recommendations, increase the energy provision of meals which may predispose to excessive weight gain in children if current physical activity levels were not increased.
- The report may have important implications for the EU nutrient profiling work currently being undertaken. The possible implications of the FAO/WHO/UNU report for foods that have either a high or a low energy density should be considered.
- Clarification was sought in relation to the recommendations given for infants and questions were raised about the datasets used as the basis from which the recommendations had been developed. Questions were raised in relation to infant feeding practices and possible implications for the recommendation that infants be breastfed exclusively for the first 6 months of life. It was noted that there are differences between infants receiving breast milk and those fed on breast milk substitutes in terms of energy expenditure, physical activity patterns and body composition.

25. It was agreed that there was the need to be clear about the implications of the recommendations contained within the new WHO/FAO/UNU report, and the evidence that had been used as the basis for the development of the recommendations.
26. The Chair thanked members for their contribution to the discussion and agreed that the report raised a number of important considerations.
27. It was agreed that a working group should be formed to consider the report in detail and to consider the issues raised by the report. The working group would include Committee members interested in the area and a lay or consumer representative. Experts from the UK who had played a part in the Expert Consultation of the FAO/WHO/UNU would also be invited to participate. It was agreed that the Secretariat, with the Chair, would discuss how to take the work forward. The Secretariat noted that a formal response to the document is not required.

Action Secretariat

28. The item would be brought back to the Committee in October with a proposal on how best to proceed.

Agenda Item 6 – Fish Inter Committee Subgroup (FICS) report (SACN/04/15)

29. Members were informed that the report would be published and launched in the week of 21 June. The report would not be made available to the public before the launch. Information on the launch will be forwarded to members.

Action Secretariat

30. The Chair thanked the Subgroup and the Secretariat for their work and noted the valuable and successful working relationship with the Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment.

Agenda Item 7 –Obesity reports (SACN/04/16)

31. The Chair provided background on the issue noting the recent work in the area. The Committee were requested to comment on:

- the requirement for a risk assessment,
- an examination of the evidence base to inform the risk assessment and
- the nature of the evidence base needed to inform such a risk assessment.

32. Professor Kopelman led the discussion. He highlighted the Health Department white paper due for publication in the autumn and a number of the recommendations contained in the Report on Obesity from the House of Commons Health Committee including:

- recommendation 11; on the importance of physical activity and environmental factors
- recommendation 22; energy density of foods
- recommendation 58; the measurement of children's Body Mass Index at school

33. Professor Kopelman noted that it would be useful to have a better understanding of:

- the dose response relationship of obesity with physical activity
- the food consumed by at risk groups by interrogation of NDNS data
- food advertising and promotion to all age groups
- how messages are understood by people in different age and minority groups
- particular associated diseases and obesity

34. Members raised and noted a number of considerations:

- a) for children, the rate of weight gain may itself be a risk factor, although information on this was absent from the reports provided. The results of screening of children for obesity may be problematic for some families. It was noted that it was important to know how the data may be used before screening is started.
- b) a greater understanding of how food choices are made, including biological and sociological factors is required. Research into product labels and how they influence food choice were also seen as important. The Secretariat noted the availability of some work in

this area although there was need for further work in relation to labelling and behavioural change. The Secretariat agreed to trace relevant work.

Action Secretariat

- c) the importance of the public understanding the balance between energy intake and expenditure, and the need for recommendations on energy requirements to be understood by the population and especially those at high risk of being overweight and obese.
- d) the issue of the under reporting of energy intake and expenditure in population surveys such as NDNS and the need for biomarkers of intake to be developed suitable for surveillance. What is the gap between energy consumption and expenditure?
- e) the cost of food production and agriculture policies and subsidies, the common agricultural policy and food purchasing and their effects on food consumption
- f) the shortcomings of current research evidence on obesity
- g) the importance of evaluating interventions

35. Members discussed the importance of the data derived from the NDNS in providing information on changes over time, and expressed concern should this programme of surveys be changed or stopped. Members were assured that its design was under active review to overcome practical problems in undertaking surveys and improve the value of survey outputs. Members were advised on the nature of the review process, including discussions with stakeholders (Gill Fine declared an interest and noted being involved in these discussions). A request was made that the Committee be formally advised of the current state of this review, with the opportunity to respond. Members were also advised that a workshop would be organised in the autumn to consider the data derived from the 2000/2001 NDNS.

Action Secretariat

36. The Chair noted that the ongoing interest in obesity had raised a number of important issues, some of which would need to be addressed by the Committee. In these deliberations it would be important to determine whether a more sophisticated approach could be adopted, which would enable an analysis of the different influences operating in different subgroups in the population.
37. It was agreed that members would discuss with the Secretariat the composition and identification of members and terms of reference for a subgroup to take the issues forward.

Action Secretariat

Agenda Item 8 – – Government Updates FSA (SACN/04/17)

38. Mr Tom Murray gave an oral report on the items. Emphasis was given on the number of projects that could feed into policy developments and intervention approaches and on the level of cross- Government working.
39. Members' attention was drawn to the first survey of secondary school meals in England that had been completed. It was noted that the report was available and public launch arrangements were underway. Mr Murray explained that the report was a useful diagnostic tool but also would be used as a platform on which remedial action required could be taken forward.
40. In response to Members queries on the use of salt replacers in foods, Mr Murray noted that there was scope for salt reductions in a wide range of food categories. Where there are technical barriers to salt reduction, the use of salt replacers could be explored (Gill Fine declared an interest).
41. The Chair asked the extent to which the Agency was able formally to evaluate intervention programmes and was informed that evaluation components were built into all project work.

Department of Health (DH) (SACN/04/18)

42. Dr Sheela Reddy was not available for this paper. Members expressed concern that advice being given on vitamin D differed between DH and NICE, with the potential for confusion. The Secretariat in response stated that DH had written to NICE but had as yet received no response. The Committee requested that every attempt be made to find a resolution to the difference in advice being offered as soon as possible.

43. The Committee agreed on steps to try to resolve the problem before the next meeting.

Action Secretariat

Devolved Health Departments (SACN/04/19)

Scottish Executive

44. Dr Wilkie introduced the paper.

45. Eating for Health – meeting the challenge’ a document which describes co-ordinated action, improved co-ordination and leadership for Scottish food and health policy was due to be published and would be forwarded to SACN.

Action Secretariat

46. Members sought information on the healthy living campaign and how any outcomes would be measured. It was noted that a tracking survey was in place and an evaluation report would be forwarded to members.

Action Secretariat

47. Members noted that in relation to the various pilots and interventions, a list of campaigns and their success would be useful. In response, as an example, Mr Murray provided information on how the effect of the salt campaign would be measured.

48. Members sought advice on the level of communication between SERAD and The Scottish Health Department. It was noted that there were regular contacts. The importance of effective communication between different sectors was emphasised, and clarification was sought on ways in which Government might help to improve communication between schools and local growers in relation to the fruit for schools campaign.

Action Secretariat

49. Members noted the recommendations contained in the Curry Report, where emphasis had been placed on the general principle that health and good nutrition should be an explicit outcome to measure the success of agricultural activity.

50. Chair suggested that the Committee consider the linkages amongst health, food and agriculture at the next horizon-scanning meeting.

Action Secretariat

Wales

51. Mrs Howell informed members that page 13-17 of the paper outlined the milestones and the main emphasis was on physical activity of children and young people. The sub group will meet for the first time next month.

Northern Ireland

Health Development Agency (SACN/04/20)

52. Members requested a Scottish HDA update

Action Secretariat.

Any Other Business

53. Members requested the Secretariat forward the following points concerning the Agency Strategic Plan consultation.

- Members flagged up the importance of the Agency's research and surveillance work and stated that this should be more detailed in the Strategic Plan
- They also questioned how the national plans e.g. Food and Health Action Plan fit in with the Strategic Plan?

Action Secretariat

54. Members queried if the Committee would have an opportunity to comment on the European work being carried out on nutrition profiling. The Secretariat noted that this would be the case.

55. Members were reminded that the next meeting of SACN would take place at the Agency offices on 15 October 2004.