



**12<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**  
**15 October, Ground Floor Conference Rooms, Aviation House**  
**125 Kingsway, London, WC2B 6NH**

**FINAL MINUTES**

<b>Chairman</b>	Professor Alan Jackson
<b>Members</b>	Professor Peter Aggett Professor Annie Anderson Professor Sheila Bingham Professor John Cummings Mrs Christine Gratus Professor Peter Kopelman Dr Ann Prentice Professor Andrew Rugg-Gunn Dr Anita Thomas Mrs Stella Walsh Dr Anthony Williams
<b>Government Observers</b>	Mrs Maureen Howell (Welsh Assembly) Dr Naresh Chadha (Northern Ireland) Mrs Rosemary Hignett (FSA)
<b>Secretariat</b>	Dr Sheela Reddy (DH) Dr Alison Tedstone (FSA) Ms Mamta Singh (FSA) Ms Emma Conroy (FSA)

**Chair's Introduction**

1. The Chair welcomed Members of the Committee to the twelfth meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN).
2. Apologies were received from Professor Christine Williams, Dr Tim Key, Dr Lesley Wilkie, and Ms Imogen Sharp.

3. Members were informed that Ms Gill Fine had resigned from the committee due to her appointment as *Director of Consumer Choice and Dietary Health* at the Food Standards Agency. The Chair welcomed Mrs Rosemary Hignett, the new Head of the Nutrition Division, replacing Mr Tom Murray as the FSA observer. Tom Murray is now Head of the Food Hygiene Implementation Division.
4. Members were invited to declare any changes in interest. Professor Andrew Rugg-Gunn informed Members that the Secretariat had been notified of a change to his declaration of interests. The Chair advised the Committee that a table of Members' biographies and interests would be circulated in the near future for update and inclusion in the Annual Report 2004, which would be drafted in the same style as the Annual Report for 2003.

**Agenda Item 1 - Minutes of Last Meeting (18 June 2004) (SACN/04/Min02)**

5. Members were invited to comment on the minutes of the previous meeting (18 June 2004).
6. Agenda Item 1, Matters Arising, paragraphs 9 and 10: It was agreed to change the last sentence of paragraph 9 and to combine with paragraph 10 to read "Clarification was sought on assays for riboflavin and the procedures for collecting and storing blood prior to measuring homocysteine and Vitamin D. Members were assured that the procedures were appropriate".
7. Agenda Item 3, paragraph 17: At the end of the first sentence, it was agreed to change 'requirements' to 'intakes'.
8. Agenda Item 8, paragraph 40: In the first sentence, it was agreed to change 'standards' to 'meals'.
9. Agenda Item 8, paragraph 41: It was agreed to remove 'where for replacers were not the issue' from the last part of the first sentence.

10. Pending the amendments, the minutes were agreed as a correct record of the 11th meeting of SACN in June 2004.

**Matters Arising Action Check List (SACN/04/21)**

11. The Chair reported progress on matters arising from previous meetings and Members were invited to comment.
12. *SACN/04/01 – Secretariat to develop letters to employers noting members’ contribution:* Members had been sent copies of letters sent to their employers, signed by Melanie Johnson and Sir John Krebs, noting their contribution to the committee.
13. *SACN/04/04 – Riboflavin and Homocysteine status in NDNS:* Members were informed that MRC Human Nutrition Research who had undertaken the analyses of riboflavin and homocysteine for the NDNS had investigated this issue further and were confident that the NDNS results were robust. A consensus still needed to be developed on the threshold values for marginal riboflavin status. Members were informed that the Food Standards Agency would be calling for research to further the understanding of assays for status markers.
14. *SACN/04/06 – Evaluation procedures for Healthy Start:* Members were informed that an evaluation was planned but details were unavailable. Members questioned the extent to which the evaluation would be of process or outcome and were informed that the intention was to evaluate both process and outcome. It was agreed that evaluation of an intervention was critical and should encompass both the process and all steps towards the outcome. Members discussed the benefits of developing a generic template for evaluation, i.e., a set of standards and principles for evaluation of any intervention. Dr Sheela Reddy agreed to find out if any generic evaluation procedures already existed and report back to the next meeting. Members recognised that the outcome from the evaluation process represented an important part of the evidence base which was needed for risk assessment. Therefore, they were concerned to ensure that wherever possible the evidence should be collected in a way which could be used to good effect in risk assessment, even though evaluation was not a direct responsibility of SACN. It was agreed to discuss the matter further at the Horizon Scanning meeting in February 2005.

**Action: Secretariat**

15. *SACN/04/16 – Update on NDNS Review:* Members were informed that the future of the NDNS was due to be discussed by the FSA Board in March 2005. The NDNS Review will be considered by SACN at the Horizon Scanning meeting on 3-4 February 2005 with the aim of producing a report outlining SACN's opinion regarding the diet and health of the population and the usefulness of the NDNS, which will inform the FSA Board when it meets in March 2005. Members were assigned, according to their relevant skills, to focus on a particular survey, i.e., children, adults, older people. It was noted that the surveys started at 1½ years of age, but some relevant information on younger children and infants was collected as part of other surveys, and that current information about these age groups should also be made available to Members. The Committee were informed that the Secretariat would draw up a framework for the process by mid-November.

**Action Secretariat**

16. *SACN/04/18 – Update on advice concerning Vitamin D and NICE:* Members were informed that DH had written to NICE again to arrange a meeting. Progress regarding this issue would be reported at the next meeting.

**Action: Secretariat**

17. *SACN/04/20 Scottish HDA update:* Members were informed that this body should be referred to as 'Health Scotland' rather than Scottish HDA and that an update would be provided to Members at the next meeting.

**Agenda Item 2 –Vitamin A Subgroup (SACN/04/22)**

18. The Chair thanked Dr Ray Smith from the FSA Animal Feed Unit for attending the meeting for this item and informed Members that Dr Smith had agreed to answer any questions regarding animal feeding practices.

19. Members had been sent a copy of the draft report of the Vitamin A Subgroup for their consideration. The Chair gave a brief outline of the background to the report.
20. SACN were asked by the FSA to reassess dietary advice concerning vitamin A following publication of the report by the Expert Group on Vitamins and Minerals (EVM), which suggested that vitamin A levels above 1500 µg/d might be associated with fracture risk, and findings from the 2001 NDNS which had shown that diets of some individuals may exceed this amount.
21. The Chair outlined some of the difficulties encountered by the Subgroup in preparing their report:
  - Vitamin A refers to preformed retinol and carotenoids of which the most abundant is beta carotene, which has 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the activity of preformed retinol. In published literature a distinction is not always made between the different forms of vitamin A;
  - Limitations of dietary assessments methodologies in determining the habitual vitamin A intakes, because of the episodic pattern of consumption of some vitamin A rich foods;
  - Some studies have reported plasma retinol concentrations. Measurement of plasma concentration, however, is a poor indicator of vitamin A intake as plasma concentrations are maintained within narrow limits except at extremes of intake.
22. In preparing the draft report, the Vitamin A Subgroup had considered the following areas:
  - Review of the evidence on vitamin A and bone health, distinguishing preformed retinol and carotenoids;
  - Dietary intakes of total vitamin A, and on the relative contribution of preformed retinol and carotenoids of different population groups in Great Britain;
  - Comparison of the diets in the UK with diets in Sweden and US, as the evidence suggesting a relationship between vitamin A intake and fracture risk has been based on data from these countries;
  - Retinol content of liver and animal feeding practices, as the retinol content of liver is closely related to the retinol content of animal feeds;

- The impact of dietary change to reduce retinol intakes of high retinol consumers;
23. Members were invited to comment on the draft report. General points regarding the report were followed by detailed consideration of the overall conclusions and each section of the report. A number of amendments were agreed.
24. It was agreed that the revised report would be sent to Members within the next few weeks and made available to interested parties for comment in December. It is intended that the final version of the report will be agreed at the February 2005 meeting of SACN.

**Action: Secretariat**

**Agenda Item 3 – Maternal and Child Nutrition Subgroup**

25. Dr Anthony Williams gave an oral update on progress. The Maternal and Child Nutrition Subgroup had last met on 15 September. The main item of discussion had been progress of the report by the Subgroup. The section concerning the influence of maternal, fetal, and child nutrition on cardiovascular disease and risk factors for cardiovascular disease, was near completion. Members of the Subgroup will consider the revised draft at the end of the year and it is hoped that the section on cardiovascular disease would be available to SACN at the February 2005 meeting.
26. Members were informed that other aspects of health related to early nutrition which were being considered were bone health, dental health, allergy, respiratory disease, and possibly cancer.
27. Other issues discussed by the Subgroup were vitamin D and NICE, and the OFCOM report on ‘Childhood Obesity –Advertising in Context’.

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

28. The Chair gave an oral update on the progress of the ANANF Subgroup, which is led by the ACNFP Secretariat. Members were informed that a draft document, *Draft guidelines for the nutritional assessment of novel foods*, had been prepared. Subgroup members had

been invited to comment on the draft and their suggestions were in the process of being incorporated. The Chair informed Members that the draft might be available for consideration by SACN at the next meeting.

#### **Agenda Item 5 – Iron Working Group**

29. Professor Peter Aggett gave an oral report on the progress of the Iron Working Group. Members were informed that the draft of the iron report was much nearer completion. A further meeting of the drafting group is planned in December and a final meeting of the Working Group is planned for January 2005 with the intention of agreeing the draft at the next SACN meeting in February 2005.

#### **Agenda Item 6 – Folic Acid Subgroup**

30. Professor Sheila Bingham gave an oral report on the Folic Acid Subgroup. Members were informed that an update on new evidence since the COMA report on *Folic Acid and the Prevention of Disease* had been prepared by the Secretariat. The Subgroup had met on 10 September 2004 to discuss the report and agreed amendments. A further meeting is scheduled for November to finalise comments. It is hoped that a final version of the report will be made available to Members at the next meeting in February 2005.
31. The Subgroup had discussed the issue of the number of people that would be at risk of vitamin B<sub>12</sub> deficiency being masked if flour was fortified with folic acid in relation to biochemical evidence on the extent of B<sub>12</sub> status in the elderly. It was suggested that the Clinical Effectiveness Group at the Royal College of Physicians might provide some information regarding B<sub>12</sub> neuropathy at a later date.

#### **Agenda Item 7 – Energy Requirements Working Group (SACN/04/23)**

32. It was agreed at the last meeting that SACN should set up a Working Group to consider the report of the FAO/WHO/UNU Expert Consultation on Human Energy Requirements.
33. Members were invited to discuss and agree the terms of reference and membership of the Energy Requirements Working Group.

34. It was agreed that membership of the Working Group should comprise Professor Alan Jackson, Dr Anthony Williams, Mrs Stella Walsh together with co-opted experts who had been involved with the FAO/WHO/UNU consultation: Professor Joe Millward, Professor Marinos Elia, and Professor Andrew Prentice. Members also agreed that input from someone with expertise in the area of physical activity would be helpful.

**Action: Secretariat**

35. Members were invited to agree the terms of reference of the Working Group:

- To consider the recommendations made in the Report of the FAO/WHO/UNU Energy Consultation on Human Energy Requirements in the context of the DRVs for energy;
- To identify discrepancies and revise, as necessary, the DRVs for energy

36. The Committee felt that the terms of reference were too restrictive and suggested that they could be broadened. It was agreed that the Secretariat should set a date for the first meeting of the Energy Requirements Working Group which would discuss and agree the terms of reference.

**Action: Secretariat**

**Agenda Item 8 – Openness of Committee (SACN/04/24)**

37. Members were reminded that in accordance with Government policy on transparency in working procedures, SACN should operate from a presumption of openness (SACN/03/02).

38. The Chair informed Members that the Board of the FSA had undertaken a review on the role, methods of operation, and effectiveness of independent scientific committees that advise the Agency on food issues. Recommendation 26 of the review states that as much business as possible should be conducted in open sessions (SACN/03/02).

39. Currently, SACN holds three meetings per year, one of which is open. The open meeting comprises SACN's normal business followed by a Question and Answer session.

40. This matter had been discussed previously and Members had agreed to revisit the issue of committee openness (February 2003 meeting, SACN/03/01/min) after the open meeting in June 2003.
41. Members were invited to comment on the issue of committee openness.
42. Members agreed that it was important to provide the opportunity to be scrutinised and that openness provides an important mechanism for educating the public on the role of SACN, as there is often a misconception between risk management and risk assessment.
43. Concern was expressed that open meetings might restrict conduct of business, making proceedings more formal and less effective. A suggestion was made that meetings could be open for part of the day and certain items of the agenda could be discussed in closed session. Members considered whether there might be other opportunities for the Committee to interface with the public.
44. The consensus was that the current system was satisfactory. The availability of Committee documents on the SACN website and one open meeting every year allows public access to the Committee's proceedings.
45. The Secretariat was requested to provide information regarding procedures for openness adopted by other committees within the Agency, including: how information is made accessible to the public; how many open meetings are held; and other ways that have been used to interface with the public.

**Action: Secretariat**

46. It was agreed to discuss this matter again at the next meeting and Members were asked to reflect on alternative possibilities for interfacing with the public. It was agreed to revisit this matter on an ongoing basis.

**Agenda Item 9 – Government Update on Nutrition Related Activities**

## FSA (SACN/04/25)

47. Mrs Rosemary Hignett highlighted two recent FSA activities.

### *Promotion of foods to children*

48. Members were informed that, following a public consultation, the FSA Board agreed the *Action Plan on Food Promotions and Children's Diets* in July. The Action Plan calls upon stakeholders to work with the Agency to tackle the unbalanced nature of food promotions aimed at children. Agency commissioned consultancy work is underway to develop nutrient profiles to define 'foods high in fat, salt or sugar' and 'healthier choices' and the report is expected in the next few months.

49. Members asked if they would have the opportunity to make an input in developing nutrient profiles for foods aimed at children. The Committee was informed that their involvement would be sought. A specific event might be organised, to which SACN Members would be invited. It was agreed that an update on nutrient profiling work would be provided to Members at the next meeting in February 2005.

### *Salt Campaign*

50. The Agency is committed to reducing salt intakes to 6g/d for adults, by 2010. A major public health campaign on salt was launched by the Agency in September and a supporting salt website ([www.salt.gov.uk](http://www.salt.gov.uk)). Plans to measure the impact of the campaign include: consumer awareness research; urine analysis (2005); and monitoring of the salt content of a wide range of foods. In response to more details about how the urine analysis would be carried out, Members were informed that the analysis would be done as part of the Health Survey for England and specific surveys would be considered for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

51. Members requested an update on the Low Income Survey and were informed that the survey was on target and fieldwork was due to be completed in November.

### **Action: Secretariat**

52. Disappointment was expressed in relation to compliance with nutritional standards for school lunches, with fewer than half of all schools meeting the standards. This issue was also covered in the DH update, which stated that nutritional standards are being rewritten. Members were informed that it was necessary to revise the standards because even when schools are complying with standards, the children are not choosing the healthy options. Concern was expressed on the reference to setting 'minimum' standards. It was explained that standards needed to be tightened and that a pilot was being organised which will examine a number of changes and address potential for impact on uptake of meals.

**DH** (SACN/04/26)

53. Dr Sheela Reddy gave an update on DH activities.

#### *White Paper on Improving Health*

54. Members were informed that the Government's White Paper had been put out to wide consultation and that about two thousand responses had been received. The Public Health White Paper on improving people's health would be published in the Autumn. A national target (Public Service Agreement, PSA) had been set to halt the year on year rise in obesity among children under 11, by 2010, in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole. The *Food and Health Action Plan (FAHAP)* will deliver the diet and nutrition aspects of the White Paper.

#### *School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme*

Members were given an update on the national *School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme*, the roll out of which throughout England will be completed by the end of November. This will mean that over 2 million children, aged 4-6y who attend LEA schools will be eligible to receive a piece of fruit or vegetable. In response to an enquiry about whether fruit and vegetables would be given for 5 days of the week, Members were informed that this would be the case.

#### *5 A DAY Programme*

55. A big media campaign aimed at teenagers has been planned for the 5 A DAY Programme. Nearly 400 organisations are now licensed to use the 5 A DAY logo and the FSA and DH

are working together to develop nutrient criteria for composite foods which would be eligible to use the logo. Resources have been developed to help promote the 5 A DAY message including posters, leaflets, carrier bags etc. which will be distributed through various health locations. Members enquired whether the publicity material would be available in the wider community as well as health centres and were informed that there was a large distribution list and the information should therefore be available in the wider community.

56. Members were informed that the *Health Survey for England* was due to report at the end of this year and will provide baseline data on urinary sodium for monitoring salt intakes in adults.

### **Devolved Health Departments (SACN/04/27)**

#### **Wales**

57. Mrs Maureen Howell gave an update on activities in Wales.
58. Members were informed that the primary school free breakfast initiative was being rolled out throughout Wales and that the Food and Fitness for Children and Young People Group had held two meetings. An evaluation of nutrition training for health professionals has taken place and health nutrition modules for health professionals have been created.
59. With regard to an enquiry about whether a Health Survey for Wales had yet been developed, Members were informed that gathering of data had commenced and this would be available at the end of the year. The survey would not include data on children.

#### **Northern Ireland**

60. Dr Naresh Chadha provided an update of activities in Northern Ireland.
61. A *Childhood Obesity Task Force*, led by the Department of Education, had been established in summer 2004 with a remit to consider and evaluate options for addressing

childhood obesity in Northern Ireland. The task force is due to bring forward a set of recommendations early next year.

62. The Fresh Fruit in Schools scheme has been extended to approximately 100 primary schools and guidelines for standards of the nutritional aspects of school meals will be rolled out.
63. Work is continuing on developing a Food and Nutrition Strategy for Northern Ireland and for developing nutritional guidelines for school meals.
64. Members enquired whether there were any generic approaches to the activities of the devolved health departments and if mechanisms were in place to enable sharing of experiences. Members were informed that there was no formal shared protocol for exchange of information and that such processes were usually ad hoc.

#### **Scottish Executive**

65. A representative from Scotland was not present at the meeting and Members were directed to paper SACN/04/27 for information about activities in Scotland.
66. It was noted that no reference has been made to alcohol in the *Eating for Health* document in terms of acknowledging it as a source of energy in the diet.

#### **Health Development Agency (SACN/04/28)**

##### *Obesity/NICE Guidelines*

67. Members were informed that the HDA and NICE are merging and are currently working jointly to develop guidance on the prevention and management of obesity. Members were unclear whether there would be an overlap between SACN and HDA/NICE. The importance of an interface between SACN and the new body was noted.

#### **Any Other Business**

68. Dr Alison Tedstone informed the Committee that a report by the International Society for the Study of Fatty Acids and Lipids on *Recommendations for Intake of Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids in Healthy Adults*, which had been circulated during the meeting, was for information only and did not require a response from SACN.
69. Members were informed that the FSA would shortly be issuing a call for research on nutrition.
70. Members were reminded that the Horizon Scanning meeting would take place on 3-4 February 2005 and that the next meeting of SACN would take place at the FSA on Wednesday 23 February 2005.
71. The Chair thanked Members for their attendance.