



**Paper for information: Government Updates on Nutrition
Related Activities
DH**

Agenda Item: 09

Please see attached paper for information.

DH Update on Nutrition Initiatives

NB: Initiatives apply to England only unless otherwise stated

Food and Health Action Plan

- Nutrition will be a key theme in the forthcoming “White Paper on improving health” to be published later this year.
- The Food and Health Action Plan will help deliver the White Paper. It will also contribute to the delivery plan for the new PSA (Public Service Agreement) target on obesity, and will remain a key deliverable of the Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food.
- Over summer, we consulted on “Choosing a Better Diet: a consultation on priorities for a food and health action plan”. This, and the parallel “Choosing Activity” consultation were two strands of “Choosing Health? A consultation on action to improve people’s health”. Responses to all three consultations which ended in June will inform the development of the White Paper.
- Respondents to “Choosing a Better Diet” were broadly supportive of the direction presented in the consultation document. They identified a range of priorities for action, along the themes set out in the consultation document. The most frequently supported actions included better food labelling, better school meals, an improved school curriculum, clearer messages/consumer education and improved access. Overall, the views captured in “Choosing a Better Diet” were consistent with those captured in the wider “Choosing Health” consultation.

Reform of the Welfare Food Scheme (UK wide)

- The Government’s response to the Healthy Start consultation was published on 16 February 2004 – see DH website for details.
- The new scheme will offer qualifying pregnant women and families fixed face value vouchers worth at least £2.80 per week, and £5.60 for children under 1 year old (or within 12 months of EDD if later than first birthday).
- Vouchers will be exchanged for fresh fruit and vegetables, liquid milk and infant formula through retail. Health professionals will advise on breastfeeding and nutrition.
- Nurseries will be funded to provide either milk or fruit to children under 5.
- Draft regulations will be issued for consultation in autumn 2004.
- Regulations are expected to provide for Healthy Start to be phased in from early 2005, beginning with the introduction of the voucher scheme in one region only. The voucher scheme, and new arrangements for nursery milk/fruit provision, will then be rolled out across GB.

Infant Feeding

- The publication of the resource pack has been delayed and is expected to be distributed in November / December. A copy will be sent to all members.

Schools

- The Government vision is that all schools are healthy schools. The joint DH, DFES, FSA, DCMS and DEFRA Healthy Living Blueprint, published on 6 September, is designed to support schools and early years settings in achieving this vision. This has been distributed to all schools and is supported by a new healthy living web portal, which offers information, advice, guidance and sources of help. See www.teachernet.gov.uk for further information.
- Central to the Healthy Living Blueprint is the Healthy Schools Programme, which is jointly funded by the Department of Health and Department for Education and Skills. The programme supports the delivery of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship in schools and involves eight strands, including healthy eating and physical activity.
- The outputs from the £2.5m joint DH/DFES Food in Schools (FiS) Programme will support schools in meeting the healthy eating strand of the Healthy School Programme. The DH strand has involved eight pilot projects run in over 300 schools throughout England. This has included work on healthier breakfast clubs, tuck shops, vending machines, lunch boxes, cookery clubs, as well as water provision, growing clubs and the dining room environment. As a result, outputs are currently being developed to assist schools in implementing the “whole school approach” to healthy eating and drinking. Learnings from the pilots will be available from early 2005. See DH website for further information.
- A recent evaluation by DFES and FSA on school meals in secondary schools demonstrated a need for improvements to school meals. The Government departments involved in the development of the Blueprint have committed over £1 million to improve school meals by:
 - revising primary and secondary school nutritional standards and consideration of extending them to cover food across the school day;
 - providing additional support for headteachers and governors to provide the best way meals service possible;
 - providing better training and support for catering staff working with schools.

5 A DAY Programme

- The 5 A DAY programme aims to increase fruit and vegetable consumption, by improving access to and availability of fruit and vegetables, and improving attitudes and awareness.
- For more information about all aspects of the 5 A DAY programme, see DH website www.dh.gov.uk/healthtopics

School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme

- Earlier this year, the Department of Health announced funding of £77 million over the next two years to enable the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme to not only continue in the five government regions currently eligible under the scheme but to enable the national rollout of the scheme. This means that by the end of the year, over 2 million children aged between 4 and 6 who attend LEA maintained schools throughout England will be eligible to receive a piece of fruit or a vegetable per day.

- In June 2004, following extensive piloting, the Department of Health announced the inclusion of carrots and cherry tomatoes to the scheme, which resulted in a name change from National School Fruit Scheme to the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme. The fruit provided to children on a rotating basis include apples, pears, bananas, easy-peel citrus. The scheme will continue to pilot other fruit and vegetables in order to extend the range and variety of products offered.
- A suite of materials has been developed to support the rollout of the scheme and includes:
 - operational guidance on implementing the scheme in schools;
 - curriculum resources to help both foundation stage and key stage 1 teachers to integrate learning about fruit and vegetables into their teaching; and
 - resources that can be incorporated in a variety of ways to encourage schools to take a whole school day approach to fruit and vegetables.
- NOP survey (Oct 2003) - over a quarter of parents report that, after joining the scheme, their children and their families as a whole had increased their fruit consumption at home as well as at school.
- A full evaluation using Consumption and Dietary Evaluation Tool (CADET) is underway and results will be available in 2005.

Community initiatives

- Following successful piloting of a range of initiatives by DH in five areas, the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) – now the Big Lottery Fund - is funding for two years a further 66 PCT-led local 5 A DAY initiatives.
- A full evaluation has been commissioned by NOF, using Five-a-day Community Evaluation Tool (FACET) in accordance with DH requirements.

Communications programme

- Work on a communication strategy for the next three years has been developed with the Central Office for Information.
- Resources have been developed to help promote the 5 A DAY message, including booklets, posters, postcards, leaflets, fold-out 'Z cards', coasters and carrier bags. They are distributed via GP surgeries and other health locations, through the NOF-funded projects and via partner organisations.
- Communications activity has included the production of '5 A DAY Made Easy', a booklet containing tips on how to incorporate more fruit and veg into the family's diet, with associated press coverage.
- The focus for July – Dec 2004 is on teenagers. Planned activity includes TV and radio fillers and advertorials in teenage magazines, and the 5 A DAY website is being redeveloped to include a teenage section.
- Nearly 400 organisations have now been licensed to use the 5 A DAY logo and/or the portion indicator on promotional materials and/or food packets. The 5 A DAY logo has been developed to help people recognise the 5 A DAY message and introduce consistency in the message in all settings. Nutritional and technical criteria for using the logo and portion indicator, and information on how to apply are on the DH website.
- The logo can currently only be used to promote products without any sugar, fat and salt. Draft criteria for use of the logo on products with added sugar, fat and

salt were shared with wider stakeholders on the What Counts group and will be finalised later this year.

Obesity

- A new primary Public Service Agreement (PSA) target, held jointly between the Departments of Health, Education and Skills, and Culture, Media and Sport, was announced on 12 July 2004. The target aims to halt the year on year increase in the prevalence of obesity in children under 11 by 2010 in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole. A joint delivery plan is currently being developed.
- The Government is preparing its response to the Parliamentary Health Select Committee report on obesity, which was published on 27 May 2004. The aim is that the response should be published to complement the White Paper on improving health, due for publication in the autumn.
- The Children's National Service Framework, launched on 15 September, also includes standards for implementing measures to promote healthy diets and lifestyles, including the reduction of obesity and overweight.
- The Healthy Living Blueprint was launched by the Secretary of State for Health and the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on 6 September. It offers information, advice, guidance and sources of help to support schools in becoming healthier. Its five key objectives for schools cover all aspects of food and drink during the school day, including vending machines, school meals, packed lunches, snacks, out of school clubs and drinking water. Further information concerning the Blueprint can be found at www.teachernet.gov.uk/healthyliving

Salt

- At the Salt Summit in November 2003 the Minister for Public Health asked participants to submit plans for reducing salt in their products. By February 2004 plans had been received from 44 stakeholders (34 industry). An FSA analysis of the industry plans concluded they were insufficient to deliver the target reduction in population intakes of 1.0 gram per person per day by 2005. In June the Minister wrote to the 34 industry organisations and companies who had submitted plans, stating her disappointment that they did not go far enough and requesting further plans by 18 September.
- DH and FSA are now analysing the revised plans received, as well as some additional new plans that have been submitted, and are considering the future focus for work on salt reduction.

Physical Activity

- In December 2002, the Strategy Unit report 'Game Plan' proposed a new target of 70% of the population to be active (30 minutes of moderate activity on at least 5 days a week) by 2020. The DH and DCMS, identified as having a joint lead on taking this recommendation forward, have established a cross-government Activity Co-ordination Team (ACT) to provide a strategic overview and the planning and co-ordination of sport and physical activities at a national level. Chaired by DH and DCMS ministers, ACT met in July, October and November 2003, February and March 2004.

- The Choosing Activity consultation document was launched in May alongside Choosing a Better Diet. These consultation documents provided important strands to the wider Choosing Health? consultation process. Responses to the consultation that ended on 30th June are now being considered and will feed into the Public Health White Paper due to be published in the Autumn. During the consultation period, the Government held events to discuss current learning from free swimming initiatives and consider the monitoring and research priorities for physical activity.
- Ten Local Exercise Action Pilots (LEAP) commenced in spring 2004. Active over 2 years, the pilots will be fully evaluated by a national team.