



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

Agenda Item: 7

Please see attached paper for information.

DH Update on Nutrition Initiatives

NB: Initiatives apply to England only unless otherwise stated

Choosing Health – Making healthy choices easier

- 1) The Public Health White Paper, *Choosing Health: making healthy choices easier*, published on 16 November 2004 sets out the Government's commitment to provide more of the opportunities, support and information people want to enable them to choose health. It identifies a number of actions on obesity, diet and nutrition to promote healthy choices and to address health inequalities.
- 2) The key principles of the White Paper are :
 - Informed choice – people want the freedom to make decisions about their own health.
 - Personalisation – People want support in making healthy choices, tailored to the realities of individual lives to ensure health inequalities are addressed.
 - Working together – Government and individuals alone cannot make progress on healthier choices. Effective partnerships are needed between Government and key stakeholders.
- 3) Delivery Plan for the white paper will be published in March 2005.

Obesity

- 4) The foundation for all future work to tackle obesity and reducing obesity is one of the key overarching priorities of the Government White Paper *Choosing Health: Making healthy choices easier*. The White Paper sets out a comprehensive strategy for tackling obesity. Specific actions will include:
 - A new cross-Government obesity campaign
 - Signposting of food
 - Further work with industry on salt, fat and sugar and portion sizes
 - Action on food promotion across all forms – broadcast, non-broadcast, monitoring and evaluation and positive campaign.
 - Healthy Start vouchers, campaign and training for health professionals
 - From April 2005, a healthy school will provide a supportive environment, including policies on healthy and nutritious food and physical activity.
 - Launch of a Food in Schools package which will provide guidance and resources to support schools in implementing a “whole school approach” to healthy eating and drinking.
 - Work to improve school meals, including revision of the school meal standard.
 - Following evaluation of the SFVS in early 2005, we will consider extending the scheme to stand alone LEA maintained nurseries.
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- Funding to PCTs to strengthen primary care capacity and develop services to respond to patient need and have coordinated activity in each PCT for both adults and children with a range of appropriately trained staff – including health trainers, school nurses, health visitors, community and practice nurses, dieticians and exercise specialists.

The Obesity PSA Target

- 5) The Department of Health convened a number of Task Groups in January to assist with planning for the implementation of the Choosing Health White Paper. One of the groups looked at obesity and the delivery of the obesity PSA target - “*halting the year-on-year rise in obesity among children aged under 11 by 2010 in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole*”.
- 6) Its particular remit was to consider which *Choosing Health* commitments and other interventions could deliver the target. The Obesity Task Group, involving representatives from the food industry, sports and leisure sector, and local govt and healthcare, met for two workshops on 18 and 24 January. The outcome of the workshops is now being considered and is being used to inform the development of the Obesity PSA delivery plan.

Obesity training in the NHS

- 7) The *Choosing Health* White Paper identified the development of the public health workforce as a key long term issue. As a first step £3m is being allocated to PCTs over 2004-06 to fund training for healthcare professionals in obesity prevention and management. This is to meet the urgent need to develop the capacity and capability of current healthcare professionals, particularly in primary care and community settings.
- 8) Half the funding is being divided evenly between the nine regions and the other half will be distributed amongst spearhead PCTs. This ensures that every region receives funding while also targeting extra help at those with the highest levels of inequalities.

Food and Health Action Plan

- 9) The Food and Health Action Plan to be published in early 2005 will take forward White Paper commitments on diet and nutrition, and contribute to the delivery of the *Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food*, where the idea of the Plan originates.
- 10) The Action Plan, its parallel document the Physical Activity Plan, and other parts of the White Paper delivery plan, will show how we will deliver the cross-Government PSA on halting the year-on-year rise in child obesity.

- 11) Currently putting in place the programme and project management arrangements to oversee delivery of the White Paper, generally, and the nutrition programme.

Reform of the Welfare Food Scheme (UK wide)

- 12) The Government's response to the Healthy Start consultation was published on 16 February 2004 – see DH website for details.
- 13) 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).
- 14) Vouchers will be exchanged for fresh fruit and vegetables, liquid milk and infant formula through retail. Health professionals will advise on breastfeeding and nutrition.
- 15) Nurseries will be funded to provide either milk or fruit to children under 5.
- 16) Draft regulations were issued for consultation on 1st February 2005.
- 17) Regulations are expected to provide for Healthy Start to be phased in from mid 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

- 18) A new “Infant Feeding and Child Nutrition” resource pack, published on 26 November 2004, has been sent to every practising member of the Royal College of Midwives and the Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association. To support the introduction of Healthy Start, this resource pack will be the first stage in the delivery of the White Paper commitment to a communication and training programme for health professionals.
- 19) A commitment has also been made in the White Paper to review the Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula Regulations (1995) and to continue to press for amendments to the EU Directive on Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula Regulations.
- 20) The National Breastfeeding Awareness Week is scheduled to take place from 8 – 14 May 2005 with the aim to increase awareness of the health benefits of breastfeeding and to encourage mothers and mothers-to-be to give breastfeeding a go and continue for as long as they choose and encourage partners, family and friends to support breastfeeding.

Schools

- 21) The White Paper consultation showed a significant demand for improvements to school food, with an emphasis on the “whole school approach” to healthy eating,

improving vending and access to water. The White Paper responded with a number of key commitments to improving school food and drink.

- 22) The Government has a vision that half of all schools will be part of the Healthy Schools Programme by 2006, with the rest working towards healthy school status by 2009. From April 2005, a healthy school will provide a supportive environment, including policies on healthy and nutritious food and physical activity.
- 23) The Government is committed to improving the nutrition of school meals. This includes the revision of primary and secondary school meals standards. In doing this we will strongly consider introducing nutrient based standards and subject to legislation, we will be extending the new standards to cover food across the school day. We will also provide guidance on food procurement for heads and governors and improve training for school meal providers and catering staff. In addition, Ofsted inspectors will be looking at healthy eating in schools.
- 24) Following successful pilots in over 300 schools, a comprehensive *Food in Schools* package will be available from early 2005 to provide guidance and resources for implementing the whole school approach to healthy eating and drinking – covering breakfast, break and lunch time, water provision and other activities such as growing and cooking. This resource will be fully integrated into the joint DH / DFES Healthy Schools Programme.
- 25) We will be holding a national event on 7 March, which promotes White Paper commitments on healthy food and drink throughout the school day. It provides an excellent opportunity to showcase the extensive cross Government work we have been undertaking to promote the “whole school approach” to healthy eating and drinking. The aim of this free event is to inspire and support around 200 key senior stakeholders from across the education, health, business and voluntary sectors to take action.
- 26) The event will, amongst other things, launch the *Food in Schools* package. The event will be followed by regional training events to ensure the *Food in Schools* package is fully integrated into the Healthy Schools Programme.

5 A DAY Programme

- 27) 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.
- 28) For more information about all aspects of the 5 A DAY programme, see the programme website www.5aday.nhs.uk

School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme

- 29) Last year, the Department of Health announced funding of £77 million over the next two years to the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme. All 4 to 6 year old children in Local Education Authority (LEA) maintained infant, primary and special schools throughout England (nearly 2 million children) are now eligible to receive a free piece of fruit or vegetable every school day.
- 30) The Department of Health will consider extending the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme to LEA maintained nurseries following a full evaluation using Consumption and Dietary Evaluation Tool (CADET). Results will be available in early 2005.
- 31) 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. 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.

Community initiatives

- 32) 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.
- 33) A full evaluation has been commissioned by NOF, using Five-a-day Community Evaluation Tool (FACET) in accordance with DH requirements and will be completed in December 2005. Following the evaluation DH is committed to funding similar community food initiatives in more PCTs from 2006. The focus will be on deprived communities.

Communications programme

- 34) “Choosing Health” highlighted the 5 A DAY programme as a model for engaging industry in communicating health messages to consumers. Choosing Health also made the following commitment:
- the criteria for use of the 5 A DAY logo will be extended to processed foods and to foods targeted at children. This will be part of the work the Department of Health is undertaking with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to introduce by mid-2005, a system that could be used as a standard basis for signposting foods.
- 35) 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 lottery-funded projects and via partner organisations.

- 36) Communications activity has included the production of ‘5 A DAY Made Easy’, a booklet containing tips on how to incorporate more fruit and vegetable into the family’s diet, TV and radio “filler” advertising and magazine advertorials.
- 37) The focus for January to June 2005 is on 7 – 11 year olds in lower socio-economic groups. Planned activity includes a competition for children in Key Stage 2, magazine advertorials and work with children’s organisations such as cubs and brownies, and cinema “filler” advertising.
- 38) A new standalone 5 A DAY website has been developed at www.5aday.nhs.uk As well as general information on the health benefits, portion sizes and what counts, it contains dedicated sections for families, teenagers, health professionals, local 5 A DAY initiative co-ordinators, programme partners and a dedicated section for the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme.
- 39) Over 450 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 5 A DAY website.
- 40) DH have commissioned the National Heart Forum to produce a toolkit for health professionals to use in tackling hypertension through diet. The toolkit is due to be launched later this year.

Physical Activity

- 41) The Public Health White Paper “Choosing Health: Making healthy choices easier” was published on 16 November 2004 and details a series of cross government commitments to increase levels of participation in physical activity and sport, in the context of new services to help individuals identify and work towards their own goals for healthier living. Besides the creation of a Physical Activity Promotion Fund to support local, community-based interventions across the nine English regions, the White Paper sets out commitments in the areas of children and young people, active travel, healthy communities, the NHS and the work place.
- 42) A cross government/multi-agency Activity Co-ordination Team (ACT) was established in July 2003, led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department of Health. The group co-ordinates Government action to increase levels of physical activity and sport particularly among disadvantaged groups. ACT oversaw production of the Choosing Health, Choosing Activity public consultation in May-June 2004, the response to which influenced the White Paper. Choosing Health reiterated the commitment to publish a Physical Activity Plan in early 2005.
- 43) The Chief Medical Officer’s report, “At Least Five a Week: Evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health, was published in April 2004. The report brings together international evidence on the impact of physical

activity on health, setting out recommendations on activity levels sufficient for general health as well as more specific recommendations in relation to individual disease and conditions.

- 44) Ten Local Exercise Action Pilots (LEAP) commenced in spring 2004. Active over 2 years, the pilots will be fully evaluated by a national team, with an interim evaluation stage scheduled for the spring of this year.