



**Paper for information: Government Updates on Nutrition
Related Activities
Devolved Health Departments**

Agenda Item: 7

Please see attached paper for information.

Update on Nutrition Work in Wales

Health Challenge Wales

- 1) A major high-profile national public information campaign to promote awareness of *Health Challenge Wales* will start at the end of January, supported by national and local action.
- 2) Health challenge Wales is providing a new and inclusive national focus to secure greater ownership, commitment and action for better health, as part of a co-ordinated and sustained effort to improve levels of health in Wales.

Its key themes are:

- smoking
- obesity
- accidents and injuries
- alcohol and other substance misuse
- infections (sexually transmitted; healthcare acquired; vaccine preventable; dental decay)
- mental health and well-being.

5 A Day

- 3) In February and March a series of four radio adverts promoting fruit and vegetables will be broadcast on local stations across Wales. The ads will target young families and teenagers and will link into the Health Challenge Wales media campaign. Bilingual support materials have been distributed across Wales to support the campaign.

Food & Fitness for Children and Young People

- 4) In March 2004 the Minister for Social Services announced the formation of a Food and Fitness Task Group for Children and Young People. This brings together individuals with a wide range of experience who are helping to identify gaps in current provision, and making recommendations for future action to improve nutrition and levels of physical activity amongst our young people.

Aims of the Group:

- To respond to Health Challenge Wales, by taking forward the food & well-being and physical activity agendas for children and young people;
- To contribute to strategic planning and co-ordination of food and fitness initiatives for children and young people;
- To identify opportunities for links between existing strategies relating to nutrition and physical activity;
- To act as champions for the concept of initiatives on food and fitness operating in tandem;

- To advise on the development of additional interventions which are evidence-based, or innovative with structured evaluation, to meet identified gaps in local and national provision.
 - To consider research and evaluation requirements;
 - To consult with organisations engaging children and young people on food and fitness issues.
- 5) Meetings have been held in May, September and December 2004; with further meetings in February and March 2005.
- 6) The work of the group has been informed by 3 conferences held in Wales in March 2004; and by consultation with the groups represented at the meetings. Advice has also been received from a Research and Evaluation sub-group

Remit of Research and Evaluation sub-group of Food and Fitness Task Group for Children and Young People

- To propose an academic response to Health Challenge Wales/Food and Fitness Task Group for Children and Young People
- To consider solutions to issues raised in the Food and Fitness Task Group for Children and Young People
- To consider uniformity of data management /collection
- To consider interventions requiring evaluation
- To identify suitable sources of funding
- To feed back outcome of discussions to meetings of Food and Fitness Task Group for Children and Young People

Young people have been consulted via focus groups conducted across Wales. Information on local projects has also been collected via questionnaires.

Training

- 7) To take this agenda forward last year the Wales Centre for Health was commissioned by Food Standards Agency Wales (FSA Wales) to undertake a scoping study of education and training for health and related professionals in Wales. Following on from this, in partnership with FSA Wales, we are working with academics from universities across Wales to develop nutrition training modules for primary care professionals which will be taught across Wales. If successful this will then be used as a model to develop similar units for secondary care professionals and undergraduate and postgraduate training in the future.
- 8) As part of the Community Food Network an OCN Level 2 nutrition course is being developed for community food workers, nutrition assistants, volunteers and professional groups such as Sure Start staff and Youth workers. The course will be piloted in March and then made available nationally across Wales. It is being developed in partnership with Community Dietitians in Wales.

Nutrition Network

- 9) The Wales Centre for Health is in the process of setting up a new network, the Nutrition Network for Wales. The network which has been funded by the Food Standards Agency Wales will support all sectors that have an impact on diet and health to communicate and work together to improve public health. It will be closely linked with the other Welsh public health networks, including the physical activity network and the National Health Challenge Wales Network.

Update from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Northern Ireland)

Food & Nutrition Strategy

- 1) The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety is continuing to work with other departments and key personnel in the area of food and nutrition to develop a revised strategy and action plan to tackle poor diet. It is anticipated that a draft will be issued for consultation to a wide range of interests early in the New Year. Following publication of the definitive strategy, structures will be put in place to take forward the agreed actions.
- 2) The specific actions in the revised strategy and action plan are likely to be grouped under the following headings to support the overall aim and objectives: -
 - policy development to create a supportive environment;
 - raising awareness and increasing knowledge;
 - improving skills and facilitating change; and
 - research and evaluation.

Taskforce on Obesity in Children and Young People

- 3) On the 17th August 2004, Angela Smith, Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, officially launched the taskforce on obesity in children and young people, which is known as Fit Futures: Focus on Food Activity and Young People. Fit Futures will focus on the identification and assessment of options that will assist efforts to prevent the development of obesity in children and young people and will report back to Ministerial Group on Public Health before the end of the year.
- 4) The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety had written to organisations and groups, from all sectors, seeking views in relation to existing efforts to tackle the causal factors of obesity in children and young people and asking for suggestions in relation to what should be done to tackle the issue more effectively. We have received over 70 responses to this consultation. The steering group is now meeting with several sectoral groups to further distil the key messages emerging.
- 5) The taskforce steering group has also been working develop a research base for its recommendations. To this end, it commissioned further analysis of surveys and data sets relating to children and young people in Northern Ireland and has written to the research and academic community seeking details of relevant work, both completed and planned.

Further information on the Fit Futures initiative is available at
<http://www.investingforhealthni.gov.uk/fitfutures.asp>.

Other Initiatives

Physical Activity Strategy

- 6) The physical activity strategy, which was published in 1996 has been reviewed and a new strategy was published for public consultation in July 2004. The new strategy builds on the work of the previous strategy and highlights the link between diet and exercise. In this financial year initiatives have included a public information campaign aimed at encouraging people to go walking and a community cash grant scheme.

Fresh Fruit in Schools

- 7) As part of the implementation of *Investing for Health*, a Fresh Fruit in Schools pilot scheme was launched in October 2002. The scheme has been extended for the 04/05 academic year and now covers 101 primary schools across the 4 Health Action Zone (HAZ) areas. The scheme aims to give one piece of fresh fruit every day to 7,200 children in P1, P2 and some P3 classes. The scheme, which has just entered its third year, continues to be evaluated:
 - A final report covering all the evaluation findings from of first two years of the scheme years has been produced in early draft form and will be used to inform discussion about the future of the scheme.
 - A newsletter has been produced for distribution to parents to encourage them to provide more fresh produce at home to their children.
 - Analysis will also be carried out on the schools and P3 classes that the scheme has been extended to this year. New analysis will also look at the children who have now left the fresh fruit scheme.

Further information on the Fresh Fruit scheme is available at www.investingforhealthni.gov.uk/fruit.asp

Pilot Nutritional Guidelines for Schools

- 8) A pilot scheme to introduce nutritional guidelines for school meals was launched in March 2004. The scheme will last for three school terms and involves 100 schools representing nursery, primary and post primary sectors. All school meals staff involved in the pilot scheme have been awarded the Foundation Certificate in Nutrition through the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health and have also received training in menu planning, food presentation etc.
- 9) Evaluation is ongoing throughout the period of the pilot and is examining any changes in attitudes to the standards among school meals' staff, details of practical issues, such as cost of school meals, preparation time required, changes in food wastage, etc. The wider school environment is also being examined, to identify

existing nutrition policies and initiatives as well as those which develop as a result of the pilot scheme.

Update from the Scottish Executive Health Department

Scottish Food & Health Council

- 1) The Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care has appointed the external members of the Scottish Food and Health Council. The Council also has representation from within the Scottish Executive Departments of Health, Education, Development and Environment and Rural Affairs, and strategic delivery partners. The Council is chaired by the Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care and will report to the Joint Ministerial Steering Group on Health Improvement and Inequalities.
- 2) The council held its first meeting on 17 January 2005 in Edinburgh. Discussions included the health improvement challenge, Scottish Food and Health Policy, health inequalities, food access and a forward meeting plan.
- 3) The papers for the Group, including details of membership are available on the Scottish Executive website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/health/19133/19651>

Healthy living Food and Health Alliance

- 4) In accordance with the Food and Health Action Plan, in partnership with the Food Standards Agency (Scotland) work is ongoing to set up a Healthy living Food and Health Alliance. The Alliance is open to all and developed to fully represent the breadth of interests involved in implementing a multi-sectoral, food chain based, food and health strategy. There will be an emphasis on inclusion and wide engagement, seeking to involve people broadly, across all sectors, stakeholder groups and networks as well as individuals.
- 5) Information and application forms to join the alliance have been distributed throughout Scotland via local government, NHS and Food and Drink Industry contacts. There have been 200 applications received as of mid January 2005.

Report of the Working Group monitoring group on Scottish Dietary Targets & the joint response from the Scottish Executive Health Department and the Food Standards Agency.

- 6) The Scottish dietary targets formed the basis of the 1996 Scottish Office report 'Scottish Diet Action Plan.' The 2003 document 'Improving Health in Scotland: the Challenge' committed the Scottish Executive to continue the further implementation of the Scottish Diet Action Plan well beyond 2005. As part of this renewed impetus on diet and health, progress towards the Scottish Dietary Targets must be measured.
- 7) The working group on monitoring Scottish Dietary Targets was set up to investigate and report on the ways of assessing progress made towards the Scottish dietary targets to date and to advise on surveillance requirements beyond 2005

- 8) The Group has now reported. Both the report and the response to it by the Food Standards Agency (Scotland) and the Scottish Executive are available to view on the web at <http://www.food.gov.uk/scotland/dietarytargetsscotland/>

Food Industry Meetings

- 9) In accordance with the Food & Health Action Plan 2004/05, the Deputy Minister for Health & Community Care is leading on a series of talks with representatives from the food industry. Meetings have already taken place with McDonald's Restaurants Ltd., Masterfoods, ASDA, Coca Cola, Pepsico, British Retail Consortium and the Scottish Food & Drink Federation. Further meetings are planned in February with Somerfield and Morrisons.
- 10) The Minister is using these meetings to engage the food industry on a variety of food related issues including: salt, fat (& saturated fat) and sugar reduction; portion sizes; using the industry to stimulate demand for healthier foods; product placement; using the industry to promote the healthy living campaign and signposting healthier options.

Neighbourhood Shops (Embargoed until 7th Feb 2005)

- 11) From April – October, a six month pilot study was undertaken in order to evaluate the potential of the convenience store sector to successfully and profitably promote healthy living and healthier food choices. The findings of the pilot study are very encouraging and indicate that the convenience store sector can make a success and a profit out of promoting healthy food choices. Some examples of this success include:
- A promotion featuring a healthy range of ready to eat meals resulted in a 260% increase in sales
 - A meal deal featuring free orange juice with every sandwich resulted in a 50% uplift in sales
 - Displaying pieces of fruit at checkouts rather than confectionary resulted in an increase in the sale of fresh fruit.
- 12) The result from the pilot study will help inform further action on the promotion and selling of healthier food choices in the convenience store sector. The Scottish Executive Health Department is therefore currently considering with its industry partners on how to take this matter forward.