



**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

Delivering Choosing Health

- 1) The White Paper delivery plan (Delivering Choosing Health) published on 9 March 2005 outlines the key steps that will be taken over the next three years to deliver these commitments. Published on the same date, the Food and Health Action Plan (*Choosing a Better Diet*) and Physical Activity Action Plan (*Choosing Activity*) bring together all the commitments relating to food and nutrition and physical activity into one place. The Plans set out further detail on both the context, and next steps, for action and also reflect wider Government action in these areas not contained in the White Paper.

Food and Health Action Plan

- 2) *Choosing a Better Diet: a food and health action plan* published on 9 March 2005 brings together, in one place, action to meet all the commitments relating to food and nutrition in the *Choosing Health: Making healthy choices easier* White Paper. It gives more detail on the range of activity across government to encourage healthier eating and the action that needs to be taken at national, regional and local level to improve people's health through improved diet and nutrition.
- 3) This plan presents the action that the Government will take across a wide range of areas:
 - healthy eating in a consumer society and how information can be improved to enable healthier choices;
 - encouraging healthy eating behaviours in children and young people;
 - promoting opportunities for healthy eating in the communities where we live;
 - ensuring that the NHS promotes healthy eating in all aspects of its work;
 - promoting opportunities for healthy eating in the workplace and ensuring that the public sector leads by example;
 - working with the food industry to increase the availability of and access to healthier foods.

Physical Activity Action Plan

- 4) 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.
- 5) *Choosing Activity: a physical activity action plan* was published on 9 March 2005. The Plan brings together all the commitments relating to physical activity in

Choosing Health as well as further activity across government, which will contribute to increasing levels of physical activity. It provides further detail on both the context, and next steps, for action at national, regional and local levels to improve people's health through participation in physical activity. This represents a cross Government plan to co-ordinate action aimed at increasing levels of physical activity across the whole population – as recommended by the Game Plan report in 2002.

- 6) Ten Local Exercise Action Pilots (LEAP) commenced in spring 2004. The Department, together with co-sponsors Sport England and the Countryside Agency held a further LEAP Network Event in London on 10 and 11 May at which progress in all ten pilot sites was reviewed in order to set the course for the final year of intervention and to inform the preparation of the interim report which will be with DH in the summer. Prospects are good for LEAP producing some solid practical evidence based examples of successful interventions for dissemination to the field in 2005.
- 7) The Department through the Purchasing and Supply Agency will shortly place a contract for purchasing pedometers and securing preferred supplier terms for the NHS for the roll out of clinical use of pedometers announced in Choosing Health.
- 8) Other commitments contributing to delivery of the PSA target in obesity include:
 - Ensuring active travel plans are present in all schools in England
 - A national standard for cycle training for children
 - A national strategy for PE, School sport and Club Links
 - Guidance to be developed on “whole town approaches” based on the Sustainable Travel town pilots
 - Guidance to be commissioned on how to meet the CMO's physical activity recommendations
 - Free swimming guidance
 - In order to encourage good practice and foster links on health improvement work a guide for PCTs and sports clubs will be published.

Obesity

- 9) 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.

- A Food in Schools package was launched 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.
- Encouraging children to be physically active – travelling to school, cycle training, school sport and PE, school sports partnerships and playing fields.
- 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

- 10) The PSA target on obesity “*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*” is jointly owned by DH, DfES and DCMS in recognition that delivery will depend on a concerted, joined up effort across government and at local level. It focuses upon preventing and managing obesity in children, but also recognises that wider action to tackle obesity at a population level will be critical to achieving this.
- 11) The Commitments made in the White Paper “*Choosing Health*” describe the actions which will be taken to support this PSA target and other key success measures, and build on the government’s existing work on nutrition and physical activity. Priority interventions have been identified in consultation with key stakeholders, based on impact on the PSA target, urgency and ease of delivery. An Obesity Delivery Plan is being developed and this will set out the focus of government’s approach to obesity.

Obesity training in the NHS

- 12) 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.
- 13) 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 promotion to children

- 14) The White Paper includes a commitment to put in place a comprehensive strategy to further restrict the advertising and promotion of foods high in fat, salt and sugar to children.
- 15) We are currently working with the FSA and DCMS, as well as Ofcom, to draw up proposals for Ministers to approve, including the establishment of a Food and Drink Advertising and Promotion Forum that will have representatives from the advertising and food/drink manufacturing industries, consumer groups and other key stakeholders.
- 16) The FSA are developing nutrient criteria that will be used to identify foods high in fat, salt or sugar. **(See FSA update)**
- 17) Ofcom are putting together proposals for further restrictions on broadcast media and will be consulting on those proposals later this year.

Reform of the Welfare Food Scheme (UK wide)

- 18) Draft Regulations for Phase 1 of Healthy Start were published for consultation on 1 February 2005 and closed on 26 April (see DH website). We are currently analysing the responses to the consultation and will shortly be going to Ministers to seek their approval to lay regulations in parliament.
- 19) Regulations are expected to provide for Healthy Start to be phased in from mid 2005, beginning with the introduction of the voucher scheme in Devon and Cornwall only. Once we are satisfied that the voucher element of the new scheme is working effectively, we will then rollout Healthy Start, including the new nursery milk/fruit provision, will then be rolled out across GB in spring 2006.
- 20) 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).
- 21) New Healthy Start beneficiaries will need to complete an application form similar to the one currently in place for pregnant women – that has to be signed by a healthcare professional. This provides an opportunity for the woman or family to be offered advice on diet & nutrition as well as other health issues.
- 22) Vouchers will be exchanged for fresh fruit and vegetables, liquid milk and infant formula through retail.
- 23) Nurseries will be funded to provide either milk or fruit to children under 5 (from 2006).
- 24) The Department is putting in place a broad communications strategy for beneficiaries, healthcare professionals and retailers, and will also be providing a training programme for healthcare professionals. An evaluation strategy is also being developed that will in Phase 1 focus mainly on the new Healthy Start processes and establishing baseline data but will in the longer term be looking at the impact of Healthy Start on health outcomes.

- 25) The Department of Health plans to commission a small qualitative study with beneficiaries, health professionals and retailers, as part of the wider impact assessment of the Phase 1 introduction of Healthy Start in Devon and Cornwall. We also propose to commission an expert scoping review to inform detailed planning of a longer term evaluation of Healthy Start policy outcomes. As part of this process, the Department is engaging expert research advice and will establish an expert/stakeholder reference group.
- 26) The provisional timescales are as follows:
- i. Evaluation of Phase One implementation and initial impact of Healthy Start in Devon & Cornwall (Summer 2005 ? Spring 2006)
 - ii. Scoping and preparation for longer-term outcomes-focused policy research evaluation programme (Summer 2005 ? Spring 2006)
 - iii. Longer-term outcomes-focused policy research evaluation programme (Spring 2006 ? Spring 2010)

Infant Feeding

- 27) To support Healthy Start a communications and training programme for health professionals is being developed.
- 28) A review of the Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula Regulations (1995) has begun to further restrict advertising of infant formula. The Department of Health and Food Standards Agency will continue to press for amendments to the EU Directive on Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula.
- 29) Following publication of European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) recommendations, both DH and FSA will update the bottle feeding guidance that is available to parents through publications such as Birth to five and Bottle feeding leaflet.
- 30) DH and FSA are considering developing guidance for health professionals on making infant formula feeds in hospital.

Schools

- 31) As set out in the White Paper, work is currently underway to ensure that healthy schools will provide a supportive environment, including policies on healthy and nutritious food and physical activity.
- 32) Following successful pilots in over 300 schools, a comprehensive *Food in Schools Toolkit* has been developed 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. The toolkit consists of guidance, advice, case studies and templates brought to life by interactive elements such as a “Food Audit”, to help schools create customised solutions, and a “Virtual Day”, which follows a day in the life of a student. The toolkit is available online – www.foodinschools.org – or in

printed form from your local healthy schools co-ordinator or by calling 08701 555 455 or emailing dh@prolog.uk.com. Ask for item code 267050.

- 33) Regional training events are currently taking place across the country to ensure the *Food in Schools Toolkit* is fully integrated into the Healthy Schools Programme. The training covers healthy eating (using the Food in Schools Toolkit), and physical activity – using a whole school approach.
- 34) The Government is committed to improving the nutrition of school meals. This commitment was set out in the White Paper and Choosing a Better Diet – including;
- revision of primary and secondary school meals standards – strongly consider introducing nutrient based standards and
 - subject to legislation, extending the new standards to cover food across the school day
 - guidance on food procurement for heads and governors and improve training for school meal providers and catering staff.
 - Ofsted inspectors will be looking at healthy eating in schools.
- 35) Building on these commitments, the Education Secretary of State announced a £280m package to transform the quality of school meals on 30 March 2005. This includes more funding for ingredients, training of school cooks and the School Food Trust. The Schools Meals Review panel was announced on 16 May along with some interim members of the Schools Food Trust.

5 A DAY Programme

- 36) 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.
- 37) 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

- 38) 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 able to join the SFVS, which provides 4-6 year old children with a free piece of fruit or vegetable every school day.
- 39) 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 later this year.

5 A DAY logo

- 40) Criteria for use of the 5 A DAY logo on processed foods and foods targeted at children are expected to be launched in Autumn 2005. The criteria will be based on the nutrient profiles being developed as part of the DH/Food Standards Agency's work to introduce a system that could be used as a standard basis for signposting foods; these criteria are expected to be available in Autumn 2005.
- 41) Developing a simplified measure of portion sizes for children e.g. handfuls, is being considered.

Communications programme

- 42) The focus for January to June 2005 is on 7-11 year olds in lower socio-economic groups. Activity underway includes a competition for children in Key Stage 2 including a teacher's pack with curriculum-linked activity lesson plans, advertorials in children's magazines, and work with children's organisations such as Brownies and the Boys Brigade.
- 43) Over 480 organisations have now been licensed to use the 5 A DAY logo and/or the portion indicator on promotional materials and/or food products.

Salt

- 44) DH have commissioned the National Heart Forum to produce a toolkit for health professionals to use in tackling hypertension through diet. The toolkit was launched by the Faculty of Public Health on May 25.
- 45) For further information see FSA update.