



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

**Agenda Item: 9**

Please see attached paper for information.

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

### **Food & Nutrition Strategy**

- 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. An inter-sectoral working group has been established and a new food and nutrition strategy is in the early stages of development. The overall aim of the new strategy is to improve the health of the people of NI through better nutrition. It is anticipated that a draft will be issued for consultation to a wide range of interests early next year. Following publication of the definitive strategy, structures will be put in place to take forward the agreed actions.
- 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.
- Actions will include promotion of better nutrition for children from lower socio-economic groups, better links with schools including school meal nutritional standards and improved public information campaigns to raise awareness and create understanding of nutritional messages.
- The inter-sectoral working group is presently awaiting the outcome of the report of the taskforce on obesity in children and young people before further developing the strategy.

### **Taskforce on Obesity in Children and Young People**

- On the 17<sup>th</sup> 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 has focused 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.
- 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 has also meet with several sectoral groups to further distil the key messages emerging. The steering group has summarised the views expressed during the various phases of the engagement process into a report which can be found at the following link:

<http://www.investingforhealthni.gov.uk/documents/FitFuturesviews.pdf>

- The stakeholder engagement progress concluded with an intersectoral stakeholder event in Lisburn on 16 March 2005. Over 100 people representing a wide range of sectors, organisations and professions attended. During the event, participants were encouraged to engage in workshops to create a vision of a Fit Future and then to identify the key actions necessary to deliver this vision.
- 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.
- Following consideration of the report from the intersectoral event and reports on other significant elements of the research and engagement processes by the Fit Futures steering group, recommendations on priorities for action will be made to the Ministerial Group on Public Health. It is expected that the Ministerial Group will receive these recommendations by the end of the year. The recommendations will also inform a revised physical activity strategy and action plan and the food and nutrition strategy which is scheduled to issue for consultation in the next few months.

Further information on the Fit Futures initiative is available at

<http://www.investingforhealthni.gov.uk/fitfutures.asp>.

## **Other Initiatives**

### *Physical Activity Strategy*

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*

As part of the implementation of *Investing for Health*, a Fresh Fruit in Schools pilot scheme was launched in October 2002. The scheme 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. This year the scheme will also be testing the impact of introducing some degree of partial financing

from parents. The scheme, which has just entered its fourth 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](http://www.investingforhealthni.gov.uk/fruit.asp)

#### *Pilot Nutritional Guidelines for Schools*

A pilot scheme to introduce nutritional guidelines for school meals was launched in March 2004. The scheme lasted for three school terms and involved 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.

The evaluation of the pilot has now concluded and the final evaluation report should be available in the next few weeks. An announcement on the roll out of nutritional standards for school meals in Northern Ireland is expected in the late autumn.

## **Update from the Scottish Executive Health Department**

### **Food Standards Agency Scotland Report on Progress towards meeting the Dietary Targets**

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. The Food Standards Agency Scotland will be reporting on progress towards meeting the Dietary Targets before the end of the year.

### **Scottish Food and Health Council**

The Scottish Food & Health Council met on 23 May to discuss issues surrounding health inequalities. Members considered the issues in 3 workshops (communities, the NHS, education and skills) and have begun to identify areas for action which will be included in an action plan for 2006 – 2010.

The Council is scheduled to have its third meeting in late November/ early December. This will focus on the results of the monitoring of the dietary targets and progress towards meeting the recommendations in the Scottish Diet Action Plan.

Agenda and papers for this meeting will be publicised on the SE website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/health>. Papers relating to the first two Food & Health Council meetings are already there.

### **Scottish Food and Health Alliance**

NHS Health Scotland are in process of appointing a co-ordinator for the Healthyliving Food and Health Alliance, set up to promote the networking of food and health issues. Around 610 members have now joined so far. Following the publication of the first issue of the alliance newsletter in August, a second is due for release in October. An electronic copy of issue 1 is available from SACN secretariat.

### **2003 Scottish Health Survey**

The 2003 Scottish Health Survey is due for publication in November 2005. Carried out by the National Centre for Social Research, the primary aim of the survey is to monitor trends in Scotland's health, with a particular focus on heart disease. Methods used in the 2003 survey closely follow those of the previous surveys with large sample sizes allowing for analysis at a regional level.

### **Food Access Survey**

The Food Standards Agency and Scottish Executive have jointly commissioned new research to provide a comprehensive map on food access in Scotland. Local authorities will be given a toolkit in March 2006 to help them implement the findings (due in March 2007) in their area. The study will provide policy makers with

definitive information on the types of areas that have food access problems and allow them to make appropriate interventions.

### **Health Scotland Policy Review on the Scottish Diet Action Plan**

Health Scotland are carrying out a review of the implementation of the Scottish Diet Action Plan since its inception in 1996. The review will draw together evidence of progress and achievements from a variety of sources and provide some overarching observations, conclusions and recommendations for future food and health policy in Scotland. It will provide a national overview of the changes introduced under the Scottish Diet Action Plan rather than an assessment of performance of delivery partners. Publication of the Review is expected in early Summer 2006. This review will complement the Progress Report towards meeting the Scottish Dietary Targets, which is being prepared by the Food Standards Agency Scotland.

### **Healthy Scotland Convention 4**

A fourth national Healthy Scotland Convention, being organised by NHS Health Scotland on behalf of Scottish Ministers, will be held on Monday 21 November. The Convention will take tackling health inequalities as its theme and has been designated as an associate event as part of the UK Presidency of the EU, which has health inequalities as one of its themes. The Minister for Health and Community Care, Andy Kerr MSP, will give the key note address to the Convention. Participants will take part in facilitated discussion sessions, network with colleagues and view display materials.

### **Continued Funding for Hungry for Success Announced**

In his September statement to the Scottish Parliament, the First Minister announced that a further £70m will be made available to local authorities over the next 3 years for the Hungry for Success programme. Hungry for success aims to supply properly-sized portions of nutritious food at no extra cost, to increase school meal uptake, to tackle issues of stigma around free school meals and to equip children with healthy eating knowledge, attitudes and habits that will last a lifetime.

### **Proposed Health Promotion, Nutrition and Schools Bill**

In his legislative statement to the Scottish Parliament in September, the First Minister announced that Scottish Ministers would consider options for consultation on a Health Promotion, Nutrition and Schools Bill.

## **Update from NHS Health Scotland**

### **Breastfeeding**

Following the success of the breastfeeding television advertisement *Science* (which promoted the health benefits of breastfeeding) in 2002, Health Scotland developed a second advert which was launched during Breastfeeding Awareness Week 2004. This focused on increasing the social acceptability amongst the Scots of breastfeeding in public, as well as increasing the confidence of breastfeeding mothers to do so.

A Breastfeeding Education Resource (CD Rom) was developed during 2004 by Health Scotland in partnership with UNICEF/BFI and NHS Education for Scotland. The resource is designed to support Higher Education Institutions meet the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative Education Standards and achieve institutional accreditation.

### **Weaning**

Following research carried out in 2003/4 Health Scotland has developed a new weaning leaflet called *Fun First Foods* to replace the existing leaflet *From Milk to Family Meals*. The new leaflet is designed to be more practical than the existing one and includes improved information on oral health as well as recipe ideas for parents. The leaflet was launched in May 2005 and is also downloadable from the [www.healthyliving.gov.uk](http://www.healthyliving.gov.uk) website.

### **Early Years Nutrition – *Adventures in Foodland***

This information and resource pack for carers of children aged 0-5 years in early years settings (nursery, childminding, crèche etc) was launched in 2003. It has been widely disseminated across Scotland, supported by Training for Trainers activity delivered in partnership with Childcare Partnerships.

Health Scotland currently also chairs a Working Group comprising Health Scotland, NHS Board and academic colleagues which has been working with the Scottish Executive to develop Nutritional Guidance for the Early Years Sector. The Guidance is due to be launched by the end of the 2005. The Nutritional Guidance is strongly linked to *Adventures in Foodland* and joint training to support roll-out of the Guidance is currently being explored.

### **Schools - *Growing Through Adolescence***

*Growing Through Adolescence* is a training pack that contains materials trainers can use in designing training sessions for teachers of pupils in upper primary schools and lower secondary schools. The sessions aim to facilitate teachers in helping young people cope with emotional and physical health issues as they grow and develop.

**Growing Through Adolescence focuses on healthy eating and has five key components:**

Trainers' Notes - concise information on how trainers can integrate the component parts of the training pack to develop coherent and engaging sessions for teacher participants.

Pre-designed training sessions - five training sessions of approximately three hours duration aimed at developing teachers' knowledge and awareness of the complex issues surrounding healthy eating for young people as they develop through adolescence.

Training activities - a 'menu' of activities from which trainers will be able to select the most appropriate options to design their own training sessions for particular groups of teachers.

Background resource - in-depth chapters on key issues relating to healthy eating for trainers to use as background preparation for session design and facilitation. Themes of the chapters include nutrition, physical activity, puberty, food patterns, dieting, eating disorders, self-esteem, body image and the role of the media.

Factsheets - information and statistics on key issues relating to healthy eating and growing through adolescence that trainers will be able to offer session participants.

Training for Trainers activity for *Growing through Adolescence* has been taking place over recent months as part of the roll-out of the resource.

### **Health Behaviour Of School Children (HBSC)**

Health Scotland supports CAHRU (Child and Adolescent Health Research Unit) at the University of Edinburgh in delivering the cross-national HBSC study. HBSC is a WHO cross-national study of school-aged children in 36 countries & regions in Europe and North America. Data is collected from 11, 13 and 15 year olds (1500 in each age group) every 4 years. Included in the data collection are key questions on diet and eating behaviour.

A key aim of the Scottish HBSC study is to contribute to the development and delivery of health education and health promotion within the school setting and in other arenas. National dissemination of research findings has been conducted after each survey to a wide range of user groups including schools, Education Departments, Health Boards, policy makers and other key professionals with responsibility for health promotion targeted at young people.

### **European Network Of Health Promoting Schools**

As a member of the European Network of Health Promoting Schools, Health Scotland conducted a study with CAHRU of healthy eating in schools using a health promoting school approach. Final report was completed in summer 2003.

## **Update on Nutrition Work in Wales**

### **Health Challenge Wales**

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.

The response to Health Challenge Wales has exceeded expectations, and momentum continues to build. By 1 April 2005, awareness of the Challenge had nearly doubled - from 15% of all people aged 16 and over in November 2004 to 27% at end of March 2005. When prompted with stills of the television advertisements and picture cards of the press and poster adverts, people's recall was even higher - at 38% and over 21,000 action packs have now been distributed. To build on this initial success, the Welsh Assembly Government will be sponsoring a further national public awareness campaign. The campaign, which will include a mix of television and radio advertising, will commence on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> October and will run for a period of four weeks. One of the key focuses of this campaign will be the 5 a day messages and simple steps to increasing physical activity.

### **Action on Food & Fitness for Children and Young People**

The action plan responds to Health Challenge Wales, by taking forward the food and well-being and physical activity agendas for children and young people.

The action plan, which was released for consultation in July, was developed through the work of a Task Group representing interests from a wide range of groups in Wales, including officials from relevant policy divisions. As the plan has been developed officials have monitored other strategies and plans to ensure synergy of interest; to address gaps in current provision and to prevent duplication.

A research and evaluation sub group has helped to identify relevant reports and papers. A series of focus groups were held with young people around Wales to gain their views.

The action plan contains 7 key recommendations:

- Extend Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS)
- Improve the food and drink consumed throughout the school day
- Provide high quality PE, health related exercise and practical cookery skills
- Provide an environment that will encourage children and young people to access opportunities for physical activity and healthier foods
- Develop skills to enable children and young people to take part in physical activity and prepare healthier foods
- Develop and deliver training on food & fitness for those working with children and young people
- Ensure that actions are evidence-based, or innovative with evaluation and that findings are shared

The action plan was issued for consultation on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005 with a young people's version issued for consultation on 1<sup>st</sup> September.

Consultation ends on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2005.

Key dates for implementation over the next 5 years are given throughout the document. For further information:

<http://www.healthschool.org.uk/nutrition/pdfs/food-fitness-consultation-e.pdf>

In order to address the second action point a food in schools working group has been established.

### **Community Food Network**

Managed by the Welsh Assembly the network provides support for projects across Wales:

- A promising practice database
- A quarterly newsletter which highlights promising practice from community food projects and informs people of funding sources, food and nutrition policy relevant publications, training etc
- Training for community workers and volunteers
- Resources – In the process of developing a handbook which will provide info on how to set up different types of community food initiatives
- Evaluation support.

In July 2005 a new round of funding was made available through the Food & Fitness Grant Scheme. The purpose of the scheme is to provide financial support for community projects that tackle obesity by encouraging both active lifestyles and healthier eating within priority groups. The main target group for the scheme is people within socially disadvantaged communities. Within those communities, organisations bidding for grant support may identify their own target groups based on local needs assessment. Small grants of up to £5,000 a year for two years are available to health, youth, community and voluntary organisations to develop projects of up to two year's duration in community or primary care settings. The projects should encourage the promotion of both healthy eating and physical activity by encouraging participation and addressing barriers.