



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

Agenda Item: 6

Please see attached paper for information.

DH Update on Nutrition Initiatives

NB: Initiatives apply to England only unless otherwise stated

Obesity

Cross-Government Obesity Campaign

- A team is in the process of developing plans for the obesity campaign. The programme will take an early focus on children under 11 and their influencers, primarily parents and carers. A coalition of stakeholders, including other government departments, the food and leisure industries and Non-Government Organisations are involved in the development and implementation of the campaign. We expect the campaign will launch in the autumn of 2006.

Guidance for Measuring Childhood Obesity

- An expert advisory group was formed to advise DH on the complex issues involved in measurement of childhood obesity at local level. Their advice was to pursue an anonymised surveillance approach rather than an individual screening approach to measurement of obesity in primary school age children.
- Good practice guidance to the NHS was issued on 12 January, covering issues such as the policy background, definitions, data collection options, core data, stigma and confidentiality. The guidance specified the minimum data requirements for monitoring the deferred NHS Local Delivery Plan line on childhood obesity.
- PCTs will be responsible, with the co-operation of schools, for resourcing and implementing measurement of height and weight in primary school age children, within their existing resource allocations for obesity. The intention is that data will be fed back to PCTs and DH performance management systems (LDP lines).
- A further guidance on data transfer, handling, analysis and feedback to PCTs will be published in April 2006.

Weight Loss Guide & Obesity Care Pathway

- Pending the comprehensive NICE guidance in 2007, the White Paper, *Choosing Health* committed to developing an obesity care pathway and a weight loss guide for patients to support weight management in primary care. Expanding on these commitments, we are developing a set of interim tools to support health professionals in primary care until the definitive NICE guidance. Draft tools were put out for consultation, which was completed in January 2006.
- A comprehensive package comprising Obesity Care Pathway for adults and children, tools to help health professionals to raise the issue of weight with patients will be disseminated to PCTs and GP surgeries in Spring 2006. The package will also include a weight loss guide in the form of a leaflet to be given to

patients who intend to lose. The guide aims to clarify the myths around losing weight and preventing weight gain and provide simple self-help advice with pointers on appropriate diet and physical activity,. Limited consultations were completed on 3 January.

Obesity Toolkit

- The Department is contributing to the development of a Toolkit for developing local strategies to prevent and tackle overweight and obesity (developed by the Faculty of Public Health and the National Heart Forum). The primary purpose of the toolkit is to provide the framework for development of a comprehensive local strategy to prevent and treat overweight and obesity through primary care, local government and local partnerships. The intention is to signpost the reader to relevant sources of information regarding evidence of effectiveness of interventions. Toolkits will be disseminated to PCTs and other key local partners in spring 2006 to enable effective local action to tackle obesity.

Food promotion to children

- The Government established the Food and Drink Advertising and Promotion Forum in mid 2005 to consider further restrictions in non-broadcast media including print, internet, SMS, point of sale, sponsorship and brandsharing.
- DH will be monitoring the change in balance of advertising and promotion of food to children. The aim is to measure the effectiveness of any new restrictions.
- FSA has produced a nutrient profiling model that will be used to identify foods high in fat, salt and sugar. Based on this model, Ofcom will be consulting in early 2006 on proposals for further restrictions on advertising in broadcast media.

Reform of the Welfare Food Scheme (UK wide)

- Phase 1 of Healthy Start began in Devon and Cornwall on 28 November 2005. It is expected that Phase 2 of Healthy Start will be introduced across the rest of Great Britain towards the end of 2006. Colleagues intend to introduce provisions to mirror those of Healthy Start in Northern Ireland.
- As part of Phase 1 of Healthy Start a rapid evaluation of the scheme and its processes will be undertaken to ensure that they effectively support its introduction.
- Nursery provision of milk is still under review, with any changes to the scheme expected to coincide with the introduction of Phase 2 of Healthy Start.
- Training for selected health professionals in Devon and Cornwall has been undertaken to assist with the implementation of Phase 1. The training will be evaluated prior to roll-out across the rest of Great Britain.

Infant Feeding

- A review of the Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula Regulations (1995) is currently underway. Both DH and FSA are pressing for further restrictions in the EU Directive on the advertising of formula milk.
- Research commissioned by DH and FSA looking at the effects of advertising follow-on formula was undertaken in August 2005 and informed the evidence document drafted by FSA to support discussions on the Recast EC Directive in Brussels on 12 September 2005 and 20 January 2006. A further working group meeting has been scheduled for late March/early April 2006.
- Guidance on making up bottle feeds, in light of EFSA recommendations has been issued to health professionals. Leaflets to parents and carers, and the DH website have also been updated.

School Food (DfES led, support from DH/FSA)

- In 2001, the school meal standards were re-introduced. A joint DfES/Food Standards Agency survey of secondary school meal standards showed that there is much to be done and that is why, in March 2005, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills announced a £235m package to transform the quality of school meals. Over the next three years, from September 2005, £220m of new grants were given directly to schools and local education authorities to raise the quality of school meals.
- Funding is available for new or upgraded kitchen facilities, through the existing programme to rebuild and refurbish schools. Better catering facilities will allow fresh produce to be used in meals and help schools move away from processed and pre-prepared ingredients. Government is already committed to investing £5.5 billion in 2005-06 rising to £6.3 billion in 2007-08 to improve secondary school buildings and at least £1.8 billion to improve primary schools in 07/08.
- The Department for Education and Skills has allocated £15m to the School Food Trust to provide independent support and advice about school meal improvements to schools and parents. In addition, the Big Lottery Fund, as part of a strategic programme to promote well being, has decided to allocate up to £45 million to support healthy eating projects and initiatives for children, parents and their wider communities. The Fund will work in partnership with the voluntary sector, including the School Food Trust, the Soil Association and Sustain, local authorities, schools and the Healthy Schools Programme to develop the programme.
- The Department is also taking forward a number of complementary initiatives all aimed at improving school meal provision:
 - Toughening up minimum school meal standards. An expert panel was commissioned to consider how best to reduce pupils' sugar, salt and fat intake and increase consumption of fruit, vegetables and essential nutrients. The panel was also asked to consider the introduction of 'nutrient based'

nutritional standards and to recommend whether certain foodstuffs should be restricted or banned. In September 2005, the SMRP's final report recommended a combination of food-based school lunch standards (to be introduced from September 2006) and new tough nutrient-based standards (to be met by 2008 in primary schools and 2009 in secondary schools); and made a series of wider recommendations on their implementation, which emphasised the importance of a whole-school and whole-system approach to the issues. The wider recommendations including applying similar standards to meals other than lunches; and to outlets such as tuck shops and vending machines. A public consultation was held on the SMRP's recommendations for new school lunch standards and are currently considering the responses. The resulting standards will take account of the views gathered during the consultations, but also will take account of the need to do more to encourage pupils to make smarter choices in the food they consume.

- The School Food Trust (SFT) was commissioned to develop standards for food and drink (other than lunches) provided on school premises. Subject to a limited consultation on these proposals, DfES intend to announce a full suite of nutritional standards for schools including standards for school lunches in May and legislate to create a statutory footing for the new standards.
- proposals that will enable parents to work constructively with schools to improve the quality of school meals, including a dedicated 'toolkit' to guide parents in the right direction;
- The development of a new vocational qualification for school caterers and creating many more training opportunities. The qualification will help schools promote healthy eating and ensure that catering staff are seen as integral to the whole-school team with the same high status as teachers and classroom assistants;
- new guidance to help schools and local education authorities draw up catering contracts that source healthy school meals' services and healthy food in vending machines, tuck shops and breakfast clubs.
- From September 2005, as part of their routine evaluation of school performance, Ofsted will make an assessment of school food. In addition, Ofsted are rolling out a programme of visits accompanied by nutritionists, which will allow more detailed reporting on the standard of food provided and consumed in schools.

Healthy Schools (Joint DH/DFES)

- Guidance on new criteria for Healthy Schools "A Guide for Schools" was launched in September 2005. Importantly, this now specifies both healthy eating and physical activity, as two of the four key themes that schools need to satisfy to achieve Healthy Schools status. These targeted themes are expected to make a very positive contribution towards meeting the Obesity PSA target and we are working with the obesity team to look at further contributions that the Healthy Schools Programme can make.

- Work is in progress with the DfES and Schools Food Trust to ensure new school food standards can be integrated into the Healthy Schools Programme through guidance, training etc. We have also been liaising with the School Food Trust on a Big Lottery Fund bid that looks to support various community initiatives that involve pupils, parents and the wider community in cookery skills.
- The National Healthy Schools Programme is on track to achieve both of the targets set out in *Choosing Health* to have half of all schools to be Healthy Schools by December 2006 with all schools working towards Healthy School Status by 2009. Nearly 18,000 schools (over 75% of all schools) are already on the Programme and nearly 10,000 have achieved healthy school status; a lot of positive work is underway to increase numbers.

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, including the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme, see the programme website www.5aday.nhs.uk
- The focus for the remainder of the financial year is 'Young Independents': 16-24 year olds no longer living at home with their parents. Planned activity includes a radio promotion, promotion of the Fuel for Living recipe and tips guide, online activity, and PR. In 2006-07 the 5 A DAY programme will focus on young families.
- Nearly 600 organisations are now licensed to use the 5 A DAY logo and/or the portion indicator on promotional materials and/or food products.

Salt

- The *Choosing Health: making healthier choices easier* White Paper, published in November 2004, commits the Government to working with the food industry on a range of initiatives to increase access to healthier foods including reducing the levels of salt in prepared and processed food and drink.
- The *Choosing a Better Diet: a food and health action plan*, published in March 2005, outlined action by the Food Standards Agency and Department of Health to identify targets for salt reduction in key product categories that make the greatest contribution to salt intakes.
- The targets for salt in key product categories have been set to achieve the public health target to reduce population salt intakes to 6g by 2010 and will be subject to review in light of industry progress in 2008, with the aim of driving them down further wherever possible.

Reformulation

- FSA and DH are also committed to working with industry to reduce levels of added sugars and fat in processed foods, building on the salt reduction work. Targets for reducing levels of sugar and saturated fats in certain foods will be identified following discussions with industry. It is intended to publish the targets in mid 2006.

Public Procurement

- Building on best practice, DH has established working groups for the NHS, the Prison Service and the MoD to develop, oversee the implementation and monitoring of nutritional standards.
- The FSA has commissioned work to establish nutritional standards for foods served in institutions. The working groups will draw on this work when published as planned later in 2006.

Physical Activity

- Ten Local Exercise Action Pilots (LEAP) have been underway across England (jointly funded by DH, the Countryside Agency and Sport England). The pilots came to an end on 31 January 2005. DH received an interim evaluation report in July 2005, which is now being analysed. We hope this will yield best practice information that can be shared with PCTs this spring. A final report is expected in July 2006.

Links between sports club & health

- Caroline Flint launched the Football and Health Partnership Guide at the *Football Partnership Conference – The Power of Football* at Tottenham Hotspur FC on 23 May. The launch fulfils a White Paper commitment “to publish a guide for Primary Care Trusts and sports clubs to encourage good practice and foster links on health improvement work”. A series of regional seminars that commenced in Leeds in November 2005 and will run through to the summer, will be used to encourage other sports to forge partnerships with the NHS and local Government.

Guide to provision of free swimming for local authorities

- DH in partnership with the Amateur Swimming Association launched a best practice guidance for local authorities on providing free swimming in Jan’06.

School playing fields

- The Government recognises the need to discourage local authorities from selling their school playing fields, and has further strengthened the regime governing their sale. This was one of the early White Paper wins.

Activity in Schools

- A toolkit is planned for schools that sets out how schools can support physical activity across the school day, including active travel to school, high quality PE and school sport, provision of after school clubs and reconfiguration of playgrounds. We hope to publish the toolkit in 2006.

Schools on the Move

- The Choosing Health White Paper set out a commitment to “pilot the use of pedometers in schools – both as a tool to support a wide range of curriculum topics and to increase awareness amongst pupils of the need to be active”. This is being implemented through a joint DH – DfES – Youth Sport Trust (YST) programme “Schools on the Move”, which includes resource materials for schools, teachers and young people to help integrate pedometers into the life of the school. Pedometer pilots were introduced in 50 schools in October 2005 and the progress will be evaluated over 2 school terms.

Short questionnaire for primary care

- DH has developed a short questionnaire for use by practice nurses to establish the physical activity levels of newly registering patients, and of other patients as the opportunity arises. This has been validated. We are now developing guidance on how to apply the questionnaire, and on the steps that health professionals can take with patients to encourage greater activity where the questionnaire indicates that this is desirable. Links will be made to the National Step-o-Meter programme (see below). We are also working to develop a template compatible with existing GP software to support the questionnaire. The questionnaire will be available for use during the first half of 2006.

National Step-o-Meter Programme

- DH has commissioned the Countryside Agency to develop an NHS national pedometer programme. This scheme will be providing free motivational behaviour change training sessions for frontline healthcare professionals, including primary care nurses. These sessions will give healthcare professionals the skills to determine which of their patients is ready to receive advice on becoming more physically active, and of these which could benefit from the loan of a pedometer as a motivational tool.
- We have invited around 30 healthcare professionals in every PCT to sign up to receive the free training. The target is to get healthcare professionals from 270 PCTs on board.
- Training will begin in April 2006 and all healthcare professionals who undertake the training will receive a batch of free pedometers to use with their patients. An evaluation report will be produced in Dec 06.

Nice Public Health Intervention Guidance

- DH has commissioned NICE to assess four commonly used methods to increase physical activity: brief interventions in primary care, pedometers, exercise referral

schemes and community based exercise programmes for walking and cycling.
Publication of the Intervention Guidance is expected on 31 March 2006.