



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

Agenda Item: 6

Please see attached paper for information.

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

Fit Futures: Focus on Food, Activity and Young People

The recommendations of the Fit Futures taskforce on obesity in children and young people have been presented to the Ministerial Group on Public Health and will be published within the next few weeks. The Fit Futures report contains over seventy recommendations and a cross-departmental response to the recommendations, including an implementation plan, will be produced by the Ministerial Group on Public Health before the summer. This response is likely to include proposals for the way forward in relation to food and nutrition and physical activity at the population level, as well as addressing the specific recommendations in relation to children and young people.

Priorities for Action recommended in the Fit Futures report include a range of actions to deliver a much more joined up approach across government and its agencies to both food and nutrition and physical activity policy and measures to ensure that there is “real choice” in schools and early years settings.

Research papers and consultation reports developed during the Fit Futures process are available at <http://www.investingforhealthni.gov.uk/fitfutures.asp>

Nutrition Matters

In October 2005, the Health Promotion Agency, with the support of local community dietitians, published updated guidance on feeding children under 5 in childcare settings. The new guidance aims to assist childminders and childcare staff to support the children in their care to eat a healthy balanced diet and to encourage children to develop healthy eating habits. “Nutrition Matters” includes nutrition advice, meal ideas and suggestions to encourage “fussy eaters” to try healthy options. A training programme, based on the guidance in Nutrition Matters, will be delivered during 2006 to child minders and staff working in childcare and early years settings.

Food in Schools

The implementation of nutritional guidelines for school meals, developed following a pilot scheme conducted in Northern Ireland during 2004/2005, is being rolled out across Northern Ireland. The implementation of the guidelines has been supported by the provision of additional funding to increase the minimum expenditure on the food content of meals. In addition, nutritional standards co-ordinators are being appointed in each of the Education Boards to support the implementation of the guidelines by the provision of training, guidance and support for the development of a whole school approach to food provision.

In addition, in line with developments in other parts of the UK, the Department of Education will shortly be consulting on the development of nutrient based standards for school meals and on standards to be applied to other forms of food provision within schools, such as tuck-shops and vending machines.

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

Cook It!

The Health Promotion Agency is overseeing a lottery funded, community based nutrition education programme targeted at lower income groups, called Cook It!. It aims to provide practical experience of food preparation using healthy low-cost ingredients, with an opportunity to sample the completed dishes, thereby removing the financial risk involved in experimenting with new dishes within restricted resources. Dietitians have been appointed as Cook it! co-ordinators in each of the four local Health and Social Services Boards. The co-ordinators facilitate a two-day training course for the Cook it! tutors and support them in delivering the six-week Cook it! programme to local community groups in their areas.

Diet and Nutrition Information

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety will shortly be commencing discussions with other government departments and agencies, including, in particular, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland, about options for satisfying the Department's information needs in relation to diet and nutrition from 2007 onwards.

Update from the Scottish Executive Health Department

Scottish Food and Health Council

The Scottish Food & Health Council met on 23 November 2005 to discuss matters arising from the Healthy Scotland convention held the previous day, Scottish Dietary Targets and workshops themed on communities, the NHS and education and skills.

The Council also met on 6 February 2006 to focus on obtaining final agreement on the short/medium term actions proposed within the council workshops.

Agendas and papers for all council meetings are publicised on the SE website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/health>.

Scottish Food and Health Alliance

NHS Health Scotland have appointed Ms Kate Barlow as the co-ordinator for the Healthy living Food and Health Alliance. 634 members have now joined the Healthy living Food and Health Alliance since December 2004. The fourth edition of the Alliance Newsletter was published in March 2006 and updated members with the latest news on Food and Health issues in Scotland.

The newsletters can be downloaded on the web at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/health/19133/17908>

National Accreditation of Health Promoting Schools

The Scottish Executive has set the target that all schools in Scotland should be health promoting schools by 2007. In order to meet this target a national accreditation scheme has been developed that will evaluate progress.

The Scottish Executive Education Department will shortly contact Directors of Education to inform them of the process and the Scottish Health Promoting Schools Unit is finalising the evaluation criteria and a pro forma for the Local Authority responses. The Scottish Health Promoting Schools Unit will provide secretariat and specialist support for the National Accreditation process.

Prevention 2010

Prevention 2010 is a preventative medicine approach delivered through NHS Primary Care in Community Health Partnerships (CHPs) to those at greatest risk of disease in deprived communities. It will identify people at particular risk of preventable ill health and provide access to services and treatments appropriate to their needs. It will also ensure that those with existing disease are having their conditions properly monitored and managed. Though NHS-led, it will be based on community planning priorities and delivered via a range of partners in the CHP.

Each NHS Board lead presented outline proposals for Prevention 2010 at a meeting held on 21 February 2006. The meeting provided an opportunity for local key stakeholders to discuss the proposals and hear about the national support available. The Scottish Executive (Health Improvement Strategy Division and the Chief Medical

Officer), ISD, NHS Health Scotland and the Managed Public Health Network will be the main sources of national support.

Nutritional Guidance for Early Years

The Scottish Executive has published Nutritional Guidance for the Early Years. The guidance is for providers of childcare for children aged 1 to 5 years who provide food (including snacks) and/or drinks. It will apply to a wide range of providers, including local authority nurseries, private nurseries, playgroups, childminders, toddler groups, crèches, school meal services and family centres, regardless of the length of time that children are being cared for.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/01/18153659/0>

Health Promotion, Nutrition and Schools Bill

Ministers are currently considering this Bill. SE will consult in 2006 to inform a range of possible options for policies including legislation that will impact on the health and nutrition of children and young people. This will build on the strengths of initiatives like Hungry for Success and help develop health promoting schools in Scotland. Options might include statutory nutritional standards for all food in schools and removal of full sugar soft drinks.

SEERAD Science and Research Group

SEERADs new strategy "Strategic Research for SEERAD: Environment, Biology and Agriculture" commits SEERAD to procure scientific research that is of high quality and strategically relevant to Scottish Ministers policy, legislative and enforcement functions.

Under its new strategy, SEERAD Science and Research Group will commission the Rowett to undertake a five year programme of research examining the role of diet in maintaining and improving health. The key health targets are the prevention of obesity, type II diabetes, cardiovascular disease and poor gut health.

Knowledge transfer and translation of knowledge for the benefit of the patient, policy and the food industry are key aspects of the new programme and overall strategy. The Rowett is being encouraged to continue and develop stakeholder and end-user interactions including interacting with the SACN.

This activity contributes to the Executives response to recommendation 71 of the Scottish Diet Action Plan "Research activity on nutritional aspects of health to improve dietary awareness should remain a high national priority. The Human Nutrition Research Forum, the Technology Foresight Programme, the Scottish Office Agriculture Environment and Fisheries Department and the Chief Scientists Office, Scottish Office Department of Health should continue to review research activity, facilitate access to information on funding and disseminate outcomes".

Update on Nutrition Work in Wales

Action on Food & Fitness for Children and Young People

The action plan takes forward the food and well-being and physical activity agendas for children and young people. It was issued for consultation between July and 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>

The action plan is currently being amended to take on board the responses to the consultation.

A conference is being held at the Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff on the 29th June 2006 to launch the post consultation action plan on Food and Fitness for Children and Young People, and to launch the consultation document on Food in Schools.

In order to address the second action point a Food in Schools Working Group has been established.

Food In Schools Group

A new group was set up in September 2005 to advise the Welsh Assembly Government on how to improve the quality of school meals. The Food in Schools Working Group brings together dietitians, head teachers, caterers and public health experts along with representatives from local authorities and the Food Standards Agency. Its main role is to advise the Assembly Government on the extent to which more stringent nutritional standards are introduced.

The Welsh Assembly Government has a 'whole school' approach to providing school meals. The Food in Schools Working Group will help take forward the Assembly Government's intentions to:

- Undertake a fact finding exercise to gather information on current practice in local authorities across Wales (by November 2005);
- Fund a study jointly with the Food Standards Agency to examine what food choices pupils actually make and why;
- Undertake a review of the Nutritional Standards for School Lunches (by April 2006);
- Produce a Food in Schools Action Plan and identify funding implications (post April 2006).

The Primary School Free Breakfast Initiative

The incremental introduction of the Primary School Free Breakfast Initiative started on a pilot basis in Communities First areas of 9 local authorities in September 2004. Primary schools in Communities First areas in all remaining local authority areas will be given the opportunity to participate in the second phase of this initiative from September 2005. New schools are being added each term until by January 2007, the policy will be rolled out to all maintained primary schools that want to participate.

This initiative is intended to help improve the health and concentration of pupils, to assist in the raising of standards of learning and attainment. It will involve parents but is not intended to replace breakfast already provided. It will allow all those, that, for whatever reason, have not had breakfast, to have one in school. An evaluation has been commissioned. Draft guidance has been produced for the pilot: <http://www.learning.wales.gov.uk/breakfast/guidance-e.htm>

A contract for the evaluation of the pilot has been awarded to Cardiff Institute of Society, Health and Ethics, Cardiff University to undertake a study of the preliminary phase of the Primary School Free Breakfast Initiative. Baseline data collection has been completed and follow-up measurements will be taken 4 months and 12 months later. A preliminary report on the work carried out with the first phase schools has been received. Positive feedback was received on issues such as: flexibility within the pilot phase to experiment; provision of detailed guidelines and the approach of officials to consultation; support received at a national and a local level; schools are attracting at least some of the pupils that are really in need; free breakfast is seen to support other school based health promoting activities; and staff perceive benefits for children attending the free breakfast scheme, such as improved behaviour, ability to concentrate and healthier diet. Concerns were expressed by some individuals in schools and LEAs on funding and workload. <http://www.learning.wales.gov.uk/breakfast/evaluation-e.htm>

Food and Fitness Grant Scheme

In July 2005 a new round of funding was made announced 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. In December 2005 25 small grants of up to £5,000 a year for two years were awarded to health, youth, community and voluntary organisations to develop projects of up to two year's duration in community or primary care settings.

Community Food Co-operatives

In April 2004 a two year pilot scheme to develop food co-operatives in Wales and to expand and direct a food network system throughout North Wales and South Wales commenced. A grant from the Inequalities in Health Fund is funding two Community Food Development Officers to develop a minimum of 26 sustainable food co-operatives, with associated links to schools and the communities. The pilot is focusing on socially disadvantaged communities. The project aims to develop and introduce sustainable practices to improve health through collaborative action, and direct efforts at a local level linking farmers to consumers.

65 food co-operatives have been set up to date. Two networking meetings involving over 200 volunteers were held in October. The pilot is currently being evaluated and a report will be available in March 2006. Funding has been secured for an additional two years and in the fourth year the programme will be expanded to include Mid and West Wales.

Research and Evaluation

Wales is participating in the UK wide infant feeding survey. This is the first year that Wales has been included in the survey and the questionnaire will be sent to all mothers of babies born in Wales during a five-week period August/September. First wave: babies aged 4-10 weeks, then second wave 4/5 months and third wave at 9 months.

The Welsh Assembly Government has funded a study jointly with the Food Standards Agency Wales to examine what food choices pupils actually make and why; what nutritious foods they would like to be provided and most importantly would eat; and what factors such as price, peer pressure etc influence their choice. A report will be published in March.