



**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**

#### *Obesity Bulletin*

- 1) The first edition of the Obesity bulletin was published on 4<sup>th</sup> May. The Bulletin is intended for Strategic Health Authorities, PCTs, Local Authorities, Government Offices of the Regions and other Government Departments. It highlights obesity as a serious and complex public health issue and the key role Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and local authorities have to play in its prevention, measurement and management. The Bulletin also provides an update on the Obesity PSA target and delivery strategy and highlights good practice. The Bulletin will be published twice yearly as part of our communications strategy.

#### *Cross-Government Obesity Campaign*

- 2) The Healthy Living Social Marketing programme will take an early focus on children under 11 and their influencers, primarily parents and carers. The DH is commissioning research to gain a thorough understanding of the public's lifestyle choices and challenges. This consumer insight, as well as scientific studies, will inform the strategy for tackling obesity in the UK. A scientific expert advisory group has been established to regularly review and contribute to the Programme's evidence base, plans and progress. 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 programme. We expect to publicly launch the Programme in early 2007.

#### *Guidance for Measuring Childhood Obesity*

- 3) Weighing and measuring of all primary school children in Reception Year and Year 6 is being completed this term. Guidance to PCTs covering data storage, handling, analysis, and reporting was published by DH on April 21. This follows good practice guidance issued on 12 January, covering issues such as the policy background, definitions, data collection options, core data, stigma and confidentiality.
- 4) PCTs will be required to return data to DH in September. The data will allow identification of local obesity hotspots, particularly schools and neighbourhoods with a high prevalence of obese and overweight children. Existing national programmes aimed at improving diet and increasing physical activity will, wherever possible, target children who are overweight and obese.

#### *Weight Loss Guide & Obesity Care Pathway*

- 5) Pending the comprehensive NICE guidance, a set of interim tools have been developed to support health professionals in primary care. The comprehensive package comprising materials for health professionals as well as information to be given to patients was launched in May 2006. It includes Obesity Care Pathways for adults and children and a supporting booklet with detailed information for health professionals. In addition, there

are tools to help GPs raise the rather sensitive issue of weight opportunistically with both adults and children.

### *Obesity Toolkit*

- 6) The Public Health Faculty and National Heart Forum have developed an **obesity toolkit** for use by local partners and DH contributed to the funding for printing and dissemination. The toolkit has been made available on the Faculties and NHF websites on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2006. The Care Pathway references the toolkit and provides a link to the Faculties websites.

### **Food promotion to children**

- 7) 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.
- 8) DH will be monitoring the change in balance of advertising and promotion of food to children and the findings will feed into a review in early 2007 to see whether there has been a change in the nature and balance looking at spend and volume data.
- 9) Ofcom published a consultation on options for restriction for television advertising of food and drink products to children on 28 March. Ofcom has announced that it has extended the end of its consultation from 6 June to 30 June to allow industry stakeholders time to consider updated analysis of a full year of 2005 data that it will publish at the end of May. Ofcom has said that although it still thinks a 9pm watershed to be disproportionate based on current evidence, it has now invited stakeholder views on this matter. There is a large body of support for a 9pm watershed amongst health and consumer groups.

### **Reform of the Welfare Food Scheme (UK wide)**

- 10) Phase 1 of Healthy Start was introduced in Devon and Cornwall on 28 November 05. Planning for phase 2 is underway and, subject to funding, Healthy Start is expected to be introduced across Great Britain in November 2006. The evaluation of the training in phase 1 for selected health professionals has been undertaken and options for training for phase 2 are currently being considered.
- 11) Colleagues in Northern Ireland intend to introduce provisions to mirror those of Healthy Start in Great Britain.
- 12) As part of Phase 1 of Healthy Start a rapid evaluation of the scheme and its processes is being undertaken to test the impact of the scheme and ensure the processes put in place adequately support the scheme.
- 13) It is expected that the current provision of Nursery milk will continue unchanged with the introduction of Phase 2 of Healthy Start.

- 14) There is a statutory responsibility to provide vitamin supplements to recipients of milk tokens and healthy start vouchers. At present, there is a limited stock of the children's vitamin drops but supplies should last for a few months. A contract for the manufacture of a bespoke vitamin product for children is expected to be finalised in the near future. A tender for a bespoke unlicensed vitamin tablet for women is expected to be undertaken in the near future.

### **Infant Feeding**

- 15) 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.
- 16) Work continues between DH and FSA in relation to the recent EU directive on infant formula and follow-on formula and the next meeting in Brussels is scheduled for June 2006.
- 17) 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)**

#### *New Food and Drink Standards*

- 18) New standards have two strands, 'food based' and 'nutrient based'. They are based on the recommendations by the School Meals Review Panel and School Food Trust, which advise restrictions as a means to encourage healthier eating.
- 19) From this September food-based standards will ensure that:
- school lunches are free from low quality meat products, fizzy drinks, crisps and chocolate or other confectionery;
  - high quality meat, poultry or oily fish is available on a regular basis;
  - pupils are served a minimum of two portions of fruit and vegetables with every meal; and
  - any deep-fried items are restricted to no more than two portions in a week.
- 20) Schools will be required to raise the bar further with even more stringent nutrient-based standards-stipulating the essential nutrients, vitamins and minerals, for school meals-introduced in primary schools by September 2008, and secondary schools by September 2009.
- 21) The new 'food-based' standards will ban economy burgers from the school lunch table; deep fried products such as chips will be limited to twice a week; and chocolate, crisps and sweetened fizzy drinks will no longer be available as part of school lunches.
- 22) On 19 May, DfES also announced similar 'food-based; standards for all other

school food outlets, e.g. tuck and vending. These standards will be introduced from September 2006, although Regulations will not come into force until September 2007. Government's expectations are that schools will work towards these standards from September 2006. The SFT will work with schools that have moved or are moving to providing healthier food in vending machines, tuck shops and with industry players, to identify effective ways of making changes to provision and educating pupils about making healthier choices

- 23) The Department is also taking forward a number of complementary initiatives all aimed at improving school meal provision and toughening up minimum school meal standards
- 24) A dedicated 'toolkit' to guide parents in the right direction has been published, which complements the 'Food in Schools' 'toolkit'. This will help parents make a start in working with their schools to change the food on offer. The primary purpose of the toolkit is to inform parents so that they are able to engage in local dialogue – talking to heads and governors – and take an active part in improving menus and developing healthy eating policies.
- 25) The development of new vocational qualifications for school caterers which will create many more training opportunities. A Vocational Related Qualification (VRQ) has already been accredited by the QCA and is available through a number of examining bodies. 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. We are reviewing and refining the VRQ to ensure that it meets the new standards.
- 26) We are aware that there are already well over a hundred qualifications related to food, nutrition and catering which are funded by the LSC. We are working with food and education experts to ascertain which of these qualifications, or units from them, are relevant to school caterers. Where we find there is a need for a specific skill, which does not form part of one of these qualifications, we will work with our external partners to develop a unit or qualification to cover that area.
- 27) We are looking at including such units in the Training and Development Agency for School's nationally accredited vocational qualification for school support staff. This will enable progression from Level 1 to Levels 2 and 3 and will also help school caterers to feel that they are part of the whole school team.
- 28) 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. This guidance will help those schools locked into long term contracts to vary those contacts.
- 29) From September 2005, as part of their routine evaluation of school performance, Ofsted make an assessment of school food. They comment on the school's success in promoting healthier eating and drinking and will report on any issues which arise out of the self assessment or as a result of their inspection visit.

### **Healthy Schools (Joint DH/DFES)**

- 30) 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. The numbers are steadily increasing over time and a lot of work is underway to bring the schools up to the new more rigorous standard – which includes a requirement to meet healthy eating criteria.
- 31) We have worked with the School Food Trust to develop a needs assessment sheet, which Programmes are filling out to give an indication of support schools need to transform school food. The School Food Trust intend to use this to identify how funding should be channelled through Health Education Partnerships to Healthy Schools to better support the transformation in school food. In addition, Healthy Schools Programme Coordinators are helping to disseminate the SFT new school food standards guidance to schools.
- 32) The Healthy Schools Delivery Unit is looking at how we can strengthen the Programme to better support the Obesity PSA. In particular, this is likely to involve better strengthening universal activities such as resources and training to better address Obesity, and examining ways that we may provide more targeted support.

### **5 A DAY Programme**

- 33) 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.
- 34) We hope to launch composite criteria & guidance on handfals later this year.
- 35) The School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme continues to provide all children aged 4-6 in state funded primary schools with a free piece of fruit or vegetable each school day. Future developments around the scheme include work with the Healthy Schools Team, DfES and School Food Trust to identify ways to integrate the scheme more closely with other school based food initiatives.

### **Reformulation**

- 36) 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, saturated fat and sugar in prepared and processed food and drink.
- 37) Targets for salt in key product categories were published in March 2006 have been set to help 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.
- 38) The Food Standards Agency is working with industry to identify appropriate strategies to achieve population intake reductions in saturated fat and energy. It is expected that a strategy will be launched for consultation in Autumn 2006.

## **Public Procurement**

- 39) DH has worked with the NHS, the Prison Service and the MoD to raise the profile of the need for appropriate nutritional content in foods provided.
- 40) The FSA has commissioned work to establish nutritional standards for foods served in institutions. This will include sample menus and food based standards appropriate to different population groups. These guidelines will be available later in 2006.

## **Physical Activity**

### *Nice Public Health Intervention Guidance*

- 41) The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence Public Health Intervention Guidance no 2. "Four commonly used methods to increase physical activity: brief interventions in primary care, exercise referral schemes, pedometers and community-based exercise programme for walking and cycling" was published on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006. Implementation advice was published by NICE in May 2006 to support the implementation of the public health guidance.

### *Local Exercise Action Pilots*

- 42) Ten Local Exercise Action Pilots (LEAP) have been underway across England (jointly funded by DH, the Countryside Agency and Sport England) to identify effective interventions to increase population physical activity levels. The pilots came to an end on 31 January 2006. A short summary of the interim evaluation findings was disseminated through regional sport and physical activity networks in February 2006 and is available on the sponsors' websites. A final report is expected in September 2006.

### *Links between sports club & health*

- 43) Caroline Flint launched the Football and Health Partnership Guide at the *Football Partnership Conference – The Power of Football* at Tottenham Hotspur FC in May 2005. A series of regional seminars that commenced in Leeds in November 2005 and are running through to the summer, are being used to encourage other sports to forge partnerships with the NHS and local Government. DH is also funding the Business in the Community 'Clubs that Count' programme that recognises and celebrates community health development work undertaken by professional sports clubs and a 'Healthy Stadia' whole systems and settings approach has been supported by the North West Public Health Group.

### *Guide to provision of free swimming for local authorities*

- 44) 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*

- 45) 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*

- 46) 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*

- 47) 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*

- 48) DH has developed a short questionnaire (the general practice physical activity questionnaire, or GPPAQ) 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 and will be available for download from the DH website. It was reproduced as an Appendix to the NICE implementation advice, published in May 2006, to support implementation of the NICE public Health intervention guidance on physical activity (see above).

*National Step-o-Meter Programme*

- 49) 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.

50) 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.

51) Training began in May 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 spring 2007.