



Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

**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**

- 1) 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 were published in February 2006. 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.
- 2) 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.
- 3) Research papers and consultation reports developed during the Fit Futures process are available at <http://www.investingforhealthni.gov.uk/fitfutures.asp>

### **Nutrition Matters**

- 4) 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**

- 5) 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 coordinators 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.
- 6) In addition, in line with developments in other parts of the UK, the Department of Education is now 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***

- 7) 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 is nearing the end of its fourth and final year as a pilot, 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)

### **Cook It!**

- 8) 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***

- 9) 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**

### **SEERAD Science and Research Group**

#### **SEERAD Research**

- 10) SEERAD's new strategy for the funding of strategic research "Strategic research for SEERAD: Environment, Biology and Agriculture, 2005-2010" was published in January 2005. Full details of the strategy are available on <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/01/20526/49994>
- 11) Under its new strategy, SEERAD has adopted a programme approach and research is provided through four main programmes of strategic research to underpin policy development : Profitable and Sustainable Agriculture - Plants; Profitable and Sustainable Agriculture - Animals; Environment - land Use and Rural Stewardship and Impacts on Human Health. Within these four programmes, SEERAD specified a number of outputs and outcomes that were expected from the research in a number of detailed work package specifications. SEERAD Main Research Providers (the Macaulay Institute, the Moredun Institute, the Rowett Research Institute, the Scottish Agricultural College and the Scottish crop Research institute) have provided research programmes in response to these specifications and this work has been commissioned since April 1 2006. Full details of this work can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Research/15597/23150>
- 12) Improved Nutritional quality of primary products is one possible out put from underpinning work being done in work packages concerned with barley genetics, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Research/15597/WP011> potato genetics <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Research/15597/WP012> and soft fruit genetics <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Research/15597/WP013>
- 13) There is also the potential in the longer term for work at the Rowett Research Institute to be linked into livestock breeding for nutritional quality.
- 14) The majority of work concerned with the impact of diet on human health is contained in programme 4 and provided by the Rowett Research Institute. Further details on this work can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Research/15597/23154> and this programme includes work on the role of the diet in obesity prevention and management <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Research/15597/WP042> Researchers at the Rowett are in early dialogue with local researchers involved in the Counterweight programme through their involvement in ACERO (Aberdeen Centre for Energy regulation and Obesity) and closer collaboration might be possible in the future.
- 15) As part of its new strategy, SEERAD is moving towards the funding of more applied and policy relevant research. It is important therefore that the programmes of research evolve including developing greater understanding of the context in which research is undertaken. The Rowett Research Institute is being strongly encouraged to broaden its interactions with and widen its understanding of

nutrition policy and associated information and activities in the area of nutrition. Peer review of their work proposals said that they should have greater awareness of the work of SACN and this information has been fed back to them.

- 16) SEERAD is also a co-funder of a number of Defra LINK schemes including the recently launched Food Quality Innovation LINK programme which has an increased emphasis on nutritional quality of food.

### **Counterweight**

- 17) Prevention 2010 is a preventative medicine approach delivered through NHS Primary Care in Community Health Partnerships 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. One of the risk factors to be tackled is obesity and to do so we are supporting those NHS Boards involved in the first phase of Prevention 2010 to adopt the Counterweight approach. This is in the very early stages of roll out and we will be happy to provide further information at a later date.

### **NHS Scotland Food and Nutrition adviser**

- 18) The Scottish Executive has appointed Ms Helen Davidson to the post of NHS Food and Nutrition Advisor for a period of twelve months from April 2006. Ms Davidson is a Chief Dietician within NHS Greater Glasgow. She will be working with the Food Standards Agency and many other partners to develop nutrient standards for food in Scottish hospitals, nutrient specifications and also developing guidelines for their implementation.

### **Consultation on the Schools (Nutrition and Health Promotion) (Scotland) Bill**

- 19) Plans to build on Scotland's success in improving school meals have been published in a consultation paper - **Improving the Health and Nutrition of Scotland's Children**. (See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/113711/0027629.pdf> )
- 20) Ministers plan to introduce this Bill to Parliament in Autumn 2006 and are inviting written responses to the consultation paper by 31 July 2006.

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

- 21) The fifth meeting of the Scottish Food and Health Council took place on 24 March 2006. This meeting heard feedback from the Scottish Diet Action Plan Independent Review panel.

### **Joint Councils' Meeting on Obesity**

22) The Scottish Food & Health Council and Scottish Physical Activity & Health Council will meet together in Edinburgh on 12 June 2006. The meeting will be led by the Deputy Health Minister and will focus on obesity prevention.

23) Papers for previous meetings of the Food & Health Council can be found at:  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/health/19133/17905>

24) Papers for previous meetings of the Physical Activity & Health Council can be found at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/health/Introduction/pacouncil>

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

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

- 25) 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>
- 26) The action plan is currently being amended to take on board the responses to the consultation.
- 27) A conference is being held at the Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff on the 29<sup>th</sup> 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.
- 28) In order to address the second action point a Food in Schools Working Group has been established.

### **Food In Schools Group**

- 29) 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, headteachers, 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.
- 30) 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;
1. Undertake a review of the Nutritional Standards for School Lunches (by April 2006);
  2. Produce a Food in Schools Action Plan and identify funding implications (post April 2006).
- 31) The group's report 'Appetite for Life' will be published for consultation at the conference on June 29<sup>th</sup>.

### **Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes**

- 32) The Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes (WNHSS) is a network of local schemes, which are partnerships between health and education services. Co-ordinators help schools to identify what they need to do to become healthier and help them to implement relevant actions. Schools involved in the scheme look at a whole range of health issues including just food and health and physical activity. It is important that schools also address mental health issues, which are interlinked with actions on nutrition and physical activity.
- 33) There are local healthy school schemes in every area of Wales, with all schemes accredited as part of WNHSS. Over 1200 schools are actively involved in local healthy school schemes. Targets have been set to extend the WNHSS to all LEA-maintained schools by March 2010.

### **The Primary School Free Breakfast Initiative**

- 34) 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>

### **Community Food Co-operatives**

- 35) In April 2004 a two-year pilot scheme to develop community food co-operatives in North and Southeast Wales commenced. The key focus of the pilot was to supply, from locally produced sources as far as possible, quality affordable fruit and vegetable to disadvantaged communities through the development of sustainable local food distribution networks. A grant from the Inequalities in Health Fund funded two Community Food Development Officers to develop a minimum of 26 sustainable food co-operatives. The pilot focused on socially disadvantaged communities. The project aimed to develop and introduce sustainable practices to improve health through collaborative action, and direct efforts at a local level linking farmers to consumers. A total of 77 food co-operatives were set up in the two-year period.
- 36) The pilot has been evaluated by Cardiff Institute of Society, Health and Ethics and it concluded that most people buying from the co-ops were eating more fruit and vegetables. Other benefits highlighted included changes to the quality of social lives and connections to other people, perceived improvements to health and

understanding of health related issues. Changes in attitudes to fruit and vegetables were reported for other beneficiaries: in families, in schools and in the community as a whole.

- 37) 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.

## **Infant Feeding**

### **Breastfeeding Awareness Week**

- 38) Support was provided for Breastfeeding Awareness Week. The title for the week in Wales in 2006 was:

*Babies all over Wales love their mother's milk Mae babanod ar draws Cymru yn hoffi llaeth mam.*

As in previous years, posters were provided along with other promotional items for use by breastfeeding support groups. A number of events were held across Wales to raise awareness.

### **Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme**

- 39) On Monday 15th May a new Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme in Wales was launched. The scheme is open to local businesses that provide food or drink, hairdressers, shops, libraries and museums, community centres and health centres, in fact anywhere open to the general public. Several small local schemes have been set up in Wales and the Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme will bring them together with one symbol. Once local businesses have agreed to the conditions of the scheme, they can display an eye-catching sticker, and demonstrate to mothers that they are valued and that they will find an easy, comfortable welcome.

### **Data Collection**

- 40) The first Breastfeeding Statistics Bulletin was published in January 2006. This gives details of the numbers of mother's breastfeeding in Wales, drawn from a variety of sources. [www.wales.gov.uk/breastfeeding](http://www.wales.gov.uk/breastfeeding)