



Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

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

Agenda Item: 9

Please see attached paper for information.

DH Update on Nutrition Initiatives

NB: Initiatives apply to England only unless otherwise stated

Obesity

- 1) Currently we are in the process of refreshing the PSA Delivery Plan and development of a Communications Plan.
- 2) Our new report, *Forecasting Obesity to 2010* was published in August 2006 and it sets out the likely increases in obesity in adults and children without intervention.
- 3) The next edition of Obesity bulletin will be published in November 2006.
- 4) Weighing and measuring of all primary school children in Reception Year and Year 6 was completed last term. PCTs are required to return data to DH by 29th September. A review of the measurement exercise is being carried out in order to refine the measurement process for PCTs in the future. This is being carried out concurrently with a study of parent's and children's attitudes towards the weighing and measuring exercise and will review the content and type of feedback parents would prefer.
- 5) The DH Healthy Living Social Marketing Programme (HLSMP) team has now commissioned consumer insight research to gain a thorough understanding of the public's lifestyle choices and challenges. This consumer insight, as well as scientific and stakeholder input, will inform the strategy for tackling obesity in the UK, which will be developed by the end of the year. The HLSMP Expert Review Group is due to meet on 10th October to input into the strategy development process. All stakeholders, including other government departments, the food and leisure industries and Non-Government Organisations, will also be giving feedback before the strategy is finalised. We still expect to publicly launch the Programme in early 2007.

Food promotion to children

- 6) Ofcom received over 1200 responses to its consultation that closed on 30 June and an alternative option was put forward by FAU, FDF and ISBA that has the broad support of broadcasters, advertisers and the food and drink industries. Ofcom has been analysing all responses over the summer and its recommendation is due shortly. Ofcom anticipates that new restrictions on the volume/scheduling of TV advertising of food and drink to children will come into effect at the start of 2007.
- 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. The next meeting is on 13 October.
- 8) DH has recently awarded the contract for the provision of market research and data collection of current spend and volume trends in food and drink advertising and promotion to children to Thomson Intermedia Plc. The findings will feed into

a review in 2007 to see what shifts there have been in the nature and balance of promotions.

Reform of the Welfare Food Scheme (UK wide)

9) 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 it has been decided that the training for phase 2 will be a multifaceted approach including information packs for health care professionals, articles in professional journals, CPD training packages as well as a national launch event in London planned for early November.

10) Colleagues in Northern Ireland intend to introduce provisions to mirror those of Healthy Start in Great Britain which means that the Healthy Start vouchers will be able to be used at participating retailers across the UK.

11) As part of Phase 1 of Healthy Start a rapid evaluation of the scheme and its processes has been undertaken to test the impact of the scheme and ensure the processes put in place adequately support the scheme. Some key points that have emerged are:

- We need to engage senior managers in thinking strategically about the role of Healthy Start so that they can provide better support to health professionals by putting its delivery in the context of broader national and local public health initiatives, and nominate local “champions”.
- We must emphasise in our materials that pregnant women under 18 years old can get vouchers until their baby is born, regardless of their income.
- We must communicate more clearly to beneficiaries that Healthy Start is replacing the Welfare Food Scheme and that they will receive new Healthy Start vouchers instead of milk tokens.
- Health professionals could do more to signpost locally relevant classes, programmes and initiatives that complement breastfeeding, healthy eating and lifestyle messages underpinning Healthy Start. This will reinforce the advice and direct support they are already providing.

12) There is a statutory responsibility to provide vitamin supplements to recipients of milk tokens and healthy start vouchers. At present, the children’s vitamin drops Abidec are being used. A contract for the manufacture of a bespoke Healthy Start vitamin product for children is expected to be finalised in the near future. A tender for a bespoke unlicensed Healthy Start vitamin tablet for women is expected to be undertaken in the Autumn with the product being available in the Spring.

Infant Feeding

13) Guidance has been issued to the Health Care Professionals about the withdrawal of goat’s milk based infant milk from 17th September 2006. This is because infant milk based on goat’s milk has not been approved for use in Europe by EFSA.

School Food (DfES led, support from DH/FSA)***New Food and Drink Standards***

14) On 4th September 2006 Education Secretary, Alan Johnson, announced a major new package of measures and additional funding to complement the beginning of the new school food standards. The package includes:

- £240m to continue to subsidise healthy ingredients until 2011 after the current £220m transitional fund runs out in 2007/08. This will ensure that all schools have the money they need to continue to provide healthy meals to everyone. A recent School Food Trust survey showed that spending per plate last term was already 52p for primary schools and 67p for secondary schools.
- Plans to set up a network of regional training schools for school cooks to improve their cookery skills. Experts on cooking dishes that meet the new tough standards will train, support and mentor school cooks, including supporting them in their own school. These include:
 - The establishment of a network of training kitchens for school catering staff to act as centres of excellence.
 - Further work on developing this proposal currently underway including looking at how this network would fit into existing provision in schools, colleges and by private providers.
 - £2m in 2007-08 to support the establishment of this network.
 - New catering qualifications available from this September. Catering staff will be able to take units at levels 2 and 3 in food safety, preparing and cooking healthier meals and the development and introduction of recipes by taking units which is added to the Support Work in School qualification.
 - These formal qualifications will be supported by training materials from people first including a DVD with recipe demonstrations which will be available later in the autumn. The SFT is also developing Teacher's TV programme and holding a series of Cooks' Conferences to help motivate and support the development of a network of school cooks.
- Plans to give every secondary school pupil an entitlement to learn to cook from 2008. All pupils who wish to will now be able to take lessons on basic cookery skills allowing them to leave school with a "licence to cook" giving them knowledge to prepare a range of healthy meals.
- Plans to improve the quality of school kitchens, including: making capital funding available for building school kitchens where there is need; issuing new design guidance on kitchens and dining areas to be published early

2007; reinforcing kitchens as a priority in all other building guidance; and a planned review of School Premises Regulations to include a greater specification on standards that kitchens should meet.

- Increasing tendering opportunities for small and local producers – the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs will work to increase their capacity to bid successfully for contracts to supply schools with food, in particular by helping them to collaborate in consortia and with the rest of the food chain.

Healthy Schools (Joint DH/DFES)

15) The Healthy Schools Delivery Unit are working with the Obesity team to strengthen the Programme to better support the Obesity PSA. This will involve strengthening the healthy eating and physical activity themes and providing guidance to Healthy Schools co-ordinators to help them work with schools and PCTs to make the best use of their local obesity data sets.

5 A DAY Programme

16) 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.

17) We hope to launch composite criteria & guidance on handfuls in 2007.

18) 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

19) 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.

20) Targets for salt in key product categories were published in March 2006 and have been set to help achieve the public health target to reduce population salt intakes to 6g by 2010. The Food Standards Agency are working with industry to agree a self reporting mechanism against the targets and these will be subject to review in light of industry progress in 2008, with the aim of driving them down further wherever possible.

21) The Food Standards Agency is working with industry to identify appropriate strategies to achieve population intake reductions in saturated fat and energy.

Public Procurement

- 22) 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.
- 23) The FSA has commissioned work to develop nutrient based and food based guidance for publicly funded premises which will support cross-Government action on diet and food procurement. Guidance will be issued for different settings and is expected to be available later in 2006. Standards for food served in Care Homes will be incorporated into a DH consultation on care standards to be launched in late September / early October.

Physical Activity

Inter-ministerial Group on Physical Activity

- 24) Caroline Flint has been asked by the Prime Minister to work across government to support the public to become more physically active and increase their fitness. Initially her focus will be on emphasising the importance of ministers championing work that is already underway - for example on school travel and on sports facilities.
- 25) In order to take this forward she will lead an Inter-ministerial Group on Physical Activity made up of DCMS, DCLG, DfT, DfES and delivery bodies such as Sport England. The group will encourage a 'Small Change Big Difference' approach by looking at the ways the public can be supported to make minor changes that will make a long term difference to their health.
- 26) There will be a focus on adults who are least active population, building physical activity into daily routines, for example by walking and cycling (active travel) and the role of employers. The group will also explore options for delivery mechanisms, possibly making use of the existing structures such as Regional Sports Boards, and how to optimise data collection mechanisms.

2012 Health Legacy

- 27) **'Health and 2012'**, the national delivery plan for the London 2012 health legacy was published 2 weeks ago for public consultation. The main focus of the delivery plan is *Physical Activity and Healthier Lifestyles*. The plan contains details of a range of existing DH programmes e.g. from *Choosing Health* that could benefit from an association with the Games, as well as more aspirational plans linked directly to the Games

Nice Public Health Intervention Guidance

- 28) 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 31st March 2006. Public Health Programme Guidance on physical

activity and the environment is due for publication in September 2007, with public consultation scheduled for March/April and May/June of next year. New Public Health Programme Guidance for Promotion of physical activity in children will be taken forward as part of the “12 wave”.

Links between sports club & health

- 29) The last of a series of regional seminars to encourage sports to forge partnerships with the NHS and local Government will be held in the South West in October. 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. In support of this agenda, the Amateur Rowing Association has published a Rowing and Health document and we have worked closely with Arts Council England to produce a Dance and Health Brochure, which sets out how dance can be used to communicate a range of health messages.

Activity in Schools

- 30) We have commissioned a Schools Physical Activity Toolkit to bring together all the different strands of physical activity in schools. Its aim is to help school physical activity providers such as Healthy Schools co-ordinators and School Sport co-ordinators deliver their targets.
- 31) The National School Sport Strategy is targeting action through School Sport Partnerships to increase sports participation by the groups that traditionally have been marginalised by sport e.g., increasing girls’ participation in PE lessons by placing emphasis on communication, teamwork, problem solving and health-related exercise and creating a women’s fitness group (which includes mother and daughter sessions)

Schools on the Move

- 32) 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 has been 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.