



Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

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

**Agenda Item: 9**

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 Ministerial Group on Public Health (MGPH) established the Fit Futures taskforce to examine options for tackling childhood obesity. Following the establishment of the taskforce and developments nationally, a PSA target was set to stop the rise in obesity in children by 2010. Responsibility for the target is shared with DHSSPS by the Department of Education and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure.
- 2) The taskforce report was published in March 2006 and includes over seventy cross-departmental recommendations designed to deliver the PSA target. A response to the Fit Futures report, including a cross-departmental implementation plan is currently under development and will be presented to the next meeting of the Ministerial Group on Public Health at the end of October.
- 3) Progress has already been made in relation to the delivery of some of the Fit Futures recommendations. For example, regulations on school development planning now require schools to consider arrangements for promoting the health and well-being of staff and pupils as part of the school development planning process. There has also been a major investment by the Department of Education in improving the nutritional status of school meals. All of the Health and Social Services Boards have submitted integrated obesity prevention plans covering the planned activity of Boards, Trusts and Investing for Health Partnerships and meetings have been held with lead officials to discuss priorities for action in light of the Fit Futures recommendations.
- 4) Liaison is also continuing with officials in the Department of Health in relation to dimensions of the Fit Futures report that are being progressed at a UK-wide level, such as advertising of food to children.
- 5) It is anticipated that the Fit Futures implementation plan will also include a commitment to publish new strategic frameworks on nutrition and physical activity.
- 6) Research papers and consultation reports developed during the Fit Futures process are available at <http://www.investingforhealthni.gov.uk/fitfutures.asp>

### **Nutrition Matters**

- 7) 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**

- 8) 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. Associate inspectors have also been appointed to carry out inspections of food in schools as part of the school inspection process.
- 9) 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.

### **Cook It!**

- 10) 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**

- 11) 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.

### **Healthy Start**

- 12) In November 2006, in line with developments elsewhere in the UK, the new Healthy Start Scheme will be introduced in Northern Ireland.

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

### **Food & Fitness – Promoting Healthy eating and Physical Activity for Children and Young People in Wales Implementation Plan**

13) The five-year implementation plan was launched by the First Minister at the Food and Fitness Conference in June attended by over 400 delegates.

14) The plan sets out a wide range of actions under 7 key headings:

- Extend the Welsh network of Healthy School Schemes;
- Improve the food and drink consumed throughout the school day;
- Provide high quality PE, health related exercise and practical cookery skills;
- Provide an environment that will encourage children and young people to access opportunities for physical activity and healthier foods;
- Develop skills to enable children and young people to take part in physical activity and prepare healthier foods;
- Develop and deliver training on food and fitness for those working with children and young people;
- Ensure that actions are evidence-based, or innovative with evaluation, and that findings are shared.

15) The plan reinforces the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to the integration of nutrition and physical activity policies and programmes, where appropriate.

For further information:

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/health/improvement/food/action/?lang=en>

16) Leaflet providing supportive information on nutrition and physical activity distributed to all parents of 7 to 11 year olds by Wales Centre for Health.

### **Appetite for Life**

17) Appetite for Life, the report of the expert Food in Schools Working Group was launched for consultation at the Food & Fitness conference in June. It contains 41 proposals to improve the food and drink served throughout the whole school day in Welsh schools. Consultation closes at the end of October.

For further information:

[http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/education\\_and\\_skills\\_consult/education\\_and\\_skills\\_consul/appetite?lang=en](http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/education_and_skills_consult/education_and_skills_consul/appetite?lang=en)

### **Cooking Bus**

18) A Cooking Bus has been sponsored by the Welsh Assembly Government, through Design Dimension Educational Trust, as part of its programme of work outlined in the Food & Fitness - Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity For Children and Young People in Wales implementation plan. The Cooking Bus is a

specially designed mobile trailer that provides 4-fully fitted kitchens complete with qualified teachers. The Bus visits schools and provides cookery lessons for 16 pupils at a time and one teacher training session at each school.

- 19) It will focus on visiting primary schools in Communities First areas which are part of the Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes, and which are already working on healthy eating and physical activity. One session at every venue will be used to help parents of young children to develop their cooking skills.

### **Increasing Community Dietetic Capacity**

- 20) Grants totalling £1.2 million are being provided to NHS Trusts across Wales to increase dietetic capacity in the community through utilising dietitian's expertise to train and develop community workers and / or peer educators, volunteers working with people in the community on food and nutrition skills.

### **Nutrition in Hospitals**

- 21) A Welsh Health Circular is being issued to re enforce Welsh Risk Pool Standard No. 23 - Nutrition and Catering, in particular Assessment Areas 9, 10, 11 and 12, which refer to hospital based patients and issues around patients nutritional assessment, re- assessment, mealtimes and feeding. The Assembly Government will be initiating further work on nutrition in hospitals. The Chief Nursing Officer is to chair a group to look at the implications of attempting to apply similar recommendations to those in *Appetite for Life* to NHS settings. This will include issues of food provided through all onsite outlets for patient's staff and visitors.

### **Infant Feeding**

#### **Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme**

- 22) A Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme in Wales has been launched and the first awards made. 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. The scheme will be assessed by mothers in their own areas with annual monitoring to ensure compliance

#### **Baby Friendly Initiative**

- 23) Of the 28 hospitals in Wales nine have obtained the Baby Friendly Award and four a certificate of commitment. Funding has been provided to support training courses at half price for Welsh delegates. The UNICEF Baby Friendly Moving Forward: Sustaining Change conference will be held in Cardiff 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> November.

**Publications**

24) New leaflets have been distributed by the Welsh Assembly outlining methods for safer bottle feeding. These include advice to make up bottles of artificial milk one at a time with particular emphasis on the very young and vulnerable baby. Guidance on sterilising is also of use to mothers who are feeding their babies expressed breast milk. The Pregnancy Book and Birth to Five are currently being revised and are being issued to all mothers in Wales.

**Physical Activity****Exercise Referral Scheme**

25) The Welsh Assembly Government is currently developing plans to roll out exercise referral across Wales. A good practice guide has been produced building on best practice in Wales. This will complement the programme which will carry out a randomised controlled study to investigate the effectiveness of this intervention in increasing physical activity and improving health together with a health economy study; a national training programme for exercise instructors and support for the development of schemes in local areas.

## Update from the Scottish Executive Health Department

### REVIEW OF THE SCOTTISH DIET ACTION PLAN (SDAP)

- 1) The Scottish Food and Health Council commissioned an independent panel to review the SDAP. The panel published its report on 11 September alongside the Food Standards Agency Scotland's report on progress towards meeting the Scottish Dietary Targets. The purpose of the Scottish Diet Action Plan review is to examine the implementation of the plan, what has been achieved and what remains to be done. The review identifies impacts and strategic priorities for improving Scotland's diet in the future.
- 2) For a full copy of the SDAP Review, see <http://www.healthscotland.com/understanding/evaluation/policy-reviews/review-diet-action.aspx#report>
- 3) For a full copy of the Report on progress towards the Scottish Dietary Targets, see <http://www.food.gov.uk/scotland/scotnut/dietarytargetsscotland/>
- 4) The review highlights a number of areas where substantial progress has been made. There are 4 areas of particular success : improving breastfeeding rates (70% of Scottish mothers now initiate breastfeeding compared to 38% in 1993); improving food and diet in schools; supporting community food initiatives and producing health education resources and creating increased awareness among the population and the media.
- 5) The review assessed implementation in some areas as minimal. These include: reducing the production of dairy fat and finding non food uses for butter fat; provide basic training in nutrition for those the food industry and hospitality management and increasing consumer demand for fruit and vegetable.

The review notes:

*“Despite the considerable progress made with implementing the SDAP recommendations, these actions have not in themselves made a significant impact on population trends and in food consumption and nutrient intakes over the last 10 years”*

- 6) The Review considered 4 possible explanations: failure of policy; failure of implementation; consumer resistance to dietary change and inadequate monitoring. None of these explanations provides a complete answer.
- 7) The Review proposes 4 themes for future work:
  - Closer integration between the policy goals of improving Scotland's diet related health and those of social justice, sustainable development and agriculture. - calls for a new Sustainable Food and Health Policy (SFHP) that

brings together food production, supply and consumption to meet the policy goals of sustainability and public health.

- Centrality of the principle of equality - emphasises that reducing inequalities in health outcomes must be at the heart of a future SFHP policy and subsequent actions.
- Re-establish grounds for engagement with the food industry in Scotland so that public health and sustainability are key drivers for food production and supply
- Develop new governance structures, institutions and leadership at all levels - the already strong policy commitment to food-related health improvement needs to be accompanied by leadership at community-level and at international (especially European) level. National and local health improvement strategies require clear signals from government together with engagement at all levels.

### **SDAP Review Conclusions**

- Scotland's current national dietary profile is still unacceptable and the pace of improvement too slow.
- With obesity levels rising fast, the case for step change is strong.
- There is already a strong commitment to cross-government action to improve health and sustainability, as well as a strong political will to achieve economic, social and health improvements in a devolved Scotland.
- Forging alliances across government and civil society, and at national, local and international level, are essential.
- The entire food system must be shifted in a more health-enhancing direction. This will take time.
- Panel believes that Scotland has much in its favour to help tackle the problems, not least the political commitment to health improvement and sustainable development goals, with the foresight and courage to take legislative measures where necessary.
- Scotland has the opportunity to lead the way on food and nutrition policy as a small nation in Europe, building on the lessons learned over the past ten years.

### **Schools (Nutrition and Health Promotion) (Scotland) Bill**

- 8) This Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament in September 2006. The Bill will:
  - place a duty on the Scottish Ministers and local authorities to endeavour to ensure that all their schools are health promoting environments;

- place a duty on local authorities to ensure that food and drinks supplied in schools meet defined nutritional requirements;
- give local authorities the power to provide children with food and drinks (within defined nutritional requirements) at any time of the day, either free of charge or subject to a charge; and
- place a duty on local authorities to promote the uptake of school meals, in particular free school meals, and a duty to ensure those receiving free school meals can do so anonymously, as far as is practicable.

### **Scottish Prison Service (SPS)**

- 9) The prison service is making steady progress to improve food provision. It has worked in partnership with SEHD, environmental health experts, Foods Standards Agency Scotland and prison caterers to develop standards and monitoring methods. Inspectorate reports in the last year are more positive. There is investment in food delivery from prison kitchens, and further investment is planned. The SPS is recruiting a 'leader' on catering who will encourage best practice and share experience with other public sector caterers. [By March 2007] SPS will ensure that prisoners can choose nourishing food in routine menus, suitable for a diverse range of requirements.

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

- 10) The sixth meeting of the Scottish Food and Health Council took place on 12 June 2006. This was a joint meeting with the Scottish Physical Activity and Health Council and focused on obesity prevention. In the afternoon session each Council focused on its Priorities for Action for 2006-10.

- 11) Papers for the latest meeting can be found at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/health/19133/17905>

### **Healthy living Award**

- 12) The Healthy living Award Scheme (which replaces the Scottish Health Choices Award Scheme) was launched to the trade in August and to the public in October. This award will be open to both private and public sector eating establishments and will be promoted by the Healthy living “apple” brand.
- 13) Establishments must make sure that at least 50% of the food served is labelled as *healthy living choices* and that they have an appropriate sales promotion and marketing strategy which works alongside the general principles of the Healthy living Award and supports healthier eating.