



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

Agenda Item: 8

Please see attached paper for information.

National Diet and Nutrition Survey

- 1) The contract for the NDNS Rolling programme has been awarded to a consortium led by the National Centre for Social Research and comprising the MRC Human Nutrition Research and the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at the Royal Free and University College London Medical School. The core rolling programme will comprise a sample of 1000 people per year covering all ages from 1½ years upwards and representative of the UK including Northern Ireland. Preparations are underway for pilot work to begin in March 2007 and if successful fieldwork for the core rolling programme, covering the whole UK, should commence in Spring 2008. Results would then begin to become available from 2009. A SACN sub-group will continue to provide expert advice on the development of methodology for the rolling programme.

Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey

- 2) Publication of the report of the survey of low income/materially deprived consumers (covering both adults and children) is now expected in Spring 2007.

Salt Work

- 3) The Agency is committed to reducing salt intakes and has agreed, in line with SACN recommendations, a long-term aim to achieve the average salt intake to 6g for adults by 2010.

Salt Reduction Targets and Self Reporting Framework

- 4) With voluntary salt reduction targets in place since March, the Agency has been working to develop a voluntary self-reporting framework for industry, which will be one method of measuring industry progress towards meeting these targets. A series of meetings were held with stakeholders during the second half of 2006 to discuss the data that industry is willing to provide. Ultimately, the data collected needs to provide sufficient information to enable the Agency to track progress towards achieving the targets without imposing an excessive administrative burden on industry.
- 5) During discussions it became clear that there were different views on the types and amounts of data that could be provided to the FSA for the purpose of the self-reporting framework, although it remains the Agency's preference to receive sales weighted average levels of salt/sodium in products as this provides meaningful data which can be related to average population intakes. Since the meetings were held, a data collection tool and guidelines for completion have been developed, taking into account the points and issues raised by stakeholders. These documents will be circulated to stakeholders early in 2007 to obtain their views. The framework will be finalised and published in time for the first set of data collection to commence in the spring.

Public Awareness

- 6) The Agency launched a major public health campaign on salt in 2004 with a supporting salt website (www.salt.gov.uk). The Agency is continuing to develop phase 3 of its consumer education campaign which will be launched in March

2007. As well as a range of media and press advertising routes, the Agency will be working closely with a wide range of stakeholders – both industry organisations and NGOs – to increase the impact of the key messages.

- 7) To ensure that the messages from phase 2 of the campaign remained in consumers' minds, the Agency arranged for a series of short TV adverts to be aired during the second half of 2006. This maintenance work resulted in increases in those claiming to be making a special effort to reduce their salt intakes as well as those trying to cut down on salt by checking the label.

Monitoring progress

- 8) Results from a survey of salt intake in adults aged 19-64 years in England, assessed by 24-hour urinary sodium analysis, will be published in 2007, together with results from similar surveys in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- 9) The Agency published in July its 'processed food databank' containing data collected from the labels of around 1000 products bought in the UK between December 2004 and February 2005. The databank was designed as a reference tool to provide indicative information on levels of sodium, fat, sugar and a range of other nutrients in processed foods. It has been used by the Agency to inform discussions with industry and other bodies, and as a tool to support policy development. A second sampling round repeating and extending the earlier round is currently underway. The databank can be accessed via the Agency's website: <http://www.food.gov.uk/science/surveillance/fsisbranch2006/fsis1306>

Addressing saturated fat and energy in the nation's diet

- 10) The Agency's Strategic Plan for 2005-2010 includes objectives to work with health departments to reduce saturated fat intakes from 13.4% to 11% of food energy by 2010 (for everyone from age 5 upwards) and to address energy imbalance. The Choosing Health White Paper includes a commitment to reduce fat and sugar levels in processed foods.
- 11) At the time of writing Agency Officials were in the final stages of developing a draft strategy to help reduce saturated fat levels in the population's diet and address the current calorie in/energy out imbalance. This strategy was being prepared for consultation in January.
- 12) To help inform the focus and content of the strategy the Agency has been consulting with key retailers, manufacturers and trade associations to seek their input. We are aware that some industry organisations are already working to improve the nutrition profile of their products, as health and diet is increasingly a competitive issue.
- 13) The Agency will continue to consult with industry, SME's and non-government organisations throughout the 12 week consultation period. Information from a range of sources and a number of projects will also feed into the strategy, including:
 - a) a report on the microbiological risks associated with reductions in fat and added sugars in foods;

- b) independent advice on the scope for reductions in the saturated fat content of foods that contribute to consumer intakes; and
- c) qualitative research into consumer awareness which will examine consumer understanding of fats (expected to report in March).

Communications strategy for encouraging behaviour change among teenagers in 2007 – Sugar Magazine

14) The Agency continues to provide consumer-facing information through the Agency's websites and lifestage leaflets. In addition, to help support, influence and encourage teenage girls to improve their eating habits, the Food Standards is working closely with Sugar Magazine (a magazine aimed at teenage girls). This involves giving tips and advice to teenagers about eating well and being healthy, making it relevant and practical to follow. In 2007 this includes:

- twelve 1 page features on healthy eating as part of a healthy lifestyle;
- online content at sugarmagazine.co.uk to compliment magazine features;
- two online surveys to assess teenage eating habits and the impact of FSA features;
- hosting two live web chats on the Sugar website, with Q & A's on healthy eating.

New research under the Food Choice Inequalities (N14) Programme

15) The Agency has recently commissioned a research project to assess the effectiveness of engaging communities to make healthy changes in their diet and levels of physical activity through a community challenge.

16) Within Middlesbrough PCT, two of the five public health locality teams and community 'champions', will receive relevant training and deliver a community development intervention in which individuals and groups (adults only) will be invited to make pledges of their choice to make healthy changes to their diet and levels of physical activity, and body weight (optional). The intervention will include multi-level evaluation at baseline, 6 months and 1 year. Two locality teams will serve as controls, and will collect data through a population health promotion intervention '*Tees on the Move*'.

17) The Principal Investigator is Prof. Carolyn Summerbell (University of Teesside) whose team will collaborate with Middlesbrough PCT. The final report is due at the end of September 2009.

18) A project which will be taking a similar approach but targeting children and young people in primary and secondary schools as part of the Healthy Schools Programme in the South East is also in the process of being commissioned.

School Meals

19) The Agency continues to provide expert nutritional advice to DfES and the School Food Trust on issues relating to the new food and nutrient standards.

20) In partnership with the National Governors Association, and with input from the School Food Trust, DfES and Healthy School leads at the Department for Health,

the Food Standards Agency is updating the Food Policy in Schools – A Strategic Policy Framework for School Governing Bodies resource. The key focus of this document is to ensure School Governors are equipped with the necessary information to implement the new food and nutrition standards and are able to develop robust health and nutrition policies for their schools. The revised document will be available in the Spring.

School Caterers Qualifications

- 21) Work continues on developing the School Caterers Qualifications and the next steps are to update the Level 1 qualification training materials to reflect the new school meal standards. FSA and DfES have commissioned People 1st (Sector Skills Agency for hospitality and catering sector) to develop NVQ units, at level 2 & 3, aimed at up-skilling school catering staff as part of the Support Work in Schools qualification (SWiS). Level 2 units, available now, cover food safety and how to prepare, cook and finish healthier dishes. Supporting resources include a DVD and recipe book

Cooking and Food Skills!

- 22) The roll out of What's Cooking? (formerly known as Cook-It) is well under way with 92 clubs on board across North East England. Clubs will be running between September 2006 and August 2007. EdComs, who have been commissioned to conduct an independent evaluation of the project, have started collecting feedback from clubs, club coordinators and Local Authority leads. This continuous evaluation will continue on until the end of 2007.
- 23) The Agency continues to advise the SFT as they develop their approaches to cooking skills as part of the Big Lottery fund bid.
- 24) The Agency has commissioned the British Nutrition Foundation (BNF) to develop our existing food competencies for children and young people so that we have a consensus view on the food skills and knowledge that young people should know and be able to apply by the ages of 7, 11, 14 and 16. Following input from a range of stakeholders, the competencies will be going out for a public wide consultation.

Packed Lunch Menus

- 25) The Agency publishes its new and revised 'Packed Lunch Menus' for 5-8 and 9-12 year olds this month (January 2007). The menus have been developed so that, over the course of the week, they meet the minimum nutrition standards for school lunches. When published, the menus and accompanying advice will be available on eatwell.gov.uk

Institutions

- 26) The Agency is developing nutritional guidance for major institutions. Work is underway to develop nutrient and food based guidance for institutions which will support cross-Government action on diet and food procurement. Example menus will also be developed to assist caterers achieve this guidance. The Agency in

Scotland is also working with the Scottish Executive on public sector catering guidance (see update below).

- 27) In October 2006 the Agency published the principles it is using to develop nutrient and food based guidance for institutions, alongside its advice to those providing food in care homes in the document 'Food Served to Older People in Residential Care'. Both documents and a sample menu for care homes can be found on www.food.gov.uk/healthiereating/nutritioncommunity/care.
- 28) The Agency's guidance will feed into the Department of Health's consultation on the National Minimum Standards (NMS) and regulations for adult social care.
- 29) The Agency anticipates finalising the guidance for those providing food to adults in major institutions in early 2007, but the exact timing for publication has not yet been decided.

Men's Health Forum

- 30) The Agency is working with Men's Health Forum to provide appropriately targeted healthy eating advice to adult men. This will take the form of a 'Haynes' mini manual' on healthy eating throughout life and reducing the risk of developing diseases associated with lifestyle, such as heart disease. The Agency will also be a sponsor of Men's Health Week in July 2007.

Update on Signpost Labelling

- 31) The technical guidance for the Agency's recommended front of pack nutritional signpost labelling approach has been finalised and published on the Agency website (www.food.gov.uk).
- 32) Further promotional and educational materials will be published by the Agency in the near future to help encourage consumers to use signposting information wisely to make healthier choices, and to re-enforce existing advice about choosing a varied and balanced diet.

Promotion of foods to children

- 33) Ofcom proposes to introduce new restrictions for TV advertising of food and drink to children which will use the Agency's nutrient profiling model to differentiate between HFSS and non HFSS foods discussed by the SACN at its meeting in October 2005 (SACN/05/27). The Agency Board is committed to review the Nutrient Profiling model one year from its introduction. The Agency is currently considering how best to take this work forward.

Recasting of the current European Legislation on Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula

- 34) The recast European Directive laying down rules regarding the composition, labelling and promotion of infant formula and follow on formula was published in the Official Journal on 30th December 2006. The Agency has begun the process of

implementing this Directive into UK law and will consult with all stakeholders, including SACN, on the new UK Regulations. .

Goat milk protein infant nutrition products

31) During 2006, the Agency secured the withdrawal of two infant nutrition products based on goats' milk protein which had been marketed in breach of the UK Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula Regulations. The manufacturers of a third such product ('Nanny') are taking action to ensure compliance with the infant formula legislation by repositioning Nanny as a foodstuff for general consumption. The UK Health Departments have requested that health care professionals inform mothers that infant milks based on goats' milk protein are not suitable as a source of nutrition for infants and advised them that action is being taken to remove these products from the UK market place.

New research call for the Diet and Cardiovascular Health (N02), Nutritional Status and Function (N05) and Dietary Surveys and Nutrients in Food (N08) Programmes

32) The Agency has recently put out a call for its N02, N05 and N08 research programmes.

33) Requirements within the N02 programme include the effects of diet on insulin resistance, the effects of dietary factors on vascular and haemological function and the effects of diet on maintenance of a healthy body weight and risk factors for CVD and type 2 diabetes.

34) Requirements within the N05 programme include the role of diet in gastrointestinal and/or immune function in healthy ageing, markers of dietary exposure, status and function for macro- and micro-nutrients to use in national nutrition surveys, defining vitamin D sufficiency and the individuality of requirements.

35) Requirements within the N08 programme include a review of analytical methods for assessment of folate status.

36) The closing date for receipt of proposal is 16 March 2007.

Folic acid

37) The SACN report folate and disease prevention was published on 12 December 2006, alongside an FSA consultation on options for increasing folate intake in young women.

38) The consultation is due to close on 13 March. The Board will discuss their recommendation to Ministers at the open meeting in May 2007, taking into account the consultation responses and results of the consumer research.

Update FSA Wales

AFAL (Awards for Food Action Locally) 2007

- 1) Over 60 nominations for the 2007 AFAL Awards have been received. A judging panel selected from the Implementation and Monitoring Working Party will meet in January to decide the winners and runners-up, with the presentations being made at the 2007 Nutrition Conferences where finalists will be invited to make a presentation about their activities.

The AFAL awards recognise individual or team contributions to local nutrition initiatives that have made a positive impact on the diet or eating habits of residents in the communities within which they operate.

The awards are open to all individuals or organisations whose work seeks to improve the diet of their local community in Wales. This covers all sectors including community and voluntary workers, those in education, caterers, retailers, food producers, and local Authorities and health boards, who are working to make an impact at the community level.

Primary Care Practitioner Training

- 2) Following an initial small scale pilot, the nutrition module for Primary Care Practitioners has been revised, and FSAW and WAG are exploring piloting it on a larger scale.

Food and Well Being Interim Review

- 3) Warwick University gave a presentation on the Mid-Term review of Food and Well Being and discussed how their team have drawn on the recent experiences in Scotland to review available data, undertake both stakeholder and community level consultations and case studies, and interpret this within both a national and international context. After a presentation on some of the methodology used, as well as an update on their progress and early findings, the Implementation and Monitoring Working Party stakeholders briefly discussed ideas for the way forward. The initial draft will be reviewed in January.

Nutrition Network for Wales (NNW)

- 4) It has been agreed with the Welsh Assembly Government that the NNW website will be merged with the Physical Activity Network for Wales (PANW) website from the next financial year.

Healthy Options Award

- 5) FSA Wales are facilitating the development of an All Wales Healthy options award that catering premises in possession of a food hygiene award will be eligible to be assessed for by their Local Authority. As with the Hygiene Award, the Healthy Options Award will consist of three tiers -bronze, silver and gold. The Minister for Health and Social Services will launch a one year pilot of the award at the CIEH Wales Conference in February.

Curriculum Review

- 6) The Food and Well Being Monitoring and Implementation Working Party received recommendations from the curriculum sub-group on how to ensure nutrition and cooking skills were considered in the current curriculum review in Wales. The recommendations were informed by a baseline survey of current teaching of food in maintained primary and secondary schools across Wales. The Group will consider the recommendations further at their meeting in January and will feed into the Welsh Assembly Government's consultation on the review which will be launched in January.

Update FSA Scotland

- 1) Following the Report (and recommendations) of the Working Group on Monitoring Scottish Dietary Targets, the following projects been commissioned by FSAS Science Branch and are currently underway:

Secondary Analysis of Existing Data

Review of progress made towards the Scottish Dietary Targets using existing data sets

- 2) The first phase of this work was completed in November 2005 and was presented to both the Food and Health Council and to the Scottish Diet Action Plan Review Panel in December. Reflecting the SEHD priority to reduce health inequalities in Scotland, the project was extended to include analysis of the Scottish Expenditure and Food Survey data on food and nutrients in relation to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. The report is now complete following peer review and was published on the Agency's web site on Monday 11th September coinciding with the publication of the Scottish Diet Action Plan Review Report.
- 3) A research requirement was published in FSA Research Requirement Document No. 21 to invite proposal for the continuation of this work to 2010, encompassing data from both the Expenditure and Food Survey and the Scottish Health Survey. Proposals have now been received and been appraised. Decisions regarding commissioning have been taken and the contracts are currently being negotiated.

Intake of Non Milk Extrinsic Sugars (NMES) by Scottish School Children

- 4) This survey began in December 2005 after extensive negotiations around finding a suitable data set from which to draw the sample. Eventually permission was granted from the Department of Work and Pensions to allow us access to Child Benefit Records.
 - The dietary assessment methodology includes a combination of Food Frequency Questionnaires, Diet Diaries and 24 hour recall and will provide information on NMES, as well as other nutrients of interest in relation to children diets in Scotland.
 - Field work for the main study was completed on 8th September 06.
 - Data has been coded and analysis is currently underway.
 - Final Report due May 07

Dietary Sodium Intake of the Scottish population estimated by urinary sodium excretion

- 5) This survey, which started in February 2006, will provide information to measure progress towards the Scottish Dietary Targets as well as information

that can be fed into UK measurement of progress towards the FSA strategic plan target to reduce dietary salt intake.

- This project is identical to the study being carried out by FSA in England but with additional spot urine samples being carried out in Scotland.
- The final report is in currently in preparation and due to be completed early 2007.

The following research project, unrelated to the Scottish Dietary Targets, is currently underway:

Food Access.

- 6) This project is designed to provide a retail map of access to affordable and healthy food across Scotland using a combination of GIS mapping and a newly developed Healthy Indicator Shopping Basket Tool for Scotland.
- The survey field work has been completed and the data has been checked and data analysis is underway.
 - The project outputs will include a national assessment of retail mapping across Scotland using case study sites.
 - The project has been designed so that it may be rolled out for use by Local Authorities / Health Boards to assist them in identifying problems in their areas.
 - A draft final report from the project is currently in preparation.
 - Project due to report early 2007

The following research project has been completed;

Investigation into the impact of Target Nutrient Specifications (TNS) on food purchased in Scotland to supply the education sector and other public sector organisations.

- 7) This project was designed to explore the extent to which the TNS for manufactured foods used in school meals (developed by FSAS to assist in the achievement of the Hungry for Success Nutrient Standards) has improved food supply to education and other public sectors.
- The research found that the specifications have had an impact on improving food supplied to school meals in Scotland. However, the impact was small as many of the larger manufacturers appeared to have been waiting on the outcome of UK wide nutrient specifications and the changes being made to the nutritional standards of school food in England.
 - The final report has been published and is available from the FSA's Information Centre.

School Food

- 8) The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill was introduced into Parliament on 8th September and published on Monday 11th September.

- 9) The Agency has been a member of an expert-working group (included 4 full day meetings) set up by the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) to draw up the regulations for the nutritional standards for all food and drinks in schools. As part of the Working Group, the Agency played a key role in preparing the paper for these meetings. The final recommendations of the Working Group for primary and secondary schools were submitted to SE Educations Department on the 13th of October but have yet to be accepted by the Education Minister.
- 10) An additional meeting of the expert working group was set up by SEED in October to draw up recommended nutritional standards for regulation for Nurseries operated by education authorities for the provision of pre-school education in Scotland. Again, the Agency prepared papers and played an active role as a member of this group. The final recommendations of the group are due to be submitted to SEED shortly.
- 11) The Parliamentary Communities Committee started to take oral evidence on the Bill on 24 October 2006. On the 8th of November, the Agency (as a member of the Expert Working Group) was called to give evidence in support of the recommendations for mandatory food and nutrient standards for schools, along with the Chair of the Group.
- 12) FSAS are drafting catering guidance in relation to the Bill to support all those involved in the provision of food and drink within schools. The development of this guidance is being discussed and agreed by a short life working group. A final draft will be submitted to SEED by April 2007.

Prison Food

- 13) FSAS have prepared a new document entitled 'Nutrient and Food Standards for the Scottish Prison Service'. The development of these standards is part of a wider ongoing process to support healthy eating and healthy choices across the public sector. The Scottish Prison Service caters for approximately 7,000 prisoners a day in 16 different locations. This document reiterates and extends the food based commitments already made by the SPS in 2002 by proposing nutrient and food based standards and providing example menus.
- 14) The Nutrient Standards will ensure that the provision of food meets the majority of the prison population's energy and nutrient requirements to meet target Government recommendations. The Food Standards will ensure that menus meet government guidelines for intakes of fruit and vegetables and fish in the Scottish population. Menu planning guidance on food based approaches which reflect the Nutrient Standards, have also been provided to assist caterers in achieving the standards. Two weeks of example menus which meet the Food and Nutrient Standards have also been developed to include foods and dishes already provided or close to current provision through close consultation with the SPS.
- 15) The second draft document has been circulated to the steering group (The Good Food Group), and to the prison catering managers. The costs for the healthier

menus are being calculated and are expected to be higher than the existing budget however. It is hoped that the document will be finalized by the end of March 2007.

Cook-it! Resource

What's Cooking Resource

16) Previously known as Cook-it!, this resource is intended as a guide to setting up and running Community and School Food Clubs. This resource will be piloted in Scotland early 2007 across 4 Local Authorities within school and community settings.

Food hygiene, healthy eating & fitness initiative in Primary schools

17) Following a successful pilot with Aberdeen Football Club earlier in 2006, FSA Scotland has now begun Phase 2 of this project for Primary 3 & 4 pupils (pupils aged 7 & 8), combining food hygiene, healthy eating and fitness activities

18) For Phase 2, FSA Scotland has linked with both Aberdeen Football Club and Active Schools (a SportScotland initiative) to deliver the project to 40 schools across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. Aberdeen Football Club is again providing fitness activities through their community coaches with Active Schools co-ordinators for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire providing support. The project was launched on 19 September 2006. FSA Scotland is now looking into various avenues to widen the scope of this initiative for the future.

Elementary Course in Food and Health

19) The Agency, along with a partnership group, has been involved in the development of a catering training course. The objectives of the course are to provide candidates with a basic knowledge of the link between diet and health. The course provides knowledge, which can be put into practice in a number of settings from school dining halls and workplace canteens to community cafes and in the home. The course is being provided by the Royal Environmental Health Institute for Scotland (REHIS) through its approved training centres and in November 2006, the 1000th certificate for completion of the course was awarded.

Food and Health Course – Roll out in Low Income Communities

20) Food Standards Agency Scotland and the Scottish Community Diet Project (SCDP) are providing funding to boost the above Food and Health Course's provision in low income communities. A contractor was appointed in May 2006 to carry out this project which involves commissioning a series of subsidised courses in low income communities across Scotland and assisting existing REHIS elementary food hygiene course providers to become elementary food and health course providers. The project is expected to last for approximately six months. FSAS and SCDP have both committed funds to this project on behalf of the partners group for the course. Areas where there are food access/food poverty issues and gaps in existing training provision are being given priority.

Food and Health Alliance

21) The Food and Health Alliance was established in April 2005 by FSAS and the Scottish Executive as a network for people with an interest in food and health. The emphasis of the Alliance is on inclusion and wide engagement involving all sectors of the food chain and it is hoped that the Alliance will become a 'one-stop-shop' information point for all those involved in food and health in Scotland. Since its inception, the partnership has evolved to include NHS Health Scotland, with the Scottish Executive taking more of a strategic role. The Alliance is continuing to attract members, with current membership sitting at approximately 650. An information audit was carried out over the summer with a report of the findings delivered in September. A dedicated Alliance website is also currently being developed with a prototype home page now being available at www.fhascot.org.uk.

Saturated Fat and Energy Strategy

22) As part of the Agency's Saturated Fat and Energy Strategy, FSAS will be holding a stakeholder meeting in January 2007 to feed industry comments into the UK wide strategy.

MSP Event

23) The Agency is hosting a reception for MSPs at the Scottish Parliament on 24 January to show case Agency work on, for example, front of pack nutrition labelling. In addition to MSPs, the Agency has invited a number of major UK and Scottish retailers, manufacturers and consumer organisations.

Update FSA Northern Ireland

Student Survey and Survival Guide

- 1) The Food Standards Agency recently launched a new Student Survival Guide for first year undergraduate students in Northern Ireland. The Guide includes information on shopping and cooking on a budget; kitchen hygiene; getting the most out of your diet; how to prepare food and a number of practical recipes. The context for this work is the research the Agency carried out last year on student eating habits and behaviours. This was commissioned through ARK (a joint QUB and UU social and political archive body) and targeted all students at Queens University Belfast and the University of Ulster. The research was further supplemented by a series of focus groups carried out by MORI Ireland. The survey assessed food attitudes and behaviours amongst university students in Northern Ireland and collected information on social factors which impact on their ability to obtain or to choose a healthy balanced diet.
- 2) There is a range of diet and health related issues for young people that differ from those experienced by the rest of the population. These include iron deficiency, reproductive health, low intakes of calcium, Vitamin D and restricted food consumption. At present, there is limited information available on the diets of 18 - 24 year olds and this survey is the first of its kind in Northern Ireland to focus specifically on student eating habits. Over 3,500 students took part in this exercise.
- 3) The findings from the survey suggest that first year students are the most vulnerable in terms of their diet. It is also clear from both the research findings and from student feedback, that there is a need for practical, educational and accessible information on eating well for this age group. The Agency is working with the University of Ulster as a pilot exercise. The Guide has been targeted at first years in Halls of Residence and briefing sessions have already taken place with Residential Assistants as part of their induction programme. Further promotional activity will start on the 29th January, which reinforces a number of key messages from the Guide including getting your breakfast and 5 a-day. 5 a-day fruit and veg bags will be distributed to students, along with breakfast vouchers which can be redeemed at University catering outlets. A formal evaluation will take place in February

Homeless Research

- 4) Homeless households in Northern Ireland were identified as being a priority vulnerable group during 2005/06. There is presently limited research exploring the issues homeless persons face in sourcing, funding and preparing food for themselves and/or their families in Northern Ireland.
- 5) Deloitte were awarded a contract in January this year to carry out the following research objectives:
 - Deliver a better understanding of the impact of poverty and social exclusion on the diet of people who are homeless in Northern Ireland

- Establish the extent to which homeless persons are vulnerable to poor diets and inadequate nutrition through research design based on a recognised nutritional data collection methodology e.g. food frequency questionnaire
 - Explore the issues homeless persons face in sourcing, funding, storing and preparing nourishing food for themselves and/or their families through structured interviews with a sample of homeless persons
 - Explore issues of service use and service access by homeless persons in Northern Ireland and develop a clear understanding of the barriers to healthy eating. This will include interviews/discussions with hostel staff, for example
 - Identify the impact of food poverty upon health and wider experiences of social exclusion
 - Identify gaps in current food provision for homeless persons across a range of support services.
- 6) This exercise was treated as a pilot study. Primary research was carried out with 80 homeless households, 10 of which were rough sleepers. Both a structured questionnaire and a food frequency questionnaire were used. Further primary research was carried out with policy makers and service providers. A final report has been prepared and a series of meetings arranged with key stakeholders. The focus of work during the course of the next few months will be with single mothers in hostel accommodation and young single homeless persons.

Older Persons Calendar

- 7) This resource was first developed last year by the Consumer Choice team and targeted key nutrition and food safety messages to over 65's. A similar approach has been developed again this year, although the messages are aimed more at vulnerable older persons. For that reason, in addition to dietary considerations for this age group and key hygiene messages, further information has been included on pension credit and benefit/grant entitlements to alleviate fuel poverty. The calendar has been developed with partners such as the Department of Social Development, Help the Aged and the Health Promotion Agency. To date, over 45,000 calendars have been distributed across Northern Ireland, via a number of organisations including, Post Offices, GP surgeries, churches, Age Concern, Help the Aged, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Investing for Health Partnerships and District Councils.