

# Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

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## Subgroup on Maternal and Child Nutrition (SMCN)

**Paper for information: Update on Activities related  
to Maternal and Child Nutrition**

**Agenda item: 6**

Please see attached paper for information.

# Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

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## Subgroup on Maternal and Child Nutrition (SMCN)

### Update on Activities related to Maternal and Child Nutrition

#### Department of Health

##### Targets for initiation of Breastfeeding

- As part of the Government's commitment to reduce health inequalities and increase breastfeeding rates particularly amongst disadvantaged groups, a target has been set to increase breastfeeding initiation rates by 2 percentage every year for three years through the NHS Priorities and Planning Framework.
- A data set change notice will be sent to PCTs advising them of the requirement to collect baseline data on breastfeeding initiation and how to collect it. Information to help PCTs increase initiation rates will be issued, based on the evaluation of the 79 breastfeeding projects under the breastfeeding initiative.

##### Proposals for the reform of the Welfare Food Scheme

- Proposals for the reform of the Welfare Food Scheme (to be recast as 'Healthy Start') were published for consultation towards the end of 2002. Around 500 written responses were received and over 160 people attended consultation events. There was a high level of agreement for change and reform of the present scheme. A summary of responses was published in March 2003. There are two clauses to reform the scheme in the Health & Social Care Bill currently in Parliament. Final plans for the scheme are expected to be published by the end of 2003. Draft regulations will be published for consultation early in 2004.

#### Scottish Executive

- "Hungry for Success", the report of the Expert Panel on School Meals, was published in February 2003. "Hungry for Success" sets out a vision for a revitalised schools meals service and presents a number of far-reaching recommendations connecting school meals with the curriculum as a key aspect of health education and health promotion. Nutrient based standards have been set, as well as detailed mechanisms for monitoring these standards and measures for eliminating the stigma associated with free schools meals.

- Free fruit will also be provided three times a weeks for all primary 1 and 2 children in school. £63.5m has been committed to implementation of Hungry for Success and for providing free fruit in school over the next three years.
- Regional seminars to assist Local Authorities and NHS Boards with the implementation of "Hungry for Success" will taking place in October 2003.

## **Food Standards Agency**

### **School meals survey**

- The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Food Standards Agency have commissioned research to assess whether food provided at school lunches in secondary schools in England complies with statutory nutritional standards (introduced in April 2001) and associated guidance. The survey will also assess the food consumed against the Caroline Walker Trust's nutritional guidelines for school meals (Caroline Walker Trust (1992) Nutritional Guidelines for School Meals. Report of an Expert Working Group. London: Caroline Walker Trust) and gather information on the influences on food choice that can be modified by schools.
- Work started on the survey in June and preparations for the fieldwork are ongoing, with the pilot survey due to start in mid-September, followed by the main survey from October to December 2003. The report of this work should be available in spring 2004.

### **Food Choice Inequalities R & D Programme**

- Two new projects are currently being commissioned under this programme. One will consider the barriers to healthy food choice in girls who are at risk of having low birth weight babies and to assess the effectiveness of a tailored community intervention. The other will target young women from low income British and minority ethnic communities at risk of low birth weight through a community cooking intervention tailored to the specific needs of each group.

### **Healthy diets for infants and young children**

- The above Agency resource for health professionals is currently being updated to include; for example, SACN recommended salt levels for infants and children, and the latest DH breastfeeding advice.

### **School-based work**

### **OFSTED/FSA INSPECTION OF NUTRITION IN SCHOOLS (Food and nutrition in the educational experience of pre-school and primary children)**

- Planning is in progress for the first ever survey of good practice related to a 'whole school' approach to food and nutrition. OFSTED will provide HM Inspector time to visit primary schools and early year settings such as nursery schools, Sure Start schemes, day care nurseries etc. FSA role will be to provide money for nutritionists to be commissioned to go with the inspectors. The survey will examine school activity relating to food in the school environment including that in the curriculum, breakfast and after-school clubs, school meals, tuck shops, vending, water provision, packed lunches, dining environment, alternative food supplies close to school etc. The work will start in autumn 2003. Results expected spring 2004. Results will be disseminated to school Governors, head teachers, caterers, other Government Departments, and others with an interest in school nutrition.

### **Advisory and support role**

#### *Research: Food Acceptability & Choice Programme*

N09016: Promoting recommended infant feeding practices in a low income sample: randomised controlled trial of a peer education intervention

There is evidence from the literature that peer-led education has been used successfully in a number of settings such as drugs or smoking cessation. The limited published evidence of the use of peer-led educators in promoting healthy eating is mainly from international sources, but indicates that it can be effective, particularly with hard to reach groups such as adults on low incomes and ethnic minority communities.

This project aims to:

- Assess the impact of peer educators on nutritional and other health and social outcomes in low-income mothers compared with standard professional care.
- Assess the sustainability and feasibility of using peer-led support and education.
- Assess the cost effectiveness of a peer-led support intervention.
- Develop a practical resource on the best means of conducting peer-led infant feeding interventions.

Contractor: University College, London. Duration: March 2002 to August 2005

### **FSA Scotland**

#### **Nutrient Specifications for Manufactured Products Used in School Meals**

Following the drafting of specifications for over 100 different manufactured products used in school meals, FSAS have consulted with manufacturers of the following products: bread, chips / other potato products, baked beans, canned spaghetti and tinned fruit / vegetables. Most recent consultation has been with the fish industry. During the coming months we will be consulting with the remaining industries, including the largest group, manufacturers of meat products. Due to slow response from the industry sector, this stage of the process has taken longer than anticipated and it is likely to be at least the autumn before the specifications are ready to be published.

