



## All-island Obesity News

E-bulletin of the all-island Obesity Action Forum

Volume 1, Issue 1, March/April 2009

Welcome to the first edition of *All-island Obesity News*, the e-bulletin of the all-island Obesity Action Forum. Established in December 2008 to support the implementation of obesity policies in both Northern Ireland (NI) and Republic of Ireland (ROI), the Forum brings together a wide range of stakeholders from both the areas of food and physical activity. By facilitating the exchange of best practice and by promoting networking and collaboration, the Forum provides an ideal platform for partnership and cohesive working on the island of Ireland.

**safefood** is delighted to facilitate the Forum and are committed to ensuring that it supports joint action in tackling obesity. We welcome all your support to date.

Martin Higgins  
Chief Executive Officer, **safefood**

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If you would like to join the forum or include any information in this bi-monthly e-bulletin please email us at [obesityforum@safefood.eu](mailto:obesityforum@safefood.eu).

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### Obesity Prevention NI Update

The Fit Futures taskforce was established by the Ministerial Group on Public Health (MGPH) in response to increasing concerns about the health implications of rising levels of overweight and obesity in children and young people in Northern Ireland. The role of the taskforce was to examine options for preventing overweight and obesity in children and young people and to make recommendations to MGPH on Priorities for Action.

In 2008 an Obesity Prevention Steering Group was established to oversee and drive forward Fit Futures. The Obesity Prevention Steering Group and its Advisory Groups are now working towards the development of an Obesity Prevention Strategic Framework with a view for publication in the Summer of 2010. The Framework will

expand Fit Futures by encompassing overweight and obesity throughout the whole life course.

The four Advisory Groups include;

- Promoting Physical Activity
- Food & Nutrition
- Prevention, Education & Public Information
- Data & Research

Each Advisory Group will contribute to the development of the Obesity Prevention Strategic Framework.

*Health Development Policy Branch, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety*

*03 April 2009*

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### **ROI Obesity Implementation Group Update**

An intersectoral group has been established by the Department of Health and Children to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the report of the National Taskforce on Obesity. The Group comprises representatives of all key stakeholders, including experts from Government Department and agencies, the food industry, and relevant NGOs.

The inaugural meeting of the group was held in January 2009 and monthly meetings, chaired by Ms Mary Wallace, Minister of State at the Department with special responsibility for Health Promotion and Food Safety, have been held since.

The first task of the group was to examine the recommendations contained in the Taskforce report and prepare a report on progress to date on their implementation. It is clear that much work has taken place and the majority of the recommendations have been, or are partially implemented. The report is being finalised and should be available shortly.

*Health Promotion Policy, Department of Health and Children*

*01 April 2009*

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### **General news**

#### **01.04.2009: Structural reform of health and social care as part of the Review of Public Administration comes into effect in NI**

The reforms include the establishment of the new Health and Social Care Board, the Public Health Agency, the Patient and Client Council and the Business Services Organisation. These organisations will streamline and replace a number of existing health and social care bodies and are fully operational since 01 April when they each held their first Board meetings. These structural changes mark the second phase of reform within health and social care. In April 2007, five new integrated Health and Social Care Trusts were created to replace 18 previous Trusts. Further information from <http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news/news-dhssps/news-dhssps-01042009-health-minister-marks.htm>

**31.03.09: Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: Child weight management programme and training providers framework (UK)**

The Cross-Government Obesity Unit has developed a framework agreement with nine provider organisations, in order to support local commissioning of weight management services for children and young people. For further information: [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/DH\\_097297](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/DH_097297)

**31.03.09: Health Secretary Alan Johnson announces NHS Health Checks to begin in April**

Everyone aged between 40-74 in England will begin to be invited for a free check as part of a national programme to identify their risk of diseases such as coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes and kidney disease. The programme is an essential tool in tackling health inequalities across the country.

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH\\_097147](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_097147)

**30.03.09: Research conducted by HSE and safefood for the 'Little Steps' campaign, suggests that parents are making positive changes to their children's diet and physical activity levels.**

Further information from: <http://www.safefood.eu/en/News1/2009/Research-shows-parents-are-making-positive-changes-to-their-childrens-diet-and-physical-activity-levels/>

**26.03.09: Funding call for all-island Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives**

Healthy Food for All and **safefood** are setting up a three-year demonstration programme of Community Food Initiatives. Funding applications are currently being sought from eligible groups and organisations. The closing date for applications is 5pm on 23 April 2009. Further details from

<http://www.healthyfoodforall.com/content/view/58/42/>

**19.03.09: Irish Heart Foundation (IHF) and National Heart Alliance (NHA) jointly develop new website on Food Marketing to Children.**

The Children's Food Campaign website is targeted at parents, policy makers and the media and aims to help the IHF and NHA gauge opinion and provide ongoing advice and information on the marketing of unhealthy foods to children. It can be accessed via [www.childrensfoodcampaign.net](http://www.childrensfoodcampaign.net).

**11.03.09: Recession thwarts healthy efforts - Which? publishes its Hungry for Change? Report (UK)**

Which? found 24% of UK adults feel healthier eating is now less important, with 56% saying price has overtaken as a priority when choosing food. The poll of 2,102 showed 76% think the government needs to take action to make choosing healthier options easier. Further information from

<http://www.which.co.uk/campaigns/healthy-eating/healthy-eating-for-all/index.jsp>

**16.01.09: Northern Ireland Assembly Health Committee Inquiry into Obesity launched.**

The Committee will assess the scope and appropriateness of the current approach to the prevention of obesity and the promotion of lifestyle change; examine the availability of weight management or other intervention services to tackle obesity related ill health; and consider what further action is required, taking account, as appropriate, of the potential to learn from experience elsewhere. Further details from:

[http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/health/2007mandate/press/PNHSSPS02\\_08\\_09.htm](http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/health/2007mandate/press/PNHSSPS02_08_09.htm)

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## Nutrition news

### **06.04.09: Restaurants and caterers to display calories on menus**

Eighteen major catering companies, including many high street names, are to introduce calorie information on their menus for the first time.

<http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2009/apr/catercalorie>

**01.04.09: University acts to fight obesity epidemic.** University of Aberdeen announced plans to help meet the demand for health nutrition professionals required to tackle Scotland's rise in obesity and chronic dietary disease. It is launching an MSc degree in public health nutrition, which will deliver nutritionists to work in agencies, health promotion, industry and health care. Further details from [http://media-newswire.com/release\\_1088662.html](http://media-newswire.com/release_1088662.html)

**25.03.2009: FSA Board agrees advice to Ministers on nutrient profiling model.** The Board agreed that the model was working effectively. In particular it concluded that the protein cap, which prevents foods containing high levels of fat, salt or sugar being classed as 'healthier' by the model by virtue of their protein content, should be retained. Further information from:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2009/mar/nutriboard>

**19.03.09: Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland (HPA) launched a new healthy eating website,** [www.enjoyhealthyeating.info](http://www.enjoyhealthyeating.info) to support people in improving their eating habits and help them eat healthily, particularly during the current economic climate.

**06.03.09: Coffee Shop and Sandwich Chains Serve up Healthier Eating Commitments** Seven of the UK's largest coffee and sandwich shop chains have joined the growing number of companies working with the FSA to make healthier eating commitments.

More details at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2009/mar/healthiereatingcommitments>

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## Physical activity news

**07.04.09: Sport personalities lend their support to get kids active.** An array of sports stars were at St Bride's Primary School in Belfast to help launch Sport Northern Ireland's Activ8 Campaign which aims to increase the levels of participation in sport and physical activity amongst young people. Further details from <http://www.sportni.net/Sportpersonalitieslendtheirsupporttogetkidsactive.htm>

**18.03.09: An Post joins forces with the Irish Sports Council** to encourage communities around the country to get back on their bikes. Further details from: [http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/News\\_Events/Latest\\_News/2009\\_Archive/PARTICIPATION\\_Get\\_On\\_Your\\_Bike\\_with\\_An\\_Post\\_Cycle\\_Series.html](http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/News_Events/Latest_News/2009_Archive/PARTICIPATION_Get_On_Your_Bike_with_An_Post_Cycle_Series.html)

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## Resources/Publications

**England: Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: One Year On.** This report reviews progress on the delivery of Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: A Cross-Government Strategy for England (published January 2008) and sets out priorities for the future. Further details from:

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/DH\\_097523](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/DH_097523)

**England: Standard Evaluation Framework for Weight Management Interventions** developed by the National Obesity Observatory was launched on 31 March 2009. This SEF is to assist practitioners in the evaluation of weight management interventions. The aim of the SEF is to support high quality, consistent evaluation of weight management interventions in order to increase the evidence base. To download a copy of the report visit <http://www.noo.org.uk/SEF>

**All-island: Report of the All-island Obesity Surveillance Symposium** held in Belfast on Nov 14<sup>th</sup> 2008 published on 25 March 2009. Further information from Dr Catherine Hayes, Health Service Executive, Tel: +353 (1)635 2103

**NI: School Food: Top Marks, a nutrition programme for schools** was launched by the Health Promotion Agency (HPA) for Northern Ireland, the Department of Education (DENI) and the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) on 25 March. This initiative aims to support healthy eating in schools in NI. Further details from [http://www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/work/Publicrelations/PressReleases/school\\_food\\_09.html](http://www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/work/Publicrelations/PressReleases/school_food_09.html)

**England: The Commons' Health Select Committee Report on Health Inequalities** was published in 15 March 2009. Areas such as nutrition labelling, health promotion in schools, the built environment and tobacco control are discussed. You can download the report from <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmhealth/286/286.pdf>

**UK: Early Life Nutrition and Lifelong Health Report** published 10 March 2009. This report from the British Medical Association Board of Science highlights the main aspects of childhood nutrition and exercise, draws attention to the role of the clinician, and provides links to sources of further information. It also makes recommendations for tackling the obesity epidemic in the UK. You can view or download the report from [http://bma.eu/images/Early%20life%20nutrition%20FINAL\\_tcm41-182859.pdf](http://bma.eu/images/Early%20life%20nutrition%20FINAL_tcm41-182859.pdf)

**NI: A Health Legacy – 20 Years of the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland**, published in March 2009. This document is a record of, and a reflection on, the HPA's 20 years of activity and contribution to improving health. It gives an overview of the breadth of the HPA's work over this time and the progress that it has made across a range of public health issues with its partners. For further information and to download a copy of the report visit <http://www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/Resources/corporate/legacy.html>

**NI: Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services Network in Northern Ireland – Update Report 2007-2008**, published March 2009. This report details the development of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Health Promoting Hospitals (HPH) and Health Services network in NI and outlines the range of work and initiatives ongoing in each of the 13 member hospitals, detailed under the five new health and social care trusts. For further information and to download a copy of the report visit [http://www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/Resources/hphospitals/hph\\_report\\_0708.htm](http://www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/Resources/hphospitals/hph_report_0708.htm)

**UK: Childhood Obesity and Responsibility: the Next Steps for Policy** was published by Westminster Diet and Health Forum in February following a seminar on the issue. Further information from: <http://www.westminsterforumprojects.co.uk/foodandnutritionforum/home.html>

**UK: WCRF/AICR policy report, Policy and Action for Cancer Prevention**, was published on 26 February 2009. It highlights that more than 40% of some of the most common cancers, including those of the breast, bowel and stomach, could be prevented if we all had healthier lifestyles. Further information from <http://www.dietandcancerreport.org/>

**ROI: Men's Health Policy 2008-2013** was launched by Minister Mary Wallace on 28 January 2009. You can download the policy at [http://www.dohc.ie/publications/pdf/mens\\_health\\_policy.pdf?direct=1](http://www.dohc.ie/publications/pdf/mens_health_policy.pdf?direct=1)

**ROI: 2006 Factsheets on HBSC Ireland.** These factsheets contain information on school children's health behaviour in Ireland including drug and alcohol use, dieting, smoking, bullying, exercise, injuries and family structure and relationships. They can be downloaded from <http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc/factsheets2006.html>

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## Campaigns/Initiatives

### Island of Ireland: Little Steps campaign

'Little Steps' is a **safe food** and HSE campaign which aims to provide parents with information and support to make small changes to improve their children's diet and increase their levels of physical activity. One of the ways to introduce 'Little Steps' into family life is by eating and taking physical activity together as a family. There are lots of simple 'Little Steps' including shopping, cooking, healthy eating and physical activity tips and ideas available from the campaign website <http://www.littlesteps.eu/>

### ROI: Nutrition and Health Foundation (NHF) Workplace Wellbeing Campaign

Under way since May 2007, this is free to all participating organisations and covers healthy eating and physical activity. It currently has over 300 organisations and 80,000 employees participating. A small evaluation survey was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the NHF WWC, both on an employer and employee level. For further information contact Adrienne McDonnell, NHF executive on (01) 6051677, [Adrienne.mcdonnell@ibec.ie](mailto:Adrienne.mcdonnell@ibec.ie) or visit [www.nhfireland.ie](http://www.nhfireland.ie)

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## Forthcoming events

Title: **Fifth National Conference on Obesity and Health: Controversies in the Prevention and Management of Obesity – Managing the Balance**

Date: 27 – 28 April 2009

Venue: Lakeside Conference Centre, Birmingham, UK

Details: Available from [www.obesityandhealth.co.uk](http://www.obesityandhealth.co.uk)

Title: **National Walk to Work Week**

Date: 27 April – 01 May 2009

Venue: United Kingdom

Details: Visit:

[http://www.livingstreets.org.uk/news\\_and\\_info/media\\_news\\_releases.php?id=933](http://www.livingstreets.org.uk/news_and_info/media_news_releases.php?id=933)

Title: **Prevention of Weight (Re)Gain – Diet, Genetics, Behaviour, Screening and Novel Food Ingredients**

Date: 04 to 06 May 2009

Venue: Noordwijkerhout, Amsterdam

Details: View full details at <http://www.diogenes-eu.org/ECO2009/Programme.htm>

Title: **17<sup>th</sup> European Congress on Obesity – 6-9 May, Amsterdam, the Netherlands**

Date: 06 to 09 May 2009

Venue: Amsterdam

Details: Visit: <http://www.easo.org/eco2009/>

Title: **Nutrition and Health Foundation Eat Smart Week**

Date: 11 to 17 May 2009

Venue: Republic of Ireland

Details: NHF will be providing advice with regards to shopping smart and eating smart. Top chef Derry Clarke, from Dublin's Michelin-starred l'Ecrivain restaurant, has developed recipes for a family of four over a week long period. Further details available from: [www.nhfireland.ie](http://www.nhfireland.ie)

Title: **"Changing Lives for Good", First National Annual Social Marketing Conference**

Date: 15 May 2009

Venue: J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economics and Áras Moyola, NUIG, Newcastle Road, Galway

Details: Further information from Valerie Parker, Centre for Innovation and Structural Change on 091 495971 or [valerie.parker@nuigalway.ie](mailto:valerie.parker@nuigalway.ie)

Title: **Obesity – a reality check? Towards a deeper understanding**

Date: 03 June 2009

Venue: The Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole Street, London, W1G 0AE

Details: Available from <http://www.rsm.ac.uk/academ/xaq10g.php>

Title: **Closing the gap in child and adolescent health: the settings approach**

Date: 11th – 12th June, 2009

Venue: Health Promotion Research Centre, National University of Ireland Galway

Details: Annual health promotion conference hosted by the HPRC. Further details from [www.hprconference.ie](http://www.hprconference.ie).

Title: **National Men's Health Week 2009: Men and Access to Services**

Date: 15-21 June 2009

Venue: UK, ROI and Europe

Details: One of the biggest risks to men's health is their reluctance to seek help from services. This event will encourage men not to be embarrassed about seeking help and make them aware of the range of services available. Further details from [www.menshealthweek.org.uk](http://www.menshealthweek.org.uk)

Title: **Communicating to Make a Difference**

Date: 16 June 2009

Venue: Belfast

Details: An All-island Obesity Action Forum Workshop in association with **safefood**. Full information on speakers, timetable and registration details will be circulated in the coming weeks.

Title: **Nutrition Society Meeting hosted by the Irish Section: Dietary Management of Disease**

Date: 17 - 19 June 2009

Venue: Queen's University, Belfast

Details: Available from <http://www.nutritionociety.org/node/32>

Title: **Nutrition Society Summer Meeting: Over- and under-nutrition: challenges and approaches**

Date: 29 June – 02 July 2009

Venue: University of Surrey, Stag Hill Campus, Guildford, UK

Details: Available from <http://www.nutritionociety.org/node/55>

Title: **The National Obesity Conference: Reversing the Tide of Obesity - Working Together to Create an Active, Healthier Nation**

Date: 01 July 2009

Venue: Central London

Details: Available from [http://www.insidegovernment.co.uk/health/obesity\\_activity/index.php](http://www.insidegovernment.co.uk/health/obesity_activity/index.php)

Title: **19<sup>th</sup> Workshop of the European Childhood Obesity Group**

Date: 17-19 September 2009

Venue: Trinity College, Dublin, Republic of Ireland

Details: Available from <http://www.ecog-obesity.eu/dublin2009/index.php>

Title: **6th Population Health Autumn School**  
Date: 01-02 October 2009  
Venue: Queens University Belfast  
Details: The theme for this event, jointly hosted by UCC, QUB and IPH, is 'When is a simple answer sufficient? Understanding complex interventions – implications for policy and practice. Further details will be available soon from <http://www.publichealth.ie>

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## Consultations

**UK: The Food Standards Agency is currently carrying out a strategic review of its nutrition research portfolio** and has launched a public consultation, seeking views on the future direction of this work. The consultation responses will be used by an external panel of experts, set up to undertake the review, to inform recommendations. The closing date is 11 May 2009. Further details from: <http://www.food.gov.uk/consultations/ukwideconsults/2009/nutritionresearchreview>

**NI: The Food Standards Agency NI has an open consultation on The Draft Food Labeling (Nutrition Declarations) Regulations (NI) 2009.** The latter are intended to implement the relevant provisions of Commission Directive 2008/100/EC into national law. The closing date is 29 May 2009. Further information from: <http://www.food.gov.uk/consultations/consultni/2009/draftfoodlabelnutdecniregs>

**UK: Exercise Referral Toolkit (BHFNC 18/02/09) - Closed**

The British Heart Foundation National Centre recently developed a toolkit for the design, implementation and evaluation of exercise referral schemes. A consultation was held on the draft version which closed on **27 March 2009**. You can download the draft toolkit at: [http://www.bhfactive.org.uk/downloads/Draft\\_ER\\_Toolkitforconsultation\\_Feb09.pdf](http://www.bhfactive.org.uk/downloads/Draft_ER_Toolkitforconsultation_Feb09.pdf)

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## Members of the all-island Obesity Action Forum

Department of Education Northern Ireland: Ms Louise Warde-Hunter  
Department of Education, ROI: Mr Seamus McLoughlin  
Department of Health and Children: Mr Brian Mullen and Ms Ursula O' Dwyer  
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Mr Rob Phipps  
Food Safety Authority of Ireland: Dr Brian Redahan  
Food Standards Agency: Ms Maria Jennings  
\*Health Promotion Agency: Dr Brian Gaffney  
Health Service Executive: Ms Maria Lordan Dunphy  
Institute of Public Health: Dr Kevin Balanda  
Irish Cancer Society: Ms Norma Cronin  
Irish Heart Foundation: Ms Maureen Mulvihill  
Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute: Ms Margot Brennan and Ms Janis Morrissey  
Irish Sports Council: Mr John Tracey  
Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke Association: Mr Andrew Dougal  
Northern Ireland Food and Drink Association: Mr Michael Bell  
Nutrition and Health Foundation: Dr Muireann Cullen and Ms Catherine Bent  
**safefood**: Dr Cliodhna Foley-Nolan, Dr Marian Faughnan, Mr Dermot Moriarty and Ms Marita Hennessy  
Sport Northern Ireland: Mr Eamonn McCartan  
Ulster Cancer Foundation: Mr Gerry McElwee  
University College Cork: Prof Ivan Perry

\*As and from 01 April, all Health Promotion Agency responsibilities have been transferred to the Public Health Agency

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