

Response to Age Concern in respect of Equality Consultation on safefood strategy for education settings

Age Concern comment:

Part 4 of the consultation document deals with the potential for any adverse impact in regards to the current consultation. Part 4.8 specifically relates to 'age' and states that as the "strategy is aimed at young people and children, it is not considered to have an adverse impact with regards to age."

The Practical guidance from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in Appendix 1 of the Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment (February 2005) provides examples of groups and states that 'Age' "for most purposes, the main categories are: those under 18; people aged between 18 and 65; and people over 65... However, the definition of age groups will need to be sensitive to the policy under consideration... (ii) in relation to policies concerning young people narrower age bands are likely to be more appropriate."

We would therefore like to bring to your attention the issue that there may be an adverse impact on the policy as to how it relates to children & young people and that you should contact young people's organisations for further comment.

Age Concern Northern Ireland welcomes the development of this strategy to help improve the nutrition and understanding that young people have of food. The strategy will fit into the school and its curriculum and will work with external agencies and people such as parents and teachers. By taking a narrow approach to the future development of the strategy the strategy itself does not highlight the possible developmental needs of the supporting structures, such as teachers and parents or even grandparents and may therefore perhaps be missing a link in the chain in regards to further developing the health and support needs of children and young people, the main aim of the strategy.

ACNI realises that the strategy is a living document and that there is room for breathing within it, which we welcome, we do feel that the support structures for the children and young people requires more attention however.

safefood response

Comments noted. **safefood** consulted with young people's organisations and education authorities as part of the development of this strategy. We have developed training programmes for teachers with regards to the '**safefood** for life' programme for schools and will continue to seek other avenues to develop the supporting structures that Age Concern has highlighted.



Response to Armagh City and District Council in respect of Equality Consultation on safefood strategy for education settings

Equality issues

Council comment

In relation to the promotion of Good Relations, jointly publicised initiatives across the 'Maintained/Controlled/Integrated' educational sectors would be welcomed by the Council.

safefood response

Comments noted. **safefood** has, through the '**safefood** for life' pack and other such initiatives, promoted Good Relations to all schools independent of their status as 'Maintained/Controlled/Integrated' schools.

Policy Issues

Council comment

There is a need to amend this strategy to state that the definition of an educational establishment relates only to pre-school, primary school and secondary level of education establishments.

safefood response

Comments noted. Out-of-school educational settings for young people provide a bridge between school and work and offer an opportunity to further enhance healthy life skills. **safefood** considers it important that all aspects of education establishments are addressed in as broad a sense as possible.

Council comment on Promotional Strategy (Page 13 para 3)

"by collaborating with the Environmental Health services, District Councils...". The Council is not aware of any current collaboration between **safefood** and the environmental health service with District Council's in Northern Ireland and certainly not in relation to the encouragement of the adoption of basic food hygiene to achieve "Hygiene Certification". Is this a formal certified course leading to the award of a hygiene certificate or is it just raising hygiene awareness?

NB: FSA NI has advised Environmental Health Department within Councils not to actively promote formal basic food hygiene courses for food handlers. Such courses should normally be left to others to provide.

Safefood response

Comments noted and examples of partnerships are as follows:

safefood works annually with the Environmental Health Departments in the District councils across Northern Ireland in collaboration with the Food Standards Agency, Northern Ireland on a themed week every June entitled 'National Food Safety Week'.

In relation to food handling education, **safefood** worked in partnership with in the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), the Council for the Curriculum, Examination and Assessment (CCEA) and the Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland (FSANI) in the development

of a food safety training programme entitled '**safefood** for life' aimed at home economics students at Key Stages 3 and 4. This was rolled out in post primary schools across Northern Ireland in September 2006. The course was developed based on the CIEH's basic food hygiene course which was tailored specifically for the younger student cohort and provides them with the opportunity to sit an online examination in Food Hygiene with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health.

safefood organised training sessions for teachers providing the '**safefood** for life' programme at the request of a Schools' Environmental Health Officer from the North Eastern Education and Library Board.

Council comment

Empowering behavioural change (page 13)

Can the promotion of healthier lifestyles, absence of diet related diseases etc be progressed by supporting/promoting a food labelling system that is simple, can be universally applied and be legally enforced. Can **safefood** also encourage food producers/manufacturers to fortify basic food stuffs with the essential vitamins/minerals e.g. folic acid in bread, and reduce other ingredients such as salt.

safefood response

Comments noted. To support understanding of food labelling, **safefood** has developed and implemented a resource for post-primary schools entitled "How they measure up – deciphering food labelling". Through it's 'farm to fork' approach, **safefood** is promoting the need for simple and clear food labelling and is working with the enforcement agencies to ensure this message gets across to the consumer.

safefood recognises that understanding nutrition labelling is only one skill required for choosing a safe and healthy diet. We will continue to

promote a healthy diet and the skills associated with choosing, preparing and cooking food through educational settings. One such resource called 'Tastebuds', which will be available to primary schools in 2008, is aimed at reducing overweight and obesity in 8-12 year olds. It is a fun and interactive teaching resource that looks at food from farm to fork.

Council comment

safefood are currently involved with CAWT in the Food Allergy Project. Could this important food safety issue of allergen awareness not be specifically referred to as part of the promotional strategy for educational settings?

safefood response

safefood agrees that this issue is important and, in particular, advocates that the necessary skills be developed to adequately address this. Whilst there is no specific reference to allergy awareness in the school setting, it is implicit in a broad ranging strategy for educational settings. **safefood** will seek to influence general awareness of the issue of food allergy at appropriate levels in the educational settings particularly through advocating for reference to food safety issues in the context of the curriculum.