
Minutes of the second meeting of the All-island Obesity Action Forum, held on Tuesday 16th June, 2009 at The Ramada Encore Hotel, Belfast

Present

Mr Martin Higgins	Chair, safefood (MH)
Ms Gerry Bleakney	Public Health Agency (GB)
Ms Margot Brennan	Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (MB)
Dr Cliodhna Foley-Nolan	safefood (CFN)
Ms Janas Harrington	University College Cork (JH)
Ms Claire Holmes	All-island Community Nutrition and Dietetic Group (CH)
Ms Maria Jennings	Food Standards Agency (MJ)
Ms Maria Lordan Dunphy	Health Service Executive (MLD)
Ms Janis Morrissey	Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (JM)
Ms Pauline Mulholland	British Dietetic Association NI (PM)
Ms Ursula O' Dwyer	Department of Health and Children (UD)
Mr Rob Phipps	Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety (RP)

In Attendance

Dr Marian Faughnan	safefood (MF)
Ms Marita Hennessy	safefood , Minute Secretary (MHy)
Dr Aileen McGloin	safefood (AMcG)

Apologies

Mr Michael Bell	Northern Ireland Food and Drinks Association
Ms Catherine Bent	Nutrition and Health Foundation
Ms Norma Cronin	Irish Cancer Society
Dr Muireann Cullen	Nutrition and Health Foundation
Mr Gerry McElwee	Ulster Cancer Society
Mr Brian Mullen	Department of Health and Children (represented by UD)
Ms Maureen Mulvihill	Irish Heart Foundation (represented by JM)
Prof Ivan Perry	University College Cork (represented by JH)
Dr Brian Redahan	Food Safety Authority of Ireland
Ms Karen Robinson	British Dietetic Association NI (represented by PM)
Ms Louise Warde-Hunter	Department of Education Northern Ireland

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chairperson welcomed members to the second meeting of the all-island Obesity Forum. The Chair particularly welcomed representatives of the British Dietetic Association (BDA) Northern Ireland (NI), Public Health Agency (PHA) and All-island Community Nutrition and Dietetic Group. Apologies were noted. Round-table introduction followed.

2. Minutes of meeting 04 December 2008 and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and adopted. There were no matters arising.

3. Tour de Table

The Chair invited each member to brief the Forum on developments within their organisations since the last meeting. The following points were noted:

Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI)

- Presenting to the Oireachtas, in conjunction with the National Heart Alliance, on the Marketing of Food to Children over coming weeks
- Recently launched the booklet 'Eat Smart, Move More' with the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists (ISCP), supported by Supervalu supermarket chain. Available hardcopy and online from INDI and ISCP.

Irish Heart Foundation (IHF)

- Reviewing Childhood Nutrition Guidelines (originally published in 2002) and will include recommendations on overweight and obesity
- National Heart Alliance and the Irish Heart Foundation officially launched the Children's Food Campaign (www.childrensfoodcampaign.net) on 15 June.

Action Point 1: Secretariat to circulate IHF research, position paper and press release on food marketing to children

All-island Community Nutrition and Dietetic Group

- CAWT beginning 3-year obesity project, meeting 26 June

BDA NI

- Provided written response to Assembly's Health Committee Inquiry on Obesity and awaiting final report (date to be advised). Seeking representation on DHSSPS obesity advisory groups.

Health Research Board (HRB) Centre for Diet and Health Research/UCC

- Secondary analysis of SLAN data underway
- Data collection for the follow-up Cork and Kerry Diabetes Study complete. Re-screened 360 of original 1998 cohort
- Celine O' Keefe from the Institute of Public Health (IPH) is studying the burden of disease on the island
- Prof Ivan Perry in discussions with David Katz in Yale University on the development of a nutrition quality scale (ONQI-overall nutritional quality index) used by a number of large supermarkets in the US with a view to developing a similar initiative in ROI

PHA

- Provided overview of the new structures in NI since 01 April and overview of revised work plans while these structures are put in place
- Presented at Assembly's Health Committee Inquiry on Obesity
- Involved with DHSSPS on Obesity Prevention Strategic Framework (OPSF)
- PSA (Public Service Agreement) and PFA (Priorities for Action) targets in place – Under PFA targets, pilot interventions are taking place in four areas for obese children identified through the Child Health Appraisal System
- Reviewing data collection systems such as the Child Health System. There are some challenges. Measurement of BMI to be moved to year 7

Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS)

- OPSF still in development and working to agreed timelines. Four advisory groups meeting monthly, developing outcomes and actions based on a ten-year programme logic model. Groups to report back by September; draft strategy will be compiled before December; public consultation in Spring 2010; and final publication in June 2010.

- Developing newsletter to keep stakeholders updated on OPSF
- Survey data across NI under review as there is a need for good baseline data
- Meet regularly with Department of Health and Children in ROI
- Strong commitment to tackling obesity. Cross-departmental and cross-sectoral approach is vital. Shared PSA targets would be ideal and political commitment
- Attending Assembly's Health Committee Inquiry on Obesity on Thursday 18 June

Department of Health and Children (DOHC)

- Health Promotion Policy Unit is now reporting to the Chief Medical Officer. The CMO is interested and committed to this issue, as is the newly appointed Minister for Older People and Health Promotion, Ms Áine Brady, who wishes to continue the work of Mary Wallace on the Intersectoral Group on Obesity
- Physical Activity Guidelines launched last week. A subgroup of the Intersectoral Group will move these forward
- The work of the Intersectoral Group on Obesity will continue in September. The report of this group in conjunction with the National Nutrition Surveillance Centre (NNSC) was published and is available on www.dohc.ie
- The National Nutrition Policy is still under revision to take account of resources in the current economic climate but will be launched in September
- ROI participated in WHO Childhood Surveillance study – 26% girls and 17% boys overweight/obese. Will not take part in next round due to funding constraints however the Health Service Executive (HSE) would like to build surveillance into their current systems
- Healthy Eating Guidelines developed by the FSAI Nutrition Sub-Group, submitted to DOHC and will undergo user testing with a view to launch in September
- EU meeting in July – focus to date on salt but now moving to sugar and fat. FSAI steering group on salt progressing target to decrease by 16% over four years
- WHO/EU progressing overweight/obesity in EU and have two ongoing work packages focusing on food consumption data and policy & implementation structures. Meeting next week. WHO/EU initiative on evaluating interventions in order to monitor implementation of strategies in Member States
- New broadcasting bill expected to be enacted before the end of this month with the new broadcasting authority to be established in September. BCI set up expert group to look at Food Standards Agency approach to establish criteria for foods. This group is due to report in September. A representative from FSA London will present on their system at the next meeting.
- The HSE is holding a meeting in September to look at WHO/UK Growth Charts and progressing ROI charts

FSANI

- FSA just finished a consultation on their three year strategic plan. Would like to build OPSF targets into their work. Plan for local consultation later this year.
- Chairing OPSF Food and Nutrition Sub-group. Three sub-groups (under fives, children and young people, and adults and older people) are developing outcomes and actions
- National Diet and Nutrition Survey – collecting data in NI for the first time, n=200/year, rolling survey, first year of data collection completed, difficulties obtaining blood samples, particularly from children, steering group meeting soon to discuss these issues
- Saturated fat reduction programme – liaising with large manufacturers, similar to salt work, will publish targets on website
- FSA-commissioned study on front of pack (FOP) labeling recently published. Combination of traffic light and GDA systems with high, medium and low descriptors preferred. Going back to FSA board in July for decision on scheme. Large manufacturers in NI already using hybrid scheme. All such schemes can only be voluntary due to EU legislation. Concern presently around FOP labeling and potential for making health claims

It was noted that FSAI research in ROI on labeling established similar findings and that a harmonized system would have to go ahead in the EU, however, all Member States are in very different places

HSE

- Obesity Action Plan being implemented
- Physical Activity Guidelines launched last week. Looking to develop physical activity policy with DOHC
- Guidelines on Management and Treatment of Obesity and Maintenance of Healthy Weight under development in conjunction with the NNSC

safefood

- Sending out nutrition update in the coming weeks
- Little Steps campaign (www.littlesteps.eu) – fourth wave of radio and television advertising commenced last week, with the next phase commencing late August. Campaign will be further developed next year
- Weigh2live website (www.weigh2live.eu) currently being promoted to health professionals (GPs and practice nurses)
- Workplace salt campaign taking place late summer
- Research: Further analysis of the National Children's Survey and Knowledge and practice in relation to drinks for children and young people to be launched early autumn. Research calls on a variety of areas, including health professionals attitudes towards monitoring weight and height, and portion size, closed last week
- Actively participating in OPSF development and ROI Intersectoral group
- Attended European Congress on Obesity in Amsterdam. Key themes were how to engage with parents via schools, evaluation, usefulness of height to waist measurements.
- New Consumer Focused Review on Food Behaviours underway relating to nutrition and food safety on the island of Ireland. Will be available in Spring 2010

The value of sharing research plans among Forum members was discussed and it was agreed that this would assist in identifying gaps and developing future research priorities.

Arising from the tour de table, it was recognized that much work pertaining to obesity had been progressed via the Forum and also the Intersectoral Group in ROI. There was a call for renewed action by the Intersectoral Group.

It was also suggested that the North South Ministerial Council meetings (bi-annual) would be an ideal forum to discuss shared obesity targets.

Action Point 2: MHy to circulate BTOR from Obesity Conference

Action Point 3: Members to send list of various obesity-related projects to secretariat for dissemination to members

4. Plan for Forum

a. Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference were agreed subject to minor amendment, namely the inclusion of value for money/best use of resources in the remit. It was agreed that MH should remain the Chair of the Forum for continuity rather than rotating the position. MH

agreed and it was noted that **safefood** value a sense of ownership among all members so this position can be reviewed.

b. Membership

The need for engagement with the education sector, the food industry and physical activity specialists (as distinct from sport) was highlighted and discussed. It was agreed that representation from the following should be sought:

1. Irish Chartered Society of Physiotherapists and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists Northern Ireland
2. Food and Drinks Industry Ireland
3. Physical Activity – academic representation to be sought

It was noted that the Northern Ireland Food and Drink Association (NIFDA) presented at the Obesity Inquiry last week

c. Structure

The new structure encompassing a Forum meeting followed by a workshop was perceived to be a positive development and that ongoing interaction was facilitated by the e-bulletin 'All-island Obesity News'. The subject of inviting press to the workshops was discussed, however, it was felt that the focus of the Forum was on collaboration and awareness-raising which might be impacted negatively upon were the media to be present. It was suggested that a press release could be issued to the media following each workshop.

5. Future Work

a. Meetings and Workshops

It was suggested that the next workshop focus on physical activity in order to further engage with stakeholders in this area. It was agreed that this would be timely as the guidelines have just been launched in ROI and are in development in NI. It was further suggested that the Forum could invite presentations from those involved in these groups. Other topics suggested included labeling, evaluation, strengthening the evidence base, catering sector - making healthy choices, and industry engagement/partnerships. A section on themes for future workshops was included on the evaluation form for the workshop taking place after the meeting.

It was agreed that the minutes of each Forum meeting would be posted on the **safefood** website (<http://www.safefood.eu/en/Professional/Networks/All-island-Obesity-Action-Forum/>) following agreement by Members at the Forum's next meeting

Action Point 4: Secretariat to ensure minutes of Forum meetings are published on the Forum page of the safefood website

Action Point 5: Secretariat to notify Members of potential themes for future workshops arising from the evaluation

b. All-island Obesity News

Members highlighted the value of this e-bulletin and the need for wider dissemination.

Action Point 6: Members to circulate within their organisations and networks and encourage peers to subscribe to mailing list

Action Point 7: Secretariat to broaden dissemination list

6. AOB

The obesity paper provided by the Department of Education Northern Ireland was circulated. It was noted that DOHC are working on criteria for foods under the School Food Programme with the Department of Social and Family Affairs who provide €35 million per annum under this funding programme. There was a call for consistency of approach across all regions in NI in relation to snack schemes and the need for congruency between dental health and healthy eating messages and also environmental messaging.

The next meeting will take place during the first two weeks of November.

Action Point 7: Secretariat to circulate list of potential dates to members

As there was no further business the meeting concluded at 1pm.