
**Minutes of the sixth meeting of the All-island Obesity Action Forum, held on
Wednesday 08 June 2011 at The Stormont Hotel, Belfast**

Present

Mr Martin Higgins	safefood (chair)
Dr Edel Keaveney	Food Safety Authority Ireland
Ms Ursula O'Dwyer	Department of Health
Ms Maria Jennings	Food Standards Agency
Mr Ian McClure	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
Mr Rob Phipps	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
Ms Gillian Costello	Irish Sports Council
Ms Eve McKay	Department of Education and Skills
Dr Nazih Eldin	Health Service Executive
Ms Claire Holmes	All-island Community Nutrition and Dietetic Group
Ms Sharon Daly	Irish Heart Foundation
Ms Maureen Mulvihill	Irish Heart Foundation
Dr Tracy Owen	Public Health Agency
Ms Anna Gillespie	Diabetes UK Northern Ireland

In Attendance

Dr Marian Faughnan	safefood
Dr Barbara Whelan	safefood
Dr Aileen McGloin	safefood
Ms Emily Kelleher	safefood , Minute Secretary

Apologies

Dr Kevin Balanda	Institute of Public Health in Ireland
Mr Gerry McElwee	Ulster Cancer Foundation
Dr Muireann Cullen	Nutrition and Health Foundation
Ms Janas Harrington	HRB Centre for Diet and Health Research
Ms Janis Morrissey	Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute
Ms Sinead Hanley	Diabetes Federation of Ireland
Prof Marie Murphy	University of Ulster

1. Welcome

Mr Higgins welcomed members to the sixth Forum meeting. Apologies were noted.

2. Roundtable introductions

Members introduced themselves. Mr Higgins informed members present that Ms Emily Kelleher would be taking over the secretariat role from Barbara Whelan.

3. Minutes of meeting 09 November and any matters arising

Draft minutes from the previous meeting were approved within one month of the last meeting. There were no matters arising, however, Dr Marian Faughnan acknowledged the acceptance of the minutes worked well previously. She also noted the suggested topics for the next workshop, which will be held in November in Dublin focusing on the economic cost of obesity. Other suggestions are being kept on file for workshops in 2012. Members were encouraged to continue sending in any suggestions for the workshop via email.

4. Policy Update

Republic of Ireland (ROI) - Ms Ursula O' Dwyer

The new minister of health Dr James O'Reilly has a keen interest in obesity and has given the issue high priority. The Department of Health and Children (DOHC) has split up into the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Children (DOC). The Minister for Children is also interested in the issue.

A Special Action Group on Obesity (SAGO) has been established by the DOH. This is a small internal group with members of the DOH, HSE and others as needed. The Minister for Health has requested the DOH meet him every 3 months and give an update on obesity. In addition to this, there will be a monthly update in writing.

Negotiations and discussions around the 'Healthy Eating Guidelines' and the Food Pyramid are ongoing between the DOH and FSAI. The new booklet is expected to be published in July.

Mr Martin Higgins asked Ms O' Dwyer whether the intersectoral group on obesity was still together. Ms O' Dwyer informed the group that it is likely to be replaced by the above mentioned Special Action Group on Obesity which will invite different players to attend meetings as priorities in their area are being discussed/ actioned.

Finally, Ms O' Dwyer informed the members that the DOH was putting together a public health framework. A consultation meeting is taking place on 13th June 2011.

Northern Ireland (NI) - Mr Rob Phipps

The 'Fitter Future for All' framework has been sent out for consultation and subsequently been edited. The previous health minister accepted the report and sent it out to his executive colleagues for comment. One department reported back some comments to be considered. Since then, a new minister has been appointed. He is to review the framework again and send it out to his executive colleagues. Realistically, Mr Phipps informed members that the framework should be published in the autumn.

Four UK CMOs are currently signing off guidelines on physical activity and there is to be a UK launch before summer. The guidelines are to follow a life course approach for different age groups and are intended for health professionals' use.

The UK Coalition government has set up the 'Public Health Responsibility Deal' which covers issues related to lifestyle, workplace and health, food, physical activity, behaviour change and alcohol. This was published in March 2011. The DHSSPS have been involved with the alcohol network but not with the physical activity or food network.

Further to the previous BBC programme on obesity 'Dead Fat', Mr Phipps informed members to expect 2 more BBC programmes on obesity this calendar year.

5. Tour de Table

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

Food Standards Agency (FSA) NI

- Due to changes in the structure of the FSA in England, with their nutritional remit moving to the DH, the FSANI are currently re-establishing working relationships within the DH. The FSANI are not currently participating in the food network mentioned previously by Mr Phipps but are making an effort to become part of it.
- Have built in commitments made to the 'Fitter Future for All' framework to FSA NI 5 year strategic plan.
- Funding evaluation of the Catering Award NI to see if it will be taken forward. It is to be completed by the end of this calendar year.
- A network for caterers and caterer suppliers has been established. They met in February and the discussion focused on how to introduce initiatives to provide healthy food for consumers and how to try and improve food choices for consumers.
- A network for retailers and then manufacturers is to be set up. They already have contact with some of the big manufacturers e.g. Moy Park, and are currently thinking about how to reach and support smaller manufacturers.
- Ms Jennings noted that the 4 CMOs agreed that they want to see mandatory folic acid fortification. They now need to agree on the levels of fortification and subsequently agree and change legislation.

Food Safety Authority Ireland (FSAI)

- A member of FSAI staff sits on the EU working group on food information package. In this group the format of nutrition labelling on food packaging remains undecided on whether to include saturated and trans fats.
- Dr Keaveney sits in on the EU working group meetings on 1) Nutrition and Health Claims and 2) Food supplements and the addition of vitamins and minerals to foods. The Nutrition and Health Claims group are continuing to look at the wording and conditions of use for Article 13 (general health) claims, which includes health claims on satiety and appetite. The final permitted list of Article 13 claims is expected in early 2012.

Discussion then ensued regarding food labelling

- Dr Eldin asked Dr Keaveney whether there would be a possible role for the FSAI in simplifying labelling in Ireland.
- Ms Mulvihill noted that a vote will be taking place on food labelling in the European Parliament on 5th of July. Currently there is no mandatory legislation regarding front of pack (FOP) labelling. FOP is what they will be lobbying for from now on.
- Mr Higgins noted that this had been done in Denmark, but only on foods made in the country. This could pose a problem for national programmes on the island of Ireland because a lot of foods are imported.
- It was noted that the National Heart Alliance doesn't have a formal position on labelling but they do on food marketing.

Action Point 1: Ms O' Dwyer is to circulate an information update on wording relevant to FOP labelling in EU to all Forum members

Irish Sports Council (ISC)

- The Irish Sports Monitor is an ongoing telephone survey of participation in sport and physical exercise in Ireland. The survey is primarily designed to track levels of participation in sport, both for the population as a whole and various

subpopulations of interest. An updated report will be published soon on www.irishsportsCouncil.ie

- The 'Speak' report which provides an update from all 32 Local Sports partnerships (LSP) will be published soon on the website.
- The ISC were involved with Operation Transformation this year by running different events with LSP.
- Continuing involvement with An Póist; the number of cycling events has increased significantly over the last two years.
- The National Trails Office is to publish information on different walking and cycling trails around ROI on www.irishtrails.ie.

Department of Education and Skills (DES)

Ms McKay noted that this was the first time a member of the DES has attended the forum meeting and she will email a report of current and past activities to all Forum members.

Briefly, the DES is involved in the school curriculum through

- Social, Personal and health Education (SPHE)
- Physical Education and
- Home Economics

Non-curriculum initiatives included

- Sports outside school hours
- Guidelines for schools to develop healthy eating policies
- Healthy eating education for parents
- Breakfast Clubs

Action Point 2: Ms Kelleher is to contact Ms McKay for a full report on DES activities and circulate it to all Forum members.

Health Service Executive (HSE)

- Established a working group across all services to review and support work in this area. Will also participate in DOH group.
- Report from Child obesity surveillance programme expected soon.
- With UCD have established a BMI database to aid work from a scientific point of view.
- Treatment Centres at St Colmcille's, Loughlinstown and Galway University Hospital are open. The treatment centre at Connolly will be opened soon. There are promising signs of a fourth centre to be opened in Cork University – Mercy Hospital.
- Establishing database of BMI for 25-40 year olds and agreed guidelines for detection and treatment of obesity in association with The Royal College of Physicians and ICGP.
- The provision of a primary care algorithm will allow nurses and other health care professionals to refer and deal with any potential obesity problems.
- Ongoing work with the ISC on enhancing participation in physical activity, through community games initiatives, the 'After School Activity' programme and finally through a programme aimed at targeting specific groups e.g. they are currently undertaking a project with basketball teams.
- The updated 'Get Ireland Active' website, supported by the HSE, will soon launch. It involves an interactive map of Ireland where over 56 different organisations will provide information on events and activities in Ireland.

All-island Community Nutrition and Dietetic Group

Previous recommendations were made for NI community dietitians to specialise. Currently they are being pulled back into clinical work and there is concern that this will impact on the implementation of the 'Fitter Future for All' framework. NI Community Dietitians are being surveyed currently to look at the situation.

Irish Heart Foundation (IHF)

- In September the IHF will be launching a new TV advertising campaign to increase awareness of heart attack symptoms. The campaign will explore risk factors such as obesity.
- Work relating to healthy eating and physical activity is ongoing in schools and workplaces.
- A resource for primary schools called 'Action for Life' will be launched soon which will complement the previous 'Action for Life' schools resource.
- Continuing to advocate for clear front of package labelling, as already mentioned.
- There is a Nutritional Heart Alliance meeting on June 13th with the focus being on food marketing.
- The WHO will be publishing the consensus of nutritional profiling soon.
- Currently updating and republishing all of their leaflets and are producing a new cookbook, with 120 recipes, in September.

Ms Mulvihill informed members that the European Society of Cardiology Conference will be held in early May 2012, in Dublin. It is hoped that a session on obesity will take place and Ms Mulvihill asked members for any suggestions for this session.

Public Health Agency (PHA)

- The PHA are reorganising themselves internally with regards to their obesity agenda. They recognise that they need to take a regional approach and produce a list of priorities within the organisation to ensure that work is being done within a framework where everyone is working to the same priorities.
- PHA are bringing forward recommendations and developing an annual action plan for obesity prevention work. In 2011/12 this includes a focus on the CMACE Report on Obesity in Pregnancy. (E.g. Extension of the community 'Cook It' programme, to pregnant women).
- Food for school programme continues. The launch of 'Eat, Taste and Grow' resource for primary schools takes place on the 22nd of June.
- A regional recipe book for schools, to comply with nutritional standards across NI, is coming out around October time.
- Exploring ways that all programmes associated with the year 8 weight management programme can have agreed common standards across the region.
- Implementation of 'A Fitter Future' once agreed.
- Considering regional branding on work on obesity which would show a joined up approach to tackling the issue.

Diabetes UK Northern Ireland

- Contributed to the draft OPSF by making submission to the Public consultation, this is available through the website www.diabetes.org.uk/northernireland
- Active member of the Cardiovascular Service Framework (CSF) Group which recently launched its Health Impact Assessment on June 1st and is available on the Public Health Agency website.

- The three standards on diabetes within the CSF are under review and will be revised during this year to be made more meaningful.
- Active member of the Western Trust Managed Clinical Network (MCN) for Diabetes and developing User Group supported by the Network Manager.
- Involved in developing an MCN for Belfast in conjunction with the Belfast Local Commissioning Group Lead.
- Active with the NI Regional Diabetes Paediatric Network.
- Currently working on a Diabetes Pathfinder Project with the Belfast Local Commissioning Group in South Belfast.
- Campaign on Insulin Pumps has helped clear the 2010/2011 waiting list in children although there were issues around the lack of staff to support the education programmes.
- Good news expected through the CAWT programme shortly to benefit NI and the Border Counties to secure insulin pumps for all children up to 2013.
- Major event in the Long Gallery at Stormont during Diabetes Week to draw attention to the problems faced by children with Type 1 diabetes at school (13th June).
- Diabetes UK NI has launched a manifesto 2011-2015 for the redesign of Diabetes Services in NI to include a policy of active and aggressive interventions to prevent the onset of Type 2 diabetes. Copies are available on the website.
- Co-hosting with WHSCT, the first NI Diabetic Foot Conference which is to be held in Cookstown on Tuesday 27th September.
- Active with Managed Obesity Network in Northern Health and Social Care Trust.

Safefood

- Stop the Spread was launched in May 2011.
- A more detailed update will be circulated in July 2011

Mr Higgins thanked members for their contributions and highlighted the value of the preceding updates.

5. Forum Evaluation

An information sheet outlining **safefood's** recommendations, following on from the evaluation of the All-island Obesity Action Forum, was distributed to all members at the start of the Forum meeting. Dr Barbara Whelan and Dr Marian Faughnan reiterated these recommendations and a discussion ensued. Suggestions from the members regarding the format of the Forum meeting included:

- Members should put forward one topic for discussion during the meeting (e.g. food labelling)
- Departments should give a full update of current activities and other members to give a shorter update
- Apologies should email any important updates to the Secretariat to read out, prior to the meeting.

Action Point 3: safefood will seek clarification from the DOH and the DHSSPS regarding their suggestions for safefoods recommendations, which came out of the forum evaluation

As there was no further business the meeting concluded at 3.45pm.