
Minutes of the third meeting of the All-island Obesity Action Forum, held on Thursday 12th November, 2009 at The Clarion Hotel (IFSC), Dublin

Present

Ms Ruth Balmer	Food Standards Agency (RB)
Ms Gerry Bleakney	Public Health Agency (GB)
Ms Fiona Coyne	Irish Sports Council (FC)
Dr Muireann Cullen	Nutrition and Health Foundation (MC)
Dr Cliodhna Foley-Nolan	safefood (CFN)
Ms Claire Holmes	All-island Community Nutrition and Dietetic Group (CH)
Mr Barry Lambe	Waterford Institute of Technology (BL)
Ms Maria Lordan Dunphy	Health Service Executive (MLD)
Ms Janis Morrissey	Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (JM)
Ms Maureen Mulvihill	Irish Heart Foundation (MM)
Prof Marie Murphy	University of Ulster (MMur)

In Attendance

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

Apologies

Mr Martin Higgins	Chair, safefood
Ms Pauline Mulholland	British Dietetic Association NI
Ms Ursula O' Dwyer	Department of Health and Children
Mr Rob Phipps	Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety
Ms Janas Harrington	University College Cork
Dr Brian Redahan	Food Safety Authority of Ireland
Dr Niamh Murphy	Waterford Institute of Technology (represented by BL)
Ms Maria Jennings	Food Standards Agency (represented by RB)
Mr John Treacy	Irish Sports Council (represented by FC)
Mr Colin Dunleavy	Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists
Ms Norma Cronin	Irish Cancer Society

1. Welcome and introductions

Dr Cliodhna Foley-Nolan, deputy Chair, welcomed members to the third Forum meeting and in particular welcomed new members to the Forum. These included Dr Niamh Murphy (represented by Dr Barry Lambe), Waterford Institute of Technology; Prof Marie Murphy, University of Ulster; the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Northern Ireland. It was noted that Seamus McLoughlin, Department of Education and Science recently moved posts and that new representation is being sought from the Department. Representation is also currently being sought from Diabetes UK (Northern Ireland) and the Diabetes Federation of Ireland.

The Chair highlighted apologies from Mr Rob Phipps, Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) who was unable to attend and/or deputise due to

the impending launch of the Health Inquiry Committee's Inquiry on Obesity on Monday 16 November. Further apologies were noted and round-table introductions ensued.

Action Point 1: Secretariat to progress membership

2. Minutes of meeting 16 June 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:

safefood

- Following the success of the social media presentation at the last Forum workshop, an in-house workshop was held in October. **safefood** is exploring ways of using new media in its campaigns and will also hold an all-island conference on communicating through the web in June 2010
- **safefood**/ Health Service Executive (HSE) 'Little Steps' campaign (www.littlesteps.eu) ongoing
- Weigh2live website (www.weigh2live.eu) currently being promoted to health professionals (GPs and practice nurses) in conjunction with the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI) and a mass media campaign will begin 27 December 2009
- Workplace salt campaign is in its final week
- There will be a variety of new research projects commencing in 2010, including health professionals' attitudes towards monitoring weight and height, and portion size
- Actively participating in the development of the Obesity Prevention Strategic Framework (OPSF) in Northern Ireland (NI) and in the Intersectoral group in the Republic of Ireland (ROI)
- Consumer Focused Review on Food Behaviours on the island of Ireland will be available in Spring 2010 and there will be an associated event
- Funding a Demonstration Programme of Community Food Initiatives, managed by Healthy Food for All. Contracts with seven initiatives on the island are currently being finalised. Leading the development of a food poverty network in NI in conjunction with the Food Standards Agency (FSA)
- **safefood** has held an open competition for the selection of nine Knowledge Network Facilitators. These tenders are currently being evaluated. One of the networks will focus on food behaviour and members will be eligible to participate once it is established
- Working with the Irish Heart Foundation (IHF) and HSE on the roll-out of the Happy Heart Catering Award
- Disseminating nutrition update to stakeholders next month

FSANI

- Fourth phase of public awareness campaign on salt launched 05 October

- SACN consultation on draft report on energy requirements launched on 05 November. Estimated Average Requirements (EARS) are increased by 16% based on improved understanding of physical activity levels. Concern was expressed that these revisions could be misinterpreted
- FSA consultation on front of pack (FOP) labeling closed 05 November and responses are being collated with a view to advising Ministers in March 2010
- DHSSPS Food and Nutrition stakeholder event relating to development of the OPSF was held on 10 November. Maria Jennings chaired this event and will send the report to Forum members. The event was well attended, and there was good practitioner representation. No new issues arose, however the draft outcomes refinement. The revised outcomes will be presented to the Food and Nutrition subgroup at start of December with a full consultation on the strategy in April 2010

Action Point 2: Maria Jennings to circulate report from Food and Nutrition stakeholder event to Forum members

- Saturated fat/energy intake consultation, looking at recommendations for meat, dairy and savoury snacks, will be launched end of November. This will be the second consultation around draft recommendations for industry. The first addressed reduction of saturated fat and energy in bakery products
- Work on voluntary commitments with caterers continuing. FSA is currently working with two large contract caterers in NI. The types of action will include procurement, menu planning, reformulation, kitchen practices, as well as providing customers with more nutritional information
- Working on targeted advice for small to medium-sized businesses. A pilot project with fish and chip shops is currently being developed to enable them to make small, incremental changes

Waterford Institute of Technology

- A number of relevant research projects on-going in the Department of Health, Sport and Exercise Science:
 - Influence of mass participation sports events to keep people active pre- and post such events
 - Influence of internet/online support on activity levels
 - Programme on public facilities on how to get disadvantaged engaged
 - Community development approach with vulnerable men incorporating health checks

It was noted that **safefood** and the HSE are also conducting work with men. **safefood** is currently piloting a lifestyle/weight loss programme for truck drivers on the island, while the HSE is funding health checks with vulnerable male groups (e.g. Farmers with hearts in Roscommon targeting men at marts, health checks also held at the National Ploughing Championships).

All-island Community Nutrition and Dietetic Group/Health Promoting Dietitians NI

- Annual meeting, funded by **safefood**, held in June. The hosting of next year's meeting is under discussion due to travel restrictions
 - Obesity-related activities are ongoing in each area. Fresh Programme in Belfast which aims to tackle obesity in children is currently being

evaluated. There are a number of Cook-It programmes being delivered across NI. The Southern Trust has employed a dietitian to implement the Cook-It programme in schools.

- A number of activities are ongoing in the Western Trust – Active Families, Health Promoting Homes, Cook IT Training, Food Values Pilot
- Involved in the EU-funded Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT) obesity project (see below for further details)

University of Ulster - School of Sports Studies

- Five staff in the Department working on a range of areas from molecular level to psychology, children to old age and normal weight to obese
- Helped deliver Active Families in North West
- Submitted two projects to the National Institute for Health Research's call for obesity-themed research – one on post-partum and obesity intervention in children. Will commence in 2010 if applications successful
- Involved in UK guidelines process on the adult group. There are also groups for children and older adults. Had ROI guidelines at last meeting. 23 recommendations for public consideration end of November. Aim is to have one CMO report for all 4 regions of the UK and from that guidelines

Public Health Agency (PHA)

- Progress with new structures has been slower than anticipated for a variety of reasons, including swine flu pandemic
- Work on joint units with Councils in terms of public health is progressing. A number of short briefing papers are being drafted arising from this process. The obesity paper will be drafted and signed off within six weeks
- Involved with DHSSPS on OPSF
- Participated in Institute of Public Health workshop on obesity-related issues
- Childhood obesity has been identified as a priority for action. Pilot interventions taking place in all four areas for obese children identified through the Child Health Appraisal System. North and West pilots deferred until Summer term due to swine flu, but South and East are going ahead

Irish Heart Foundation (IHF)

- Focus over the last five years has been on health promotion, including physical activity and nutrition programmes
- Ongoing workplace programmes include:
 - Healthy Eating Award - 50 establishments certified each year, annual award ceremony being held next week
 - Catering Award ongoing in conjunction with HSE North East and Midland areas only but negotiations with **safefood** underway for national roll-out. Happy Heart Eat Out month held for 14 years until 2008 to support the award.
 - Working with Community Training Centres on curriculum and provision
 - Active at Work – walking/step challenge, Slí na Sláinte

- Heart week took place end of September – guidelines and workplace – theme this year was Walk for Heart. Evaluation underway, hard to get publicity. 450 walks on World Heart Day
- Action for Life in Primary Schools ongoing
- Continuing advocacy for front of pack labeling and traffic lights (with Guideline Daily Amounts)
- Marketing of unhealthy food to children is an ongoing issue – legislation to be put in place. Broadcasting Commission of Ireland consultation in New Year
- National Heart Alliance will launch a briefing paper on physical activity and the built environment early in the New Year
- EU POLMARK project report to be published in the New Year

Nutrition and Health Foundation (NHF)

- Undergoing strategic review
- Presented at Oireachtas inquiry on 16 June to keep obesity on the agenda
- Increased research focus
 - Pigsback survey on weight loss will be publicised in the near future
 - Looking at medium term project with Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) around first year students and healthy lifestyles
 - Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) survey – awaiting publication in British Journal of Family Practice – will be presented at conference in Mexico in May 2010
- Held annual conference in October entitled 'Food and Fitness: Practical solutions to obesity'
- Workplace programmes on healthy eating and physical activity ongoing
- In discussions with the Restaurants Association of Ireland about healthier eating practices
- Next Council meeting will host Change4life and Littlesteps presentations to see how members can support

Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI)

- Involved in a number of obesity-related activities
 - Department of Health and Children (DOHC) Treatment Algorithm for weight management
 - Working with Irish Pharmaceutical Union
 - Updating weight management paper
 - Weight Management Interest Group working with UK counterparts on adapting resources
 - Weigh2live
 - Little steps
 - Review of healthy eating guidelines and food pyramid

Health Service Executive (HSE)

- Further restructuring of services about to take place. Population Health is being dismantled and three new structures will exist comprising Planning, Integrated Services (including health promotion and will be closely aligned to Primary Care), and Clinical Quality Care
- WHO Surveillance Report gone to print
- Working with the National Nutrition Surveillance Centre (NNSC) on various projects
 - Guidelines on Management and Treatment of Obesity and Maintenance of Healthy Weight will be completed by the end of the year

Further to the discussion on men's health and the need to tackle other issues before negotiating on weight, the inclusion of such issues around overweight/obesity such as stress and mental health in the algorithms was raised. It was noted that the huge shortage of psychologists in primary care was a barrier to this. It was highlighted also, however, that the ACE Programme in the Midlands which involves the wider community was working well

- Needs assessment of healthcare professionals on obesity management
- Healthy procurement policy review completed and will be published early 2010
- Review of family-based programmes
- TCD developing programme for managing morbidly obese in hospital setting
- Reviewing guidelines for community based treatment of obesity
- A workshop on growth charts facilitated by Sean Denyer was held
- Physical activity guidelines – trying to get sub-group of Intersectoral Group established. HEPA (Europe) looking to track progress. Moving towards policy action plan. Meeting next week to investigate joint working with Councils, Department of Transport
- Working with CAWT and the Western and Southern Trusts on a three-year EU-funded obesity project. The project involved the development of two programmes, one focusing on treatment, the other prevention. The Project Board and Project Manager are being advised by a Quality Assurance sub-group and a Programme Development sub-group

Irish Sports Council (ISC)

- Represented on various advisory groups - Intersectoral Group, Little Steps, Physical Activity Guidelines
- Obesity mentioned in ISC strategy but want to increase number of people involved in physical activity, keep people active through lifecycle, especially women (older) and teenage girls. The key aim is to present people with alternative avenues
- Involved with a number of agencies/departments on various projects
 - Smarter travel – Department of Transport
 - HSE
 - Trying to work with the Department of Education and Science – have joint vision on how they link with physical education

- Want to push joined-up working
- Irish Sports Monitor due to be released shortly (participants >16 years)
- Children's Research Project with the University of Limerick (UL), Dublin City University (DCU) and University College Cork (UCC) investigating primary and post primary school children's attitudes and behaviours to physical activity- will be published early next year

The issue of physical activity versus sport was discussed. It was agreed that the key issues was physical activity for life.

4. Policy Update

As Mr Phipps was unable to attend and provide the group with an oral update, he forwarded the group the latest newsletter from the Obesity Prevention Development Team along with his apologies. The draft strategy will be compiled in December; public consultation in Spring 2010; and final publication in June 2010.

MLD informed the group that there have been no further meetings of the Intersectoral Group in ROI and that the Department is currently awaiting progress reports from the various sub-groups. The Secretariat was asked to request an update from DOHC on the Intersectoral Group.

Action Point 3: Secretariat to request update on Intersectoral Group from DOHC

5. Future Work

a. Meetings and Workshops

Potential dates for the next Forum meeting are to be circulated. Suggestions for future workshops from members included behavior change, partnerships, and tackling sedentary behavior. At the last workshop in June attendees were asked what they would like to see addressed in future workshops - evaluation, strengthening the evidence base, catering sector - making healthy choices, and industry engagement/partnerships all had equal favour. The Secretariat is to circulate suggestions from today's workshop to members.

Action Point 4: Secretariat to disseminate potential topics for the next workshop to members

b. All-island Obesity News

The fifth edition of this e-bulletin will be published early December along with a survey to evaluate recipients' attitudes and perceptions towards it. There has been an increase in the number of subscriptions; however, it is unknown how many people actually receive it as it is also circulated through other networks including the National Heart Alliance, the OPSG, Intersectoral Group, Nutrition Society, and Healthy Food for All. Members were asked to submit relevant material for inclusion in forthcoming issues, including news items, research updates, new resources/campaigns and back to office reports from conferences

Action Point 6: Members to identify content for future issues and contact Secretariat

6. AOB

Date for the next meeting in May/June is to be decided.

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

As there was no further business the meeting concluded at 12.40pm.