

WORKING TOGETHER FOR SAFE AND HEALTHY FOOD FOR ALL



INFORMATION FOR COUNTY-WIDE FOOD & HEALTH PARTNERSHIP WORKSHOPS MARCH 2007



WORKING TOGETHER FOR SAFE AND HEALTHY FOOD FOR ALL

This information sheet is designed to provide a quick reference guide to some of the organisations and teams working on the food and health agenda within the East Midlands.

The Food Standards Agency (East Midlands) and emphasis (the East Midlands Public Health Network) are running a series of county wide partnership workshops on food & health during March 2007. A wide range of organisations have a role in ensuring that we all have access to a safe and healthy diet. These workshops aim to facilitate understanding and raise awareness of the roles played by these different individuals and organisations working across the region. They will also be an opportunity to discuss ways of working better together now, and to begin the process of developing new partnership projects and programmes in the future.

LOCAL AUTHORITY

Local authorities are responsible for the day to day monitoring and enforcement of most UK food and animal feed legislation. They also have a role in delivering and enforcing certain elements of central Government policy on animal health and animal welfare rules.



Environmental Health

Environmental Health Practitioners (EHPs) are based in district or borough councils and unitary local authorities. In addition to their food safety work EHPs, together with specialist technical support officers, have a wide public health remit which includes regulating workplace health and safety, housing conditions, and air quality, including noise pollution. As such EHPs are often the first port of call for businesses and consumers requiring information or wishing to raise concerns about a range of public health issues.

As part of their food safety activities EHPs routinely inspect and \ or take samples of food from shops, restaurants and manufacturers to ensure food hygiene and safety standards comply with the law. In many authorities this work would include food safety promotion or training activities. EHPs are responsible for investigating consumer complaints about food safety and hygiene, and incidents such as food poisoning or outbreaks of communicable diseases. In Unitary authorities EHPs may also be involved in the regulation of food standards ie food composition and labelling.

Trading Standards

Trading Standards Officers (TSOs) are based in second tier county or unitary local authorities. TSOs regulate and promote fair trading across a wide area of goods and services which consumers buy, hire or sell.

TSOs are responsible for enforcing food standards legislation (e.g. food composition, labelling, claims and presentational matters), on-farm food hygiene, and animal health and welfare rules. They check that the claims made about products are accurate by ensuring that information on labels is correct and that advertisements or claims are not misleading. As part of their activities to prevent fraud and illegal trade practices, TSOs routinely inspect food businesses, take food samples for laboratory analysis, and provide advice to consumers or businesses.

Public Analysts

Public Analyst (PA) are specially designated official laboratories carrying out the chemical analysis and related tests needed to support the local authority food standards activity ie checking the composition, labelling and safety of food. The East Midlands have one PA lab in the region - Leicestershire Scientific Services, which is part of Leicestershire County Council. Public analysts may work across a wide remit to ensure the health and safety of the public. In addition to food analyses, their work might also take in feed standards, environmental matters such as pollution, and other consumer protection issues such as toy safety.

Health Protection Agency

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) provides the official microbiological laboratory back up to local authority EHPs for the analyses of food or water to assess its microbiological safety. They would also work very closely with local authority officers in the investigation of any local food poisoning outbreak.

Health Inequalities Teams

Health Inequalities teams are often part of Local Authorities. These teams work closely with PCTs to develop policies and support activities to ensure many areas of work including crime prevention, transport and housing as well as health, take account of health inequality issues. . Health inequality teams support and liaise with community groups to ensure that they are aware of policies and develop best practice examples at an operational level. As the hub of all health inequality issues, this team provides the point of contact which enables service delivery teams to reduce preventable ill-health and early death, focusing on those areas with the highest ill-health and need.

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE (NHS)

Primary Care Trusts (PCTs)

PCTs have recently undergone large scale re-organisation; and these changes aim to make health services more patient-centered. The majority of the restructured PCTs will share boundaries with Local Authority boundaries (County and Unitary).

PCTs work with local authorities and other agencies to ensure there are enough services for people within their area and that these services are accessible. These include hospitals, dentists, opticians, mental health services, NHS walk-in centres, NHS Direct and pharmacies, as well as providing services themselves. As they are local organisations, they are in a good position to understand the needs of their community, so they can make sure that health and social care services are working effectively.

Public Health Team

Public Health Teams are a part of the PCT and play an important role in preventative health care, health protection, and health improvement. They give essential support to some key areas within the health agenda. Teams work with the community to improve health and well-being as well as responding to statutory requirements on a variety of health issues as required by central government and local health policy. Public Health teams contribute to developing policies and provide this information locally. They are the responsibility of the Directors of Public Health, who in the most part, are now jointly appointed between the PCT and Local Authority, to encourage joined up working between the NHS and local authority services.

Dietetics

The Nutrition and Dietetics teams provide expert nutritional advice in a variety of settings including hospitals, community settings and within PCTs. Dietitians are trained to translate the science of nutrition into practical every-day information about food, providing accurate independent evidence-based advice on all aspects of nutrition and health.



REGIONAL BODIES



Directorate of Public Health - East Midlands

This team is the Department of Health and Strategic Health Authority's representation in the East Midlands Region. The team lead on a range of health issues for the region, including the implementation of 'Investment for Health' the regional strategy for improving health. Of the 16 Objectives included in the strategy one of the objectives is to improve diet and another is around food safety. An action plan called the East Midlands Food and Health Action Plan has been developed to help achieve these goals in the region.

Strategic Health Authority (SHA)

NHS East Midlands is the new SHA for the region. The SHA has a role to performance manage and support the NHS to deliver services to their local populations according to local need. Regional Public Health functions have been joined up across SHA and the Department of Health (see above).

Food Standards Agency - East Midlands

The Agency has now opened regional offices in four Government Office Regions including the East Midlands. The FSA has three main priorities around food safety, consumer choice and healthy eating, and are working at a regional and local level to build strong partnerships and embed these priorities within local and regional strategies and action plans in the East Midlands.

Engage East Midlands

Engage is an independent voluntary organisation founded by volunteers from the East Midlands based voluntary and community organisations. Engage are helping to build a strong and vibrant voluntary and community sector in the East Midlands.

East Midlands Public Health Observatory (EMPHO)

The East Midlands Public Health Observatory is one of the nine regional PHOs funded by the Department of Health. EMPHO is the regional health intelligence organisation providing support to those working to improve health and reduce health inequalities in the East Midlands. The East Midlands Public Health Observatory is also the national lead for food and health.

East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA)

The East Midlands Development Agency is one of the nine Regional Development Agencies in England brought about to bring regional focus to economic development. One of EMDA's main priorities along with business innovation, skills and economic growth is to promote and help to create a region where people feel that they are a part of healthy, inclusive communities and live in thriving, attractive places.

East Midlands Food and Drink Forum

The EM food and drink forum is a membership led organisation which supports the sustainable development of the food industry within the East Midlands. It aims to promote a vibrant and varied food and drink sector and has a range of initiatives aimed at supporting the development of food and drink businesses across the East Midlands.

Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM).

GOEM has 10 government departments under one roof. These include Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) with its responsibility for the Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food, and DfES (Department for Education and Skills) which oversees the National Healthy Schools Standard. GOEM's aim is to work with regional parties and local people to maximise competitiveness and prosperity in the East Midlands. It can help government initiatives work at a local level, and reflects the needs of the region back to central government.

COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Community Food Initiatives (CFIs)

These are an extremely broad range of organisations with diverse remits. These initiatives often work within some of the most disadvantaged areas of the region, with good links to the most hard to reach groups in society. The activities range from community cafes and allotment projects, to self help groups and campaigning organisations.

REGIONAL HEALTHY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

East Midlands Healthy Schools Programme

A Healthy School promotes the health and wellbeing of pupils and staff through a well planned curriculum in a physical and emotional environment that promotes learning and healthy lifestyle choices.

The national healthy school status is defined as the criteria schools need to satisfy before to be able to be recognised as a healthy school. The criteria relate to four themes: PSHE (including sex and relationship education and drug education), healthy eating, physical activity and emotional well being (including bullying). Local healthy school programmes can provide schools with tools for identifying their strengths and areas for development against the four themes and for consulting the entire school community (including, pupils, parents/carers and staff) to identify priorities for action.

Some Examples of Partnership Working

The Food for Thought Partnership came together to develop the successful bid to create a Healthy Living Centre for Northampton, with funding from The Big Lottery Fund (formerly NOF). The programme is also financially supported by both the Northampton PCT and Northampton Borough Council and garners a vast amount of in-kind resources from Northampton's voluntary sector and increasingly from the private and other public sector organisations. The Food for Thought Partnership - has, for the past four and a half years, been supporting the development of a network of food-based healthy living projects around Northampton.

Trading Standards Nottingham are working with Nottingham PCT to support the national FSA Salt

Campaign. The partnership will develop and deliver a social marketing campaign targeted at specific communities within the city. The aim is to change behaviour to reduce the amount of salt purchased in food, as well as reducing salt used in home cooking. Trading Standards will support this through the development of promotional materials and the provision of advice on labelling to consumers.

Daventry District Council Environmental Health Officers work in partnership with local schools and their Community Park Ranger to run an allotment project where children grow and cook their own food.

The Lincolnshire and East Lindsey partnership have conducted a broad range of activities across the area to promote the importance of food hygiene and good nutrition. The partnership includes local authorities (trading standards, environmental health and health improvement officers), the Primary Care Trust, schools, and the voluntary sector. The work has taken several formats: advice and information, talks and training, health promotion activities (e.g. displays) and legislative work. Considerable work has been conducted within the school setting. This has involved education about the importance of hand washing, food quality and labelling and also food preparation. There is also a strong focus given to the importance of good nutrition. For example, "The Lunchbox" project was a survey carried out to evaluate just how healthy the contents of most pupils' lunchboxes were.

Greater Nottingham's Food Initiatives Group received a national award from the Caroline Walker Trust for their work in the community on Food, Health and Environment. FIG is a local food partnership that includes representatives from public, private and voluntary organisations. It aims to encourage organisations and individuals to produce healthy, safe and affordable food from sustainable sources, including locally grown and organic food. FIG's Food, Health & Environment Strategy together with FIG events such as the School Food Event, went some way towards helping FIG win the award. This event celebrated the good practice that Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Councils are already doing on improving school food and encouraged more work along the right lines. In addition FIG supports community food projects, both practically and financially. The FIG Small Grant Fund has supported over 65 local food projects over the past four years.



USEFUL CONTACTS & WEBSITES

Rob Howard
Regional Coordinator
Food Standards Agency, East Midlands
GOEM
Stanley Place, Talbot Street
Nottingham NG1 5GG
Tel 0115 971 4756
Email: rob.howard@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

The Food Standards Agency Websites
www.food.gov.uk
www.salt.gov.uk
www.foodvision.gov.uk
www.eatwell.gov.uk

Regional Public Health Group
www.goem.gov.uk/goem/public-health/

Emphasis Food and Drink Network
www.emphasisnetwork.org.uk/emphasison/food.htm

East Midlands Public Health Observatory
www.empho.org.uk

Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
www.cieh.org

Trading Standards Websites
www.tsi.org.uk
www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

Engage East Midlands
www.engage-em.org.uk

Department of Health websites
www.dh.gov.uk
www.nhs.uk
www.5aday.nhs.uk

East Midlands Regional Assembly
(Regional Public Health Strategy)
www.emra.gov.uk/i4h

Healthy Schools
www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk
www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk

East Midlands Food and Drink Forum
www.foodanddrinkforum.co.uk

**WORKING
TOGETHER
FOR SAFE
AND HEALTHY
FOOD FOR ALL**

INFORMATION FOR COUNTY-WIDE FOOD & HEALTH PARTNERSHIP WORKSHOPS MARCH 2007