

**KEEP WELL THIS WINTER CAMPAIGN: BACKGROUND, EVALUATION AND FINDINGS**

**Executive Summary**

1. The attached paper describes the National Assembly for Wales' campaign "Keep Well This Winter" and the involvement of the Food Standards Agency Wales.
2. The paper also summarises the evaluation of the campaign and the key findings both for the general campaign and, more specifically, the Agency's booklet "Eating Well This Winter".
3. The Board is invited to:
  - **note** the work that has been done; and
  - **note** the findings of the evaluation and the next steps.

**Food Standards Agency Wales**

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**KEEP WELL THIS WINTER CAMPAIGN: BACKGROUND, EVALUATION AND FINDINGS**

**Issue**

1. This note describes the National Assembly for Wales' campaign "Keep Well This Winter" and the involvement of the Food Standards Agency Wales.
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**Background**

3. The Keep Well This Winter campaign is co-ordinated in Wales by Health Promotion Division, National Assembly for Wales.
4. The aim of the campaign is to provide information and support to senior citizens to enable them to keep well during the winter. The objectives are to improve access to help and support for the most vulnerable groups within the target audience; to encourage a co-ordinated multi-agency approach among those delivering front line services, including NAW, FSA, Age Concern and local authorities; and to take positive action to help improve the quality of life of the elderly in the winter period.
5. Partners this year included the Public Health, Health Promotion and Housing Divisions of the National Assembly, Age Concern, Food Standards Agency, Care and Repair Cymru and the Wales Youth Agency, representing a cross section of statutory and voluntary organisations in Wales.

**FSA Involvement**

6. The Agency led on the nutrition information component of the campaign and developed a booklet targeted at the over 65's which focussed on healthy eating and food safety recommendations and included several healthier eating recipes. To supplement the advice on food safety a fridge thermometer was included with each booklet.

7. In developing the booklet we consulted Age Concern Cymru as to a suitable format considering the specific requirements of the target group – these included booklet size, colour of background and text as well as text style and size. Other considerations included style of writing. We researched existing publications written for the elderly<sup>1</sup>. We also talked to agencies working with the elderly and more specifically with groups of elderly people.
8. The booklet was launched on 4<sup>th</sup> December by the Assembly’s Deputy Minister for Health and Social Security, Dr Brian Gibbons at Pontyclun Day Centre. The Minister was joined by campaign partners, senior authority officials and around 40 local pensioners who tested the recipes from the booklet at a two-course lunch. Celebrity chef and ACW member Gilli Davies, aided by Welsh celebrity Stan Stennett, followed with a cookery demonstration. A press release coincided with the launch.
9. **Over 50,000 booklets were distributed throughout Wales via Age Concern offices, Post Office counters, local health authorities, citizens' advice bureaux, libraries and NHS Direct.**
10. Other events to raise the profile of the booklet included:
  - a visit by Kirsty Williams AM (Chair of the NAW Health and Social Services Committee) to a pensioners group in Powys for a Christmas lunch on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2000 where she spoke about the campaign including healthy eating,
  - article by Gilli Davies, ACW member, in the Western Mail 10<sup>th</sup> February 2001
  - an Eating and Heating seminar held at the Centre for Alternative Technology in Machynlleth for approximately 20 Age Concern and CAMAD<sup>2</sup> luncheon club members on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2001. The programme included a cookery demonstration, a discussion about healthy eating issues led by the Agency's nutritionist Dr Claire Paisley and a two-course lunch. This was followed by an opportunity for the pensioners to learn about home energy efficiency.

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<sup>1</sup> “Eat Well, Stay Active - Healthy Eating for the Over 60s”, Health Education Board for Scotland; “Healthy Eating on a Budget”, Eating Well on a Budget”, Age Concern England; and “Keep Well Keep Warm”, NAFW/Swalec/Age Concern Wales.

<sup>2</sup> Community Action for Machynlleth and District

## **Evaluation of the Campaign**

11. Partners had agreed an evaluation of the whole campaign, as well as specific components, was an essential element that would help inform any future projects.

Research was commissioned with the aim of:

- assessing the awareness of Keep Well This Winter campaign
- assessing overall opinions of the campaign
- to gather opinions of two booklets, '**Eating Well This Winter**' and '**Keep Warm Keep Well**'
- determining preferred methods of receiving information
- determining distribution methods and
- assessing awareness and opinion of flu vaccination

12. The research consisted of a series of focus groups with the over 65's. Eight groups were recruited taking account of location, gender and age with an urban/rural split and a mix of people on private/state pensions, living in rented/own accommodation and married/living alone. Each member received a copy of both booklets in advance of the discussion to ensure that, if they hadn't already seen them, they would have adequate time to consider the content and presentation.

## **Campaign**

13. The report highlighted there was very low awareness of the campaign. Of those who were aware of the campaign, most were unsure where they had heard about it suggesting TV, word of mouth or social clubs as possible sources. All were unaware of any specific initiatives related to the campaign. Overall the campaign was felt to be a good idea although concern was expressed about the lack of publicity with most feeling this could be improved. Most had seen the TV/Press campaign for the flu vaccination but were not encouraged as they were having the vaccination anyway. All agreed the campaign should continue.

## **Booklets**

14. Generally very few had seen the booklets before, again those who had seen them were unsure of where this may have been suggesting GP surgeries as a possibility. Those who had seen them before had read the booklets.

15. "Keep Well Keep Warm" is produced annually by Age Concern, with funding from the National Assembly for Wales. The booklet outlines some of the things OAPs can do in order to prevent illness and be more comfortable during cold weather.

Initial reactions were positive, however most thought they already knew the information. All agreed it acted as a reminder of essential facts.

16. All agreed the booklets were not distributed widely enough and the preferred source was the Post Office. Other suggestions included libraries, supermarkets and personally delivered - perhaps with their cold weather benefit.
17. More specifically, reaction to **"Eating Well This Winter"** was very positive and complimentary. The most useful sections were considered to be the "Recipes", "Food Labelling" and "Food Safety" with "How to eat more healthily" and the "Introduction" being the least useful. It was considered the booklet was well presented and the correct tone had been achieved although most felt the messages were more relevant to young people than themselves. The free fridge thermometer also proved popular.
18. Most people considered they were already familiar with the content of the booklet but were surprised by the messages about not drinking tea with your meal, not drinking alcohol before bedtime and that there is usually as much goodness in frozen as fresh. As most people felt they ate healthily already, few thought that they would change any remaining bad habits.
19. There were few suggestions for improving the booklet but most would have liked to see more recipes. It was thought that it should be made clear that the booklet was free and that it was for over 65 year olds. There were suggestions for additional information, which included exercise, salt, diabetic recipes and microwave cooking.

### **Reflections on this Year's Campaign**

20. Campaign partners met for a general debriefing session in late March and reflected on what had worked well this year and whether any aspects needed strengthening for a future campaign. The general consensus was that the launch in October had been very successful, securing good press/media coverage. All partners felt that, in the timescale allowed, the quality of output was good and all agreed a partnership approach was beneficial. It was felt that the planning phase needed to be longer and partners would have liked to be more involved in the planning. However partners accepted the tight timescale for implementation was a main constraint this time. All considered it would be appropriate to look at what information for this age group was already available, with the suggestion that it

might be appropriate to carry out a needs assessment. Partners also considered the number of initiatives (6) being promoted this year could be reduced for the future.

### **Ideas for a Future Campaign**

21. Partners were invited to put forward ideas for future campaigns. All agreed that promotion of the key messages like the flu vaccination, the Home Energy Efficiency scheme and benefits take-up should be done at a national level, with a focus at local level on other key messages. Some suggestions for these new themes included physical exercise/mobility, minority groups/diabetics, work with vulnerable groups, mentoring, and a good neighbour scheme.

### **Next Steps**

22. The National Assembly for Wales has agreed to fund the continuation of the Keep Well This Winter campaign for 2001/2002 and have been in touch with the Food Standards Agency to discuss the Agency's involvement. A report to the Emergency Pressures Task Force to advise on the outcome of this year's campaign will issue shortly. Following this partners will meet to discuss the proposals for the next campaign and the role of individual organisations. The Advisory Committee for Wales have been involved throughout the process and a paper on the findings was presented at their Open meeting in Llandudno in April. The paper also put forward suggestions for the Agency's future involvement in the campaign and the Committee agreed to consider the options in due course.

### **Board Action Required**

23. The Board is invited to:

- **note** the work that has been done; and
- **note** the findings of the evaluation and the next steps.