

To: Interested Parties

5th October 2006

Reference: CPD

Dear Interested Party

FIRST MEETING OF NUTRITION STRATEGY STEERING GROUP (NSSG)

The establishment of this group was referred to in the joint DH/FSA interested party letter issued on 20 June 2006. As indicated in that letter the objective of NSSG is to encourage the delivery of commitments from principal partners (industry, government departments, agencies and non-government organisations) to progress on key strategic dietary health objectives, including those in the Government's White Paper on Choosing Health.

The terms of reference and membership of the Group are attached. The terms of reference were agreed when NSSG met for the first time on 18 July. NSSG is keen to work in a transparent manner, therefore the outcome of meetings will be reported to interested party letters such as this. The minutes of NSSG meetings will be published on the FSA's website.

The main item for discussion at the first meeting was how to take forward the FSA's commitment to work with stakeholders to independently evaluate the impact of front of pack signpost labelling on consumer behaviour. The study had been considered at a stakeholder meeting held on 8 May and the output from this meeting was used to help inform discussion at the NSSG meeting.

NSSG agreed that the research objective would be to:

“evaluate the impact of ‘front of label’ signpost labelling schemes on purchasing behaviour and consumer knowledge”.

NSSG also agreed that to ensure external credibility and the objectivity necessary to secure a robust study a small group of independent experts, covering nutritional and social sciences (including market research), should manage the project (the management panel). The panel would be assisted in its work by a larger advisory group that will include members with commercial expertise and stakeholder representatives.

The NSSG will be consulted on:

- The proposed membership of the management and advisory groups;
- The research specification; and
- The project design following selection of and discussions with the successful bidder.

It was also agreed that the management group will:

- Report to NSSG
- Agree the research specification to go to open competition;
- Agree the successful bidder or how the successful bidder will be identified;
- Monitor progress on the project; and
- Agree the final report

The FSA will manage this process, and will keep interested parties informed of progress.

Yours faithfully



Rosemary Hignett
Head of Nutrition Division
Food Standards Agency



Rachel Atkinson
Head of Nutrition Programme
Department of Health

Contact address:

Claire Boville
Food Standards Agency
Room 125, Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London, WC2B 6NH
020 7276 8168
signposting@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Bydd yr amgaeëdig ar gael yn Gymraeg cyn hir, er mwyn eu derbyn cysylltwch â Hilary Neathey, ffôn 029 20678911, ebost Hilary.Neathey@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk , os gwelwch yn dda.

Membership of Nutrition Strategy Steering Group

Chair: Caroline Flint (Minister of State for Public Health)

Dame Deirdre Hutton (Chair Food Standards Agency)

Gavin Neath	President of FDF and Unilever
Salman Amin	President of Pepsico UK & Ireland
David Reid	President of IGD, Chairman of Tesco plc
Steven D Esom	Managing Director of Waitrose
Paul Kelly	Compass and Schools Food Trust
Sir Alexander Macara	Chair of National Heart Forum
Peter Vicary-Smith	Chief Executive of Which?
Justin King	Chief Executive of Sainsbury's
Lord Whitty	Chairman National Consumer Council

The Minister of State for Public Health and the Chair of the Food Standards Agency have also invited Health Ministers from the Devolved Administrations to attend meetings.

Terms of Reference (Agreed 18 July 2006)

“To encourage the delivery of commitments from principal partners (industry, government departments, agencies, and non-government organisations) to progress key strategic dietary health objectives, including those in the Government’s White Paper on Choosing Health. The key initiatives to be considered are:

- Reformulation of foodstuffs;
- Front of pack signpost labelling;
- Promotion of food to children; and
- The Healthy Living Social Marketing Campaign.

The group will:

- Aim to meet twice a year
- Be chaired by Caroline Flint MS [PH] with Dame Deirdre Hutton (Chair FSA) deputising as necessary;
- Co-opt additional members onto the group on an ad hoc basis to inform its decisions while maintaining a balance of interests; and
- Establish working groups as appropriate