

Scottish Executive

NHPC 1222

Publications

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Improving the Health and Nutrition of Scotland's Children: Consultation on the Schools (Nutrition and Health Promotion) (Scotland) Bill

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RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM: A CONSULTATION ON THE SCHOOLS (NUTRITION AND HEALTH PROMOTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL

Please complete the details below and return it with your response. This will help ensure we handle your response appropriately. Thank you for your help.

Name: LIBBY ANDERSON

Postal Address: ADVOCATES FOR ANIMALS

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1. Are you responding: (please tick one box)

(a) as an individual? go to Q2a/b and then Q4

(b) on behalf of a group/organisation? go to Q3 and then Q4

INDIVIDUALS

2a. Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in the Scottish Executive library and/or on the Scottish Executive website)?

Yes (go to 2b below)

No, not at all We will treat your response as confidential

2b. **Where confidentiality is not requested**, we will make your response available to the public on the following basis (please tick one of the following boxes)

Yes, make my response, name and address all available

Yes, make my response available, but not my name or address

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

ON BEHALF OF GROUPS OR ORGANISATIONS:

3. The name and address of your organisation **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Executive library and/or on the Scottish Executive website). Are you also content for your **response** to be made available?

Yes

No We will treat your response as confidential

SHARING RESPONSES/FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

4. We will share your response internally with other Scottish Executive policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for the Scottish Executive to contact you again in the future in relation to this consultation response?

Yes

No

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree that local authorities should be under a duty to ensure that food and drinks which they provide in their schools, including nurseries, meet defined nutrient standards?

Yes No

Comment (add separately if required)

2. Where children are attending independent schools, and where the provision of food and drinks are arranged or funded, by a local authority, should the food and drinks meet defined nutrient standards?

Yes No

Comment (add separately if required)

3. Should local authorities be under a duty to promote uptake of school meals in their schools, including free school meals?

Yes No

Comment (add separately if required)

4. Should local authorities be under a duty to ensure that those taking free school meals can do so anonymously, as far as is practicable?

Yes No

Comment (add separately if required)

5. Should local authorities have the power to provide children in local authority schools with free drinks, fruit, vegetables, bread or cereal based snacks, which meet defined nutrient standards?

Yes No

Comment (add separately if required)

6. Should there be a duty on Scottish Ministers and local authorities to endeavour to ensure that all local authority schools are health promoting schools?

Yes No

Comment (add separately if required)

7. Any other comments? (add separately if required)

see separate sheet

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Schools (Nutrition and Health Promotion) (Scotland) Bill
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31 July 2006

Dear Mr Brown

Schools (Nutrition and Health Promotion) (Scotland) Bill

I attach a short submission from Advocates for Animals on the above bill. In the response section, we have only responded to Questions 1 and 2, where we feel that we have a contribution to make from our animal welfare remit.

We have also appended a more detailed response to Question 7, on the benefits of a well-balanced vegetarian diet. In particular, we should like to commend to the Executive the information contained in the health section of The Global Benefits of Eating Less Meat, published by the Compassion in World Farming Trust, and available online from the Eat Less Meat website.

I hope that this information is of interest.

Yours sincerely

Libby Anderson
Policy Director

Question 7

Advocates for Animals (Advocates) welcomes many of the proposals on nutrition and health promotion in Scottish schools, in particular the many references to fruit, vegetables and cereals.

It is of course essential that children are provided with all the essential nutrients which make up a healthy diet and it is imperative that the idea of healthy eating should be instigated in schools.

We would, however, like to ensure that vegetarian and vegan options are available to school pupils throughout Scotland. A well-balanced vegetarian diet closely matches expert dietary recommendations for healthy eating, being low in saturated fat and high in fibre, complex carbohydrates, and fresh fruit and vegetables (1).

The Consultation mentions that the provision of dairy milk in schools by local authorities is subsidised by the Scottish Executive. We suggest that this School Milk Subsidy Scheme should also provide an alternative to dairy milk. This could be one of a number of alternatives such as soya, rice or oat milk.

It is estimated that up to 15% of the population are lactose intolerant although many people are unaware they have this condition (2). In the last couple of years, the media have linked the consumption of dairy products to ovarian cancer, heart disease, Parkinson's disease, acne as well as causing problems with the digestion system, hormones, immunity and the cardiovascular system.

The School Milk project last year launched 'Milk Magic', an interactive education pack which encourages primary school children to drink dairy milk for its nutritional benefit. Advocates asks that a dairy milk substitute be supplied in schools not only for the possible health benefits associated with non-dairy foodstuffs but also for the welfare of the animals involved in the dairy industry. A dairy cow's life consists of being in a constant cycle of reproduction, normally using artificial insemination. She yields much more milk than she would naturally, which can result in serious health problems, and is kept indoors for six months of the year. When her calf is born she is only allowed to spend a few days with it before it is taken away, and the cycle begins again.

We are also concerned that the current advertising of dairy products could be rather misleading for children. The 'White Stuff' advertising fronts its posters with celebrities, and the new 'Naturally Beautiful' campaign from the Milk Development Council claims that drinking milk will make young teens attractive. We believe both these advertising campaigns could pressurise children into drinking dairy milk rather than drinking it out of free will.

Although there is no mention of encouraging children to eat meat in the Consultation, Advocates has concerns about the promotion of meat in primary schools. For example, Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) is this year launching its 'Meaty Matters' campaign, similar to 'Milk Magic' in that it is an interactive education pack, which encourages children to eat red meat. Again, in the last couple of years the media have linked the consumption of meat with osteoporosis, bowel cancer, Crohn's disease and rheumatoid arthritis.

"Health and diet promotions sometimes tend to focus on the requirement for fruit and vegetables when the emphasis should be on eating a nutritionally balanced diet from a variety of foods containing essential nutrients, including meat." We do not agree that the emphasis should be on a diet that includes meat, but simply on one that is nutritionally balanced.

Vegetarianism is now becoming increasingly popular as it is recognised for its many health benefits. These benefits include reduced chances of suffering from heart disease, hypertension, obesity, diabetes, various cancers, diverticular disease, bowel disorders, gallstones, kidney stones, and osteoporosis. (2)

Not only are there health benefits associated with a vegetarian diet but by reducing our meat intake we are also decreasing our contribution to global warming, deforestation, desertification, water pollution and, most importantly, we are saving lives.

(1) <http://www.vegsoc.org/info/health1.html>

(2) <http://www.lactofree.co.uk/site/home.php>

Further reading:

The Global Benefits of Eating Less Meat

Part One: Eating for Good Health

<http://www.ciwf.org.uk/eatlessmeat/report/html/health.html>

Achieving Access to Ethical Food: animal and human health come together

Tim Lang, Department of Health Management and Food Policy, City University.

In *Animals, Ethics and Trade* ed Jacky Turner and Joyce d'Silva,

Earthscan Publications Ltd