

NHPC
10/0

Ernie Brown
Scottish Executive
Bill Team
Area 3A
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

Dear Ernie,

**Consultation on the Schools (Nutrition and Health Promotion)
(Scotland) Bill 21**

Thank you for consulting AHDS on the above draft Bill. AHDS represents over 1400 headteachers and deputies from Scotland's nursery, primary and special schools.

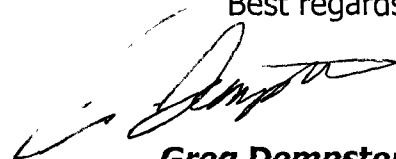
Our members have a keen interest in the issue of nutrition for Scotland's children – *not just for reasons relating to public health or staving off poor health in later years but for the here and now of effectively delivering education in schools around the country.*

While we appreciate that the consultation document currently rules out the prospect of free meals for all AHDS supports the introduction of free meals for all, or at least for all in the primary setting. We are supporters of the current campaign for free school meals. All comments in response to the consultation should be read in that context.

We believe that free school meals for all would (in addition to addressing the issues around *poverty and health which are already well rehearsed*): remove any stigma attached to receipt of free meals; ensure all pupils have access to at least one nutritious meal per day which can aid concentration and in turn behaviour and capacity to learn; remove issues of cash handling and dinner money related bullying in schools; and, remove the need for children to leave school premises at breaks which will contribute to child safety.

If any of this response is unclear or if you would like further comment please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Best regards



Greg Dempster
General Secretary

AHDS response to the "Consultation on the Schools (Nutrition and Health Promotion) (Scotland) Bill 21"

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.

Comment: These should not be overly rigorous standards but principles that establish the concept of a balanced diet with 'square meals'. We might learn a lot from other countries such as France where wholesome meals are provided with very little choice on offer.

We would hope that an increase in overall nutritional value would mean more use is made of locally produced fresh ingredients. This clearly has cost implications and this should be reflected in the budgets downloaded to local authorities.

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?

No

Comment: It is difficult to offer a suitable answer to this question. In principle we feel that all children should receive healthy wholesome school meals but on balance we feel the arrangement set out in this question would result in unacceptable singling out of children receiving free meals.

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

Yes

Comment: However AHDS believe in free school meals for all which would remove the need for expenditure of time and resources on promotion.

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

Comment: However AHDS believe that free school meals should be universal which would remove any stigma attached to receipt of free meals.

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

Comment: By providing healthy snacks at local authorities and schools can play a role in 'educating' the three P's – palates, parents and pupils. However, the responsibility for distributing snacks and clearing up should not fall to teaching staff or use school management staff. Also, care must be taken to ensure such policies do not cut across other policy initiatives such as environmental awareness and waste reduction – i.e. alternatives to large numbers of plastic bottles should be found.

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

Comment: If we are serious about making a difference to the health of our young people then there must be a united approach to health promotion. However, the paperwork and bureaucracy involved in the current initiative is a significant burden on school management time. It may currently act as a barrier to participation and should be examined before a nationwide obligatory roll-out.

Respondee information form

Name: Greg Dempster

Postal Address: AHDS, PO Box 18532, Inverurie, AB51 0WS

1. Are you responding:

on behalf of a group/organisation

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

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