

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

There should be a commitment from LA's to aim to exceed what are very sketchy nutritional standards. Measuring the value of nutrition should be linked to behavioural and academic standards as previous research has shown the benefits of healthy eating towards improvements in classroom behaviour and achievement.

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

But common sense is the most important quality. I.e. no fizzy drinks, chocolate bars and crisps. Defined nutritional standards can be a minimum standard but every individual has a different nutritional requirement. Common sense must be the true standard bearer, fruit and other healthy snacks and meals low in sugar and saturated fat are obvious but very important. Parents are often the poorest influence on the child and my experience is the majority of snacks provided by parents are the unhealthiest foods.

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

Yes

I believe in free school meals for all as eating habits at the young age group have a huge bearing on future habits. Peer pressure is also such a huge influence on meal choices. I think there is a need for an authoritarian approach. If you provide chips and burgers a couple of days a week then you will never change habits. Action should be taken to ensure dinner ladies can cook and create healthy, simple fresh meals as opposed to packed and reheated fare made with the minimum cost in mind. This is not an issue that should be guided only by the monetary cost.

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

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

Again schools should only be providing such food. There is enough unhealthy produce brought into schools, peer pressure can play a part in guiding better choice as can education from a very young age.

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

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

Re-iterating my previous points:

Scotland should introduce 'free school meals' for all at both Primary and Secondary level. This would be a visionary approach that would pay for itself ten times over in the long term. We need politicians not only with foresight but with the courage to apply it. For anyone who saw Jamie Oliver's series on school dinners will have noticed that this approach is not always popular in the short term but the longer term benefits were being reaped and the outcome was an outstanding success. The cost of poor nutrition in the form of sugary snacks, fatty meals and reconstituted cheap fare is immeasurable. I find it hard to believe that in a time when we know the cost of eating such poor quality produce we still allow this cheap rubbish to be served to our future generations.