

NFB 078

Scottish Government Consultation: A Healthier Scotland – Creating a New Food Body

Response from the Scottish Grocers Federation

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The Scottish Grocers' Federation

The Scottish Grocers' Federation (SGF) is the only national trade association for Scotland's convenience store sector. SGF has 2,000 members in a sector that employs 40,000 people and contributes some £3.2 billion to Scotland's economy. Our central aim is to ensure that key policy and decision makers understand how to improve the trading environment to allow for continuing investment, job creation and development by convenience store retailers.

SGF welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Healthier Scotland Consultation.

Our Response – The Healthy Living Programme

We note that the Scottish Government will create a new stand-alone body in Scotland for food safety and standards, feed safety and standards, nutrition, food labeling, and meat inspection policy and operational delivery. These devolved functions are currently carried out in Scotland by the UK-wide Food Standards Agency (FSA), which is accountable to all four Parliaments/Assemblies in the UK.

We also note that the new body would be a non-Ministerial department accountable to Parliament rather than a Minister and that the new body will carry out all the functions currently delivered by the FSA in Scotland.

Importantly, the consultation document suggests that the new body may take a strategic lead on the Healthy Living Programme. If this suggestion is proceeded with it is vital that the programme continues with and build on its current success/

The Healthy Living programme has been developed and is implemented by the Scottish Grocer's Federation working in partnership with the Scottish Government. As such SGF's response will focus on the potential impact on the HLP of such a transition and will make the following key points:

1. The SGF Healthy Living Programme was established in 2004. The objective of the programme was to work with convenience stores to develop the range of fresh and healthier options at affordable prices, focusing on those communities affected by multiple deprivation.
2. Phase 4 of the programme has now been completed and evaluated. The number of stores in the programme at the beginning of Phase 4 was 640. The number of stores participating at the beginning of December 2012 was 1,237 – and increase of 93%.
3. The Healthy Living Programme is funded by the Scottish Government Public Health Directorate. The total level of investment by the Scottish Government in Phase 4 was £649,000 (it should be noted that participating retailers invested some £692,000 over the course of Phase 4). It is vital that this level of commitment from the Scottish Government continues if the new food body takes a strategic lead for the programme.
4. SGF and the Scottish Government are currently finalising the next 3-year budget and development plan for the Healthy Living Programme. It is likely that this development plan (with the associated budget) will be already underway during any transition to the new food body. As such it is vital that the new food body gives a clear commitment that the development plan and budget will remain in place over

the 3-year project cycle.

5. During and after any transition to the new food body, there should be no duplication of previously completed reporting, planning or evaluation. Overall, to ensure the continued success of the programme, the new food body should work closely and in partnership with SGF and provide clearly defined lines of communication, reporting, roles and responsibilities.
6. SGF is the authoritative voice for the convenience store sector in Scotland. It should continue to be seen as such by the new food body – SGF should continue to be the budget holder for the programme and be the single source of input from the sector.

We trust you will find these points helpful and we would be very happy to discuss them further.