

Hungry for success*

**A Whole School Approach To School Meals In
Scotland**

**A Consultation document
By the
Expert Panel on School meals**

* with acknowledgement to Scottish Food and Drink

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

Dear Colleague

On 19 November 2001, Scottish Ministers announced plans to improve the provision, presentation and nutritional content of school meals for all children. An Expert Panel, under my Chairmanship, was established with a remit to provide costed recommendations and a fully developed implementation strategy to:

- establish standards for the nutritional content of school meals
- improve the presentation of school meals to improve general take up
- eliminate any stigma attached to taking free school meals.

Our interim report to Ministers sets out a vision for a revitalised school meals service in Scotland and presents a number of far-reaching recommendations to improve the quality and content of school meals, make school lunch more attractive to pupils and improve the take-up, especially for those entitled to free school meals.

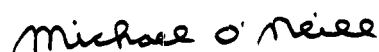
Ministers have welcomed our interim report for its whole school, whole child, partnership approach and have authorised us to proceed to consultation with key stakeholders. Once we have considered the responses to our consultation exercise we will submit a final report to Ministers. We welcome your views on any aspect of our report, but in particular seek responses to the questions in our questionnaire.

We are aware that the timing of the start of our consultation period coincides with school holidays and that some respondents may not see this paper until the new school term. In view of this, we have set our deadline for responses at 11 October. We also intend to carry out a separate consultation exercise with pupils at the start of the new school term.

As you will see from our consultation list, we are seeking the views of a wide range of interested organisations. Please feel free to share it with other groups/individuals who have an interest in this important subject. It would also be helpful to receive a single co-ordinated response from each local authority, which reflects the views of all relevant interests within the authority.

You can also access our report and respond to our questionnaire via our website, which is located at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/education/schoolmeals> or at the Scottish executive consultation website at <http://www.gov.uk/views/views.asp>

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.



Michael O'Neill
Chairman of the Expert Panel on School Meals

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CONSULTATION LIST 19

NOTES ON COMPLETION

This questionnaire should be read in conjunction with the interim report of the Expert Panel on School Meals.

It has been devised to seek your views on the Panel's recommendations. **You need not answer all of the questions, but can focus on those in which you have a particular interest.** Your views on any other aspect of the report are also welcome.

Each question is followed by a series of tick boxes. Please tick the response that most closely matches your opinion. Some questions ask you to expand on your answer in the space provided. If you wish, you can also use this space to make any additional comments on the recommendation.

Your Details

Name:

Job Title (if applicable):

Organisation (if applicable):

Address:

.....

Postcode:

Email Address:

For the purpose of analysing responses, it would be helpful if you would also indicate the capacity in which you are completing this questionnaire, please tick as appropriate.

Local authority Nutritionist/Dietitian Other Health Professional

Caterer Parent Pupil

Teacher Other (Please state) _____

Confidentiality

It is normal practice for responses to consultation papers to be made publicly available, unless respondents request that their comments remain confidential.

Acknowledgements

All responses will be acknowledged either in writing or electronically. However, please note that in view of the size and nature of the consultation exercise, it will not be possible for the Panel to respond individually to comments received.

Deadline for Responses

The deadline for responses is 11 October 2002.

Completion and Submission of Responses

You have three options for completing and submitting your response:

Online completion/submission: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/education/schoolmeals>

Email submission: school.meals@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Written submission to: Hazel Dewart
Secretariat, Expert Panel on School Meals
Scottish Executive Education Department
Area 3-A North
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

Telephone: 0131 244 1573

Facsimile: 0131 244 7943

Additional Copies of Report and Consultation Paper

Further copies are available from the above address or can be downloaded from the Expert Panel's website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/education/schoolmeals>

QUESTIONNAIRE

Promoting Healthy Eating

Diet in childhood plays an essential role in growth and development, current well being, educational performance and avoidance of ill health throughout life. The basis of the standards which have been recommended are the *Nutritional Guidelines for School Meals* with guidelines on fruit, vegetables and sodium (salt). Practical suggestions to achieve these nutrient standards through consumption of everyday foods are also included.

1. The Panel recommends that **the Scottish Nutrient Standards for School Lunches should be adopted and education authorities and schools should have them in place in all special schools and primary schools by December 2004 and in all secondary schools by December 2006.** (paras 3.1 – 3.23)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comment. For example, do you think there should be any change to the proposed nutrient standards? What are your views on the targets for implementation?

2. The Panel recommends that **school meal facilities should not overtly promote food or drink with a high fat or sugar content.** (para 3.23)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comment.

The Panel observed successful practice that promotes healthy eating in school dining rooms. This included ensuring good visibility and presentation of healthy options; price incentives such as ‘meal deals’; provision of free vegetables or salad with a main course; restricting confectionery or vending machines; and schemes offering rewards for healthy food choices.

3. The Panel recommends that **caterers should consider appropriate means of labelling food.** (paras 4.54 – 4.55).

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments.

4. The Panel also recommends **that schools, education authorities and caterers should consider presentation, marketing and pricing structures to incentivise healthier choices.** (paras 4.52 – 4.59)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments. For example, can you suggest any other strategies for encouraging pupils to make a healthy meal selection?

The role of the curriculum in promoting healthy eating is vital and there is evidence in Scottish schools of successful links between curriculum activities that promote healthy eating and the provision of food in schools. In secondary schools this occurs mainly through home economics where young people develop knowledge and understanding of healthy eating, as well as important skills in food handling and preparation. In addition other subjects such as biology and general science make an important contribution to understanding nutrition and aspects of food hygiene. Physical education provides young people with an understanding of the importance of rehydration and energy balance in the context of physical activity. In personal and social education, in social subjects and in religious and moral education, the important roles food plays in different cultures are explored and discussed.

5. The Panel recommends that **all schools should review their current practice in establishing links between learning and teaching on healthy eating in the curriculum and food provision in the schools.** (paras 4.9 – 4.18)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments. For example, can you suggest any other strategies for connecting school meals with curriculum-based learning?

Increasing the Take-up of School Meals

Pupils themselves identified one of the greatest influences on whether they eat lunch at school as the atmosphere and ambience of the dining room. Where facilities had been upgraded, pupils felt more positive about their dining environment. Improvements did not always need to be sophisticated or expensive to make a difference to how pupils felt about the dining room. Colourful canopies over serveries, bright, colourful furniture of different sizes, cheerful posters on the wall, bright uniforms for catering staff all made a difference.

6. The Panel recommends that **refurbishment of the dining room should be a priority for authorities in a review of their school estate. Furniture design, layout and usage, along with other factors such as décor and background music should be considered by all schools.** (paras 4.60 – 4.66)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments. For example, what sort of refurbishment would increase the uptake of school meals?

The Panel also recognised that the inadequate size and multiple use of some dining facilities can be an issue for some schools.

7. The Panel recommends that, **wherever possible, there should be a separate area for dining.** (paras 4.60 – 4.66)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments. For example, what might be the practical implications of providing a separate dining area?

The Panel recognised that the decision to shorten lunch hours in some schools has contributed to the hurried nature of school meal provision. It did, however, identify useful examples of staggered lunch hours.

8. The Panel recommends that **when education authorities and schools are examining the structure of the school day, the lunchtime experience should be part of that consideration.** (paras 4.43 – 4.46)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments.

The Panel's visits and research revealed a growing dislike from primary 6 onwards of the sometimes regimented and hurried nature of school meals provision. They recognised that a factor related to the time available to eat food was the time spent queuing for it. Many pupils felt that they would not have to queue so long at outside outlets.

9. The Panel recommends that **schools should examine their seating and queuing arrangements to ensure that the social experience of school meals is maximised.** (paras 4.43 – 4.46)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments. For example, can you offer any suggestions about how seating and queuing arrangements could be improved? What, in your view, are the practical issues that would need to be considered in any review of seating and queuing?

10. Having observed a number of effective working examples in schools, the Panel recommends that **to address queuing difficulties and in any review of the length of the lunch break, a number of factors should be considered, namely the introduction of multiple service points; more cash points in cash cafeterias; staggered arrivals of diners/separate sittings; pre-ordering facility; separate counter for collecting pre-ordered meals; delivery of pre-ordered meals to lunchtime clubs and examining the potential for an additional outlet elsewhere in the school.** (paras 4.43 – 4.46)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments.

The Panel observed the beneficial influences of supervision in the dining room and of commitment at the level of school management to good practice with regard to school meals.

11. The Panel recommends that **in line with the agreement set out in “A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century”, education authorities should consider deploying classroom assistants and dining room assistants to undertake a supervisory role in dining rooms.** (paras 4.50 – 4.51)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments.

12. The Panel recommends that **senior management within schools should strongly support and endorse their school meal provision as part of the whole child approach.** (paras 4.50 – 4.51)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments.

Special Needs

13. The Panel recommends that **each education authority should develop a policy for delivering, in partnership with parents and carers, medically prescribed diets and appropriate provision for children with special educational needs.** (paras 3.10 – 3.15)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments. For example, what type of provision might be required in these circumstances?

Increasing the Take-up of Free School Meals

The Panel considered whether stigma attached to receiving free school meals might be reducing the uptake. They concluded that stigma was not a major factor, but nevertheless recognised the importance of improving dining room practice to minimise stigma. They advised that a school dining room designed and managed to meet the needs of all diners is a crucial prerequisite to eliminating stigma, increasing uptake, encouraging informed choices and improving the diet and health of Scotland's schoolchildren.

14. The Panel recommends that **processes maximising anonymity for free meal recipients should be explored as a priority in all schools. Primary schools should review their ticket allocation practices to ensure anonymity for free school meals is maximised.** (paras 4.31 – 4.42)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments.

Smart Cards

From research evidence, the Panel recognised the value of electronic card systems not just for reducing stigma, but also for speeding up the payment process, rewarding healthy eating choices, and by eliminating the need for pupils to carry money, reducing the risk of some forms of bullying. Electronic cards embedded with an integrated circuit chip ('smart cards') would also allow cards to be used for many purposes and could, for example, be used as registration, library, reward and/or discount cards. Money from the Modernising Government Fund is supporting the introduction of smart cards across Scotland.

15. The Panel recommends that **education authorities should adopt early introduction of a school meal application for multiple use cards in particular in secondary schools.** (paras 4.31 – 4.42)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments.

16. The Panel recommends that **as part of the introduction of card systems, education authorities should ensure there are sufficient card validators in easily accessed areas within the school and not only in the dining room.** (paras 4.36 – 4.42)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments.

Partnership Approaches

Partnership working was identified as a key agent of success. A successful school partnership approach requires the involvement of teaching staff, support staff, catering staff and pupils and can also benefit from input by external agencies such as health promotion workers, dietitians and school nurses. Effective partnerships also engage the support of the School Board, the Parent Teacher Association and parents so that the whole school community is involved.

17. The Panel recommends that **Education Authorities should promote partnership approaches and schools should develop mechanisms to deliver partnership working.** (paras 4.19 – 4.23)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments. For example, do you consider that a partnership approach would be useful or practical? Are there other individuals or interests that should be included in partnerships?

Panel discussions with pupils and parents showed that many parents would like more information about the nutritional value of meals on offer at lunchtime.

18. The Panel recommends that **caterers consider methods of conveying information on content to pupils and parents. Through existing school communication channels, menus should be forwarded to parents at least once per term.** (paras 4.52 – 4.59)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments. For example, can you provide any suggestions on how to encourage effective communication and involve parents and pupils?

The Panel recognises that if pupils are to support healthier school meals, they must be consulted on changes.

19. The Panel recommends that **schools should consult with pupils on a regular basis on the provision of school meals and design and ambience of the dining room.** (paras 4.24 – 4.30 and 4.60 – 4.66)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments. For example, how might this consultation take place?

The Panel considers catering staff to have a vital influencing role in encouraging uptake of meals and choices made. One of the education authorities visited had introduced a scheme to award gold stars for increasing uptake of school meals. Award of a certain number of stars leads to prizes such as cookery books and kitchen equipment. Prizes are also offered for individuals' innovative ideas to improve the service and uptake of meals. Catering staff appeared to appreciate these initiatives, which helped them to develop a sense of ownership of the service, and they were becoming keen to hear of the latest developments.

20. The Panel recommends that **education authorities should consider the introduction of staff incentive schemes.** (paras 4.71 – 4.72)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments. For example, what type of incentive schemes might be useful?

Delivery of School Meals

The Panel believes that the school meals service will require a period of stability during which the recommendations will be implemented and evaluated. They suggest it is therefore essential that the service be allowed such stability, free from the commercial pressures of competition for a suitable period of time.

21. The Panel recommends that **in any Best Value review, the role of the school meals service as part of the education and health strategies should be taken into account. It should not be considered simply as a commercial trading activity.** (paras 2.10 – 2.11)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments.

Implementing the Recommendations

The Panel considers that continued commitment and effort on the part of local authorities is central to the successful implementation of their recommendations. CoSLA is currently working with local authorities as they move to become public health organisations and is therefore in a key position to assist local authorities to take forward and manage the implementation of recommendations which transsect conventional boundaries between health, education and social justice. The Panel is therefore of the opinion that improving school meals should not be seen as an additional task for education authorities and schools, but should be seen within the context of “*Our National Health: A Plan for Change*” and the “*National Priorities for Education*” set by the Scottish Executive and approved by the Scottish Parliament in December 2002.

22. The Panel recommends that **local authorities, guided by CoSLA, should incorporate strategies for implementing their recommendations into mainstream planning processes that will empower and enable schools and school communities to adopt the recommendations.** (paras 5.1 – 5.4)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments. For example, do you agree that CoSLA should have a strategic role?

The Scottish Health Promoting Schools Unit is a partnership between the Scottish Executive, Health Education Board for Scotland, Learning and Teaching Scotland and CoSLA and will facilitate and support the implementation of the Health Promoting School concept throughout Scotland. The Unit will also consider what needs to be put in place to allow formal recognition of Health Promoting School status.

23. The Panel recommends that **The Scottish Health Promoting Schools Unit should take the recommendations of the Panel into consideration when developing standards for health promoting schools.** (paras 4.9 – 4.18)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments.

Training

The Panel believes training is a key element of effective implementation.

24. The Panel recommends that **all school catering and dining room supervisory staff should undertake the Royal Environmental Health Institute for Scotland Food and Health training course (currently under development). Interested parents, carers and teachers should also be encouraged to undertake this or equivalent training.** (para 5.5)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments. For example, are you aware of other relevant training courses? In what ways could parents, carers and teachers be encouraged to undertake training?

Monitoring Implementation

The establishment of Scottish Nutrient Standards will enable an appropriate monitoring process to be put in place. The Panel recommends a three level approach to monitoring. Schools and education authorities will carry out self evaluations to complement external monitoring by HM Inspectorate and specialist Associate Assessors.

25. The Panel recommends that **monitoring of the implementation of the Scottish Nutrient Standards for School Lunches, and related aspects, should be undertaken using the three levels of monitoring proposed in paragraphs 5.16 - 5.25 of the interim report and should involve HM Inspectorate of Education working, as appropriate, with other relevant agencies.** (paras 5.6 – 5.25)

Do you support this recommendation? Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide any additional comments.

Related Matters

Recognising that food in schools is not just about what happens at lunchtime, the Panel gave consideration to a number of issues outwith its remit of establishing the nutrient content of school meals, eliminating any stigma attached to taking free school meals and improving school lunch uptake. They consider that a whole school approach, which promotes consistency across what is taught in the classroom with what is provided in school dining rooms, breakfast clubs, tuckshops, vending machines and after school clubs is required.

26. The Panel recommends that **the Scottish Executive should consider what further work needs to be done to take forward the additional important and related issues identified by the Expert Panel.** (paras 6.1 – 6.21)

Do you consider further work needs to be considered Yes No In part Don't know

Please provide comments on any further work you feel needs to be considered. For example, are there other ways in which families could be made aware of their entitlement to free school meals?

Please use the space below to provide any additional comments on any aspects of the consultation

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

CONSULTATION LIST

<p>Local Authorities Chief Executives Directors of Education Catering Departments School Board Support Units CoSLA</p> <p>NHS Boards Chief Executives Directors of Public Health Health Promotion Departments</p> <p>Health Organisations British Dietetic Association British Heart Foundation British Nutrition Foundation Brittle Bone Society Clinical Standards Board in Scotland Common Services Agency Department of Health Department of Health and Social Security (NI) Department of Health Welsh Assembly Food Standards Agency (Scotland) Have a Heart Paisley Health Education Board for Scotland Health Education Unit Neonatal Screening Laboratory Public Health Institute of Scotland Public Health Nutritionists Network Scottish Ambulance Service Scottish Diet and Nutrition Forum Scottish Health Promotion Managers Group Scottish Healthy Choices Award Scheme Scottish Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education State Hospital's Board for Scotland UK Nutrition Forum</p> <p>Child/Youth Associations Aberlour Child Care Trust Barnardos British Association of Adoption and Fostering Centre for the Child and Society Children in Scotland Child Health based within Universities Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland Children's 1st Drumchapel Young Persons Befriending Project Edinburgh Young Carers Project NCH (Scotland) One Plus Quarriers Save the Children (Scotland) Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights Scottish Child Law Centre</p>	<p>SCMA Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care Scottish Out of School Alliance Scottish Youth Parliament Who Cares? Scotland Youth Link Scotland</p> <p>Faith Groups Action of Churches Together in Scotland Catholic Education Commission (Scotland) Church of Scotland Education Committee Islamic Society of Britain Roman Catholic Church Scottish Inter Faith Council Sikh Sanjaq</p> <p>Education / Social Work Organisations Association of Head Teachers in Scotland Association of Directors of Education Association of Directors of Social Work Association of Primary Teachers British Association of Social Workers Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland Educational Institute of Scotland Head Teachers' Association of Scotland HM Inspectorate of Education Grant-aided Special Schools Indian Educational and Cultural Centre Learning and Teaching Scotland NASUWT (Scotland) Professional Association of Teachers Scotland Scottish Anti-Bullying Network Scottish Council for Independent Schools Scottish Health Promoting Schools Unit Scottish Parent Teacher Council Scottish Parent Information Network Scottish School Board Association Scottish Schools Ethos Network Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association The General Teaching Council for Scotland UNISON</p> <p>Social Inclusion Partnerships Alloa South and East Argyll and Bute Big Step Blantyre and North Hamilton Cambuslang Castlemilk Craigmillar Drumchapel Dundee Eastend East Ayrshire Coalfield Area</p>
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<p>Edinburgh Youth Falkirk Community Urban Regeneration Programme Fife FRAE Fife Generating Opportunities Project Girvan and South Carrick Glasgow Milton. Glasgow North, Springburn Glasgow Smaller Areas Gorbals Great Northern Partnership Greater Easterhouse Greater Govan Highland Inverclyde Regeneration Partnership Moray Youthstart Motherwell North North Ayrshire North Edinburgh Paisley Partnership Regeneration Renfrewshire Stirling Strategic Programme Scottish Borders Youth Unit South Coatbridge South Edinburgh Tranent West Dunbartonshire Partnership West Lothian Xplore</p> <p>Food Service / Projects Association of Service Solutions Scotland Association of Public Sector Excellence Bernard Matthews Food Service Birds Eye Walls Ltd Brake Bros Ltd British Hospitality Association British Potato Council Dairy Industry Federation Edinburgh Community Food Initiative Findus Ltd Food and Drink Federation Home Grown Cereals Authority Kraft Foods McCain Foods Meat and Livestock Commission McDougalls Catering Foods Milk Development Council Quality Meat Scotland RHM Food Service Ltd Robert Wiseman Dairies Scottish Community Award Scheme Scottish Community Diet Project Scottish Food Advisory Committee Scottish Food and Drink Federation Unilever Best Foods Ltd</p> <p>Universities Aberdeen: Faculties of Education and Medicine and Departments of Public & Child Health</p>	<p>Dundee: Faculties of Economics, Education and Medicine and Department of Public Health Edinburgh: Faculties of Education and Medicine and Department of Public Health Glasgow: Faculties of Education and Medicine and Departments of Human Nutrition and Public Health Paisley: Faculty of Education Queen Margaret: Department of Dietetics, Nutrition and Life Sciences Robert Gordon: Department of Nutrition and Dietetics St Andrews: Departments of Management and Medical Science Strathclyde: Faculty of Education Stirling: Faculty of Education</p> <p>Miscellaneous Asian Concern Bridges Project Caroline Walker Trust Commission for Racial Equality Dalziel High School David Conway Disability Rights Commission Dr Wilfred Treasure Dundee Carers Edinburgh and Lothians Racial Equality Council Enable Equal Opportunities Commission GARA Gingerbread Independent General Practitioners Association Leven Valley Partnership Nutrition and Dietetic Department, Lynebank Hospital, Fife San Jai Chinese Project Scottish Child Minding Association Scottish Consumer Council Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations Scottish Enterprise Scottish Gypsy Traveller Association Scottish Local Government Forum against Poverty Scottish Out of School Network Scottish Parliament Scottish Refugee Council Scottish School Board's Association STUC STUC Women's Committee Scottish Traveller Education Programme Scottish Travellers Consortium Sense Scotland St Andrews Eating Disorders Support Network Socialist Education Association Scotland Strategy in Scotland Sport Scotland Tim Hopkins, Equality Network Volunteer Development Scotland Women's Forum Scotland Women's National Commission</p>
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