

Obesity Review Group

Meeting note

2:00pm – 4:00pm Wednesday 26 June 2013

Board Room, Richmond House, Department of Health

Attendees

Anna Soubry MP	Melanie Leech
Piers Barrett-Barry (for Sanjay Pathak)	Paul Lincoln
Catherine Collins	Prof Ian Macdonald
Lisa Day (for Louise Ansari)	Paul Ogden (for Cllr Linda Thomas)
Deirdre Fowler	Andrew Opie
Carolyn Garland	Dr John Radford
Prof David Haslam	Dr Alison Tedstone
Zoe Hellman	Dr Jonathan Valabhji
Prof Andrew Hill	Prof Jane Wardle
Philip Insall	

Apologies

Dr Jessica Allen	Dr Susan Jebb
Prof Paul Aveyard	Prof Marie Murphy
John Byrne	Dr Abdul Razzaq
Sue Davies	Martin Smith
Prof Chris Drinkwater	Prof Terence Stephenson
Prof Nick Finer	

Officials in attendance

Liz Woodeson (Chair)	Richard Cienciala
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Discussion

1. Liz Woodeson welcomed attendees to the meeting and said that she would Chair the meeting until the Minister arrived.
2. Members were informed that Dr Abdul Razzaq (Director of Public Health at Trafford) has replaced Dr Will Blandamer as he has moved on to a new role.
3. The Chair asked Richard Cienciala to provide a brief policy update on key developments since the last meeting.
4. Richard Cienciala said that efforts to tackle obesity continue to be focused on all parts of the lifecourse, and include prevention and treatment for individuals. The national ambitions set out in the *Call to action on obesity* remain the goals that all partners are working towards. Key recent developments included:
 - A new public health system is now in place. Both Public Health England and NHS England were operational from 1 April. The Department will work with both organisations to ensure coordinated action.
 - The announcement on 19 June of the new UK front of pack labelling scheme, which will provide clear, simple and consistent information to help people make healthier choices.
 - Continued activity as part of Change4Life, including a new campaign 'Get going this summer' to be launched in July
 - Substantial investment in school sports. The Department has committed a further £120m over two years for the School Sports Premium.
5. The Chair introduced Dr Alison Tedstone, Director of Nutrition and Healthy Food, Public Health England (PHE). Dr Tedstone confirmed that PHE supported the national ambitions on obesity set out in the *Call to action* and was committed to continuing to work closely with the Department of Health.
6. Dr Tedstone set out the organisational structure of PHE and the emphasis on matrix working. An Obesity Project Team has been established to develop an overarching workplan. This would include building on the assets that have moved in to PHE, such as the National Child Measurement Programme and the National Obesity Observatory (now the Obesity Knowledge and Information

Team). Specific new projects are likely to include a peer review approach to support local authorities being developed with the Local Government Association.

7. The discussion included the following points:

- The importance of PHE engaging with key organisations prior to the development of new tools or guidance to avoid duplication and maximise opportunities to support local areas on obesity
- the importance of evaluating programmes such as Change4Life so that effectiveness can be measured
- ensuring that new guidance on fast-food outlets near schools recognises existing efforts by partners who have already signed up to the Responsibility Deal and taken steps to help people improve their diet
- welcoming a peer review process for LAs, and PHE could also consider how it can support activities taking place at supra-local level
- local authorities had competing priorities and this would be challenging in relation to how the public health ring-fenced budget is spent

8. The Chair thanked Dr Tedstone and said that it would be helpful if PHE could keep the group updated on its programme of work.

9. Dr Jonathan Valabhji, National Clinical Director for Obesity and Diabetes at NHS England, summarised NHS England's role in tackling obesity. This included working with Public Health England to increase the uptake of the NHS Health Check, and working with the medical profession to "make every contact count". The discussion included the following points for NHS England to consider:

- the impact of new guidance by NHS England - *Clinical Commissioning Policy: Complex and Specialised Obesity Surgery*. The guidance requires that patients being considered for surgery (which is a tier 4 service) need to have undergone at least one year in tier 3 management. However, in some areas tier 3 services are not established, and the specialist expertise is not always available. As a consequence patients would not be eligible for surgery.
- the importance of identifying how the NHS can support pregnant women

- the importance of focusing on BMI to assess obesity, as this provides a good estimate of the potential risk to individual health
- exploring how the NHS Health Check can support people who may be at risk
- ensuring that GPs play an active role in identifying and helping patients who are overweight or obese. The Quality and Outcomes Framework should be used to incentivise GPs to take action in this area.

10. Dr Valabhji thanked members for sharing their views and noted the importance of the points made.

11. The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health, Anna Soubry, spoke about her experience following a visit to the Rotherham Institute for Obesity and a clinic for obese pregnant women in Doncaster.

12. Anna Soubry said that obesity was an issue that needs to be addressed across the lifecourse, but she was interested in focusing on children. She stated that a focus on children would also reach families and support behaviour change more widely. The Minister commented that having a “champion” outside Government could be helpful in galvanising action across a wide range of partners and in communicating key messages.

13. The Chair asked members if they had any other business:

- It was noted that NICE is consulting on its draft behaviour change guidance
- The UK Health Forum was developing a report for the WHO (Euro) on obesity trends and their consequences for all 53 Member States.

14. The Chair then thanked all members for their contributions and closed the meeting.