



PAPER NSMC HEFS 1 (11) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

HEALTH & FOOD SAFETY SECTORAL

FORMATS

NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,

ARMAGH

20 JULY 2011

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

HEALTH

1. The twelfth North South Ministerial Council meeting in the Health and Food Safety sectoral formats was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh on 20 July 2011. The meeting was attended by James Reilly, TD, Minister for Health, Frances Fitzgerald, TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Edwin Poots, MLA, Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, and Martina Anderson, MLA, Junior Minister, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. Minister Reilly chaired the meeting.

Cancer Co-operation

2. The NSMC welcomed confirmation by the two Health Ministers of support for the development of the planned satellite radiotherapy facility at Altnagelvin Hospital which will serve cancer patients in both jurisdictions and noted that the aim is for the facility to be fully operational by 2016.
3. Ministers launched the Ireland-Northern Ireland-National Cancer Institute Consortium annual activities report for 2010 which highlights continuing success and achievement in education and training, the combining of data to produce the first all-island atlas of cancer, the sharing of best practice facilitated by the TELESYNERGY

multimedia conferencing facility and the continuing joint research projects and clinical trials.

End of Life Care and Other Research Collaborations

4. The Council noted the launch of the All-Ireland Institute for Hospice and Palliative Care to expand education, research policy and service development in palliative care.
5. Co-operation to date on other health research initiatives was noted including the recent submission of a project relevant to diabetes to the US National Institutes of Health for consideration

Health Promotion

6. Ministers noted progress in tackling alcohol abuse, tobacco consumption and obesity and the scope for sharing information and evidence based material. They also welcomed plans for a North South conference on alcohol misuse to be held in the Autumn and consideration of proposals for a joint initiative on alcohol misuse.

Co-operation on Emergency Services

7. The Council welcomed co-operation between the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service and firefighters from the six border Fire and Rescue Services on the Driving Change Project which aims to improve the health and public safety of people living and travelling in the border area.
8. Ministers also welcomed co-operation between the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service and the HSE National Ambulance Service through the development of Memoranda of Understanding which provide for cross-border assistance in the event of major incidents.

Suicide Prevention

9. Ministers welcomed progress on the All-Island Action Plan on Suicide Prevention including:
 - the publication of the All-Island Evaluation of ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training), and noted that, by the end of 2011, over 25,000 people will have completed the ASIST training programme;
 - the media monitoring service which has been in operation in Northern Ireland for seven months and that, in that period, complaint action has been taken in fifteen cases where reports were deemed to be in breach of media guidelines;
 - consideration that is being given to rolling-out the Register of Deliberate Self-Harm across Northern Ireland;
 - the sharing of a range of initiatives by the National Office for Suicide Prevention and the Public Health Agency under the new area for action, "Suicide and the Economic Downturn"; and

- the commencement of the All-Island Men's Health Forum which seeks to help males in crisis and emotional distress and the plans for pilot initiatives to be taken forward in the Autumn.

Child Protection

10. Ministers welcomed continuing progress on advancing co-operation in the area of child welfare and protection including:
 - the uptake and usage of the Child Protection Hub by practitioners and that action will be taken to raise further awareness of its existence;
 - developments in the Inter-Jurisdictional Protocol for the Transfer of Child Care cases which includes the development of a common set of operating procedures;
 - the continued co-operation by the two police services and Social Services on sharing information on a cross-border basis in relation to individuals who may pose a risk to children.

FOOD SAFETY PROMOTION BOARD (*safefood*)

***safefood* Progress Report**

11. Ministers welcomed a progress report from the *safefood* CEO, Martin Higgins, on the activities of ***safefood***. The report covered:
 - promotional activities undertaken and planned;
 - the review of current and previous research activities, and
 - the extension of the term of the Obesity Action Forum which assists in identifying common areas in obesity reduction policies.
12. Promotional activities include the success of a "Stop the Spread" obesity and overweight campaign and a workplace campaign aimed at reducing salt intake in work canteens and restaurants. Research activities include the estimation of the dietary salt intake across a cross-section of the population and its association with lifestyle related risk factors.

***safefood* Corporate Plan 2011-2013 and Business Plan 2011**

13. The Council approved ***safefood's*** Corporate Plan 2011-2013 and Business Plan 2011 and recommended the budget provision for 2011 of €8.5m (£6.97m). They noted indicative budgets of €8.5m (£6.97m) for each of the years 2012 and 2013 which will be subject to budgetary consideration by the Executive and Irish Government.
14. The key objectives for *safefood* for 2011-2013 include empowering individuals to make healthier and safer choices in relation to food safety and healthy eating, the dissemination of knowledge that is relevant, practical and fit for purpose and supporting communities including those at social and economic disadvantage to achieve better food safety and healthy eating outcomes.

Next Meeting

15. The Council agreed that the next NSMC Health and Food Safety meeting will be held in November 2011.

**Joint Secretariat
20 July 2011**