

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC HEFS 1 (12) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

HEALTH & FOOD SAFETY MEETINGS

**NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,
ARMAGH**

2 FEBRUARY 2012

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The thirteenth North South Ministerial Council Health and Food Safety meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh on 2 February 2012. The meeting was attended by Edwin Poots, MLA, Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Michelle O'Neill, MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, James Reilly, TD, Minister for Health and Frances Fitzgerald, TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. Minister Poots chaired the meeting.

Cancer and Health Research Co-operation

2. The Council welcomed progress on arrangements for the Radiotherapy Unit at Altnagelvin and that construction is planned to commence in 2013 with an operational date of 2016.
3. Ministers welcomed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding which enables continuation for the next five years of joint programmes in education, training, research and prevention by the Ireland-Northern Ireland-US National Cancer Institute Cancer Consortium. They also welcomed the launch by the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry and the National Cancer Registry of the All-Ireland Cancer Atlas 1995-2007 and the launch of the new All-Ireland Institute for Hospice and Palliative Care which will deliver education, research and care services for people who are nearing the end of life with illnesses that include cancer.

Health Promotion

4. The Council noted the development of strategies in both jurisdictions on alcohol misuse and that following publication of these the two Departments will work together to address issues.
5. A successful North South conference on alcohol misuse was held in Armagh on 26 January 2012. Over 130 delegates from many sectors attended the conference, which included informative presentations from local and international speakers. It was agreed that the two Health Departments will work to develop proposals for a common response to alcohol and that feedback will be provided at future NSMC Health and Food Safety meetings.
6. Ministers noted the forthcoming publication of a ten year tobacco control strategy for Northern Ireland and that regulations to introduce text and photo warnings on tobacco products were introduced in Ireland in December 2011.
7. Joint progress on suicide prevention was also noted, including the National Office for Suicide prevention and the Public Health Agency part funding an all-island project targeting the issue of Suicide and Young Men.

Child Protection

8. Ministers welcomed the launch of the Inter-Jurisdictional Protocol for the Transfer of Child Care cases between Northern Ireland and Ireland. The protocol will be made available to appropriate Health and Social Care and Health Service executive staff and will be included on both departmental websites.
9. The Council acknowledged work undertaken by the five existing Child Protection sub-groups, that the work of these is largely completed and that the Cross-Border Steering Group on Child Protection will bring forward a new work programme to the next NSMC Health and Food Safety meeting.

FOOD SAFETY PROMOTION BOARD (*safefood*)

10. Ministers noted a progress report from the CEO, Martin Higgins, on the activities of **safefood**. The report covered scientific and promotional activities, including the results of the market research on the initial phase of the "Stop the Spread" obesity and overweight campaign. The progress report also provided an update on a research report on food poverty funded by **safefood**.
11. The Council discussed the main priorities for **safefood** in 2012 and reviewed progress in finalising its Business Plan and Budget 2012.
12. Ministers welcomed a presentation by Dr Gary Kearney from **safefood** on the work of Knowledge Networks. The networks will help facilitate greater knowledge sharing by those involved in all parts of the food chain to support and enhance food safety.

St Andrews Agreement Review

13. The Council noted a number of recommendations concerning the Food Safety Promotion Board (FSPB) referred by the November 2011 NSMC Plenary meeting. The two Health Departments will now consult with the FSPB and bring forward proposals for consideration at the next NSMC Health and Food Safety meeting.

Next Meeting

14. The Council agreed that the next NSMC Health and Food Safety meeting will be held in May 2012.

**Joint Secretariat
2 February 2012**