

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC HEFS 1 (16) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY MEETING

**NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,
ARMAGH**

20 JANUARY 2016

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The twentieth North South Ministerial Council Health and Food Safety meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh on 20 January 2016. The meeting was attended by Leo Varadkar TD, Minister for Health, Dr. James Reilly TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Simon Hamilton MLA, Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, and Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. Minister Varadkar chaired the meeting.

Review of Work Programme

2. Ministers noted that the current work programme remains relevant, enabling practical and effective cooperation for mutual benefit in the Health Sector and agreed that officials will progress deliberations on potential additions to the work programme.

3. Ministers noted that officials have already commenced a review of the child protection agenda work programme.

EU Funding Opportunities

4. The Council received an update on the ongoing collaboration to maximize drawdown of EU funding in the Health sector and noted that officials continue to seek to identify opportunities to collaborate on the drawdown of EU funds.
5. Ministers welcomed the successful delivery of the twelve strands of the Cooperation and Working Together (CAWT) project under INTERREG IVA.
6. Ministers also welcomed the presentation from the Health Research Board on Horizon 2020 funding streams in the Health Sector.

HEALTH AND CHILD PROTECTION

Health Promotion

7. The Council noted continued progress on strategies to prevent the harm related to alcohol misuse in both jurisdictions and also received an update on the work of the North/South Alcohol Policy Advisory Group and the North/South Hidden Harm Group which is facilitated by CAWT.
8. The Council noted that both jurisdictions are reviewing the recent European Court of Justice judgment in the Scottish Minimum Unit Pricing case and considering its implications.
9. The NSMC noted that legislation, both to introduce standardised packaging of tobacco products and to transpose the EU Tobacco Products Directive, is expected to come into force in May 2016.
10. Ministers welcomed the update on suicide prevention initiatives in both jurisdictions including: the decision by all four major Christian churches to include within clergy training the Flourish! Inter-church suicide prevention initiative; the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training Programme (an Australian initiative), adapted for Northern Ireland, and which has been delivered to more than 4,500 people since 2009; and the collaboration between the Public Health Agency and the National Office for Suicide Prevention in working with the GAA on a health and well being project.
11. The Council noted the launch last week of Ireland's first ever National Physical Activity Plan.

Cancer and Health Research Co-operation

12. The Council noted that construction on the Radiotherapy Unit at Altnagelvin Hospital is on target and that it is planned that the Unit will open, and be in operational use, by late Autumn 2016.

13. The NSMC noted that the All-Ireland Cancer Consortium (AICC) Conference 2015 took place in Belfast on 10-13 May 2015.
14. Ministers received an update on the work of the US-Ireland R&D Partnership and noted that six new submissions were made to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) involving researchers from both jurisdictions.
15. Ministers welcomed the update on the ongoing work of the All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care (AIHPC) which included a Global Colloquium in October 2015 hosted by AIHPC and co-sponsored by the World Health Organisation; and the holding of the 4th Annual Palliative Care Research Network (PCRN) Symposium in Dublin in November 2015.

CHILD PROTECTION

16. Ministers noted that the work programme agreed at the NSMC meeting in July 2012 continues to be progressed through the cross-border Steering Group of officials (co-chaired by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs) which most recently met on 29 October 2015.
17. The Council noted that a review of the current child protection work programme is underway and the outcome of that review will be reported at a future NSMC meeting in this sector.

FOOD SAFETY PROMOTION BOARD (*safefood*)

SAFEFOOD-REVIEW OF 2015

18. The Council noted the CEO's report on the high level achievements and updates on campaigns against 2015 Business Plan targets.
19. The Council also noted the launch earlier in the month of *safefood*'s weight loss app ('weight-mate') to coincide with the new series of Operation Transformation.

***safefood* Annual Report and Accounts 2014**

20. The Council noted the *safefood* Annual Report and Accounts 2014.

***safefood* Advisory Committee Appointments**

21. The appointment of 4 new members and one reappointment to *safefood*'s Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) was approved as was the appointment of Professor Margaret Patterson as Chair of the Committee.
22. The Council agreed that the Chief Executive would write to the new members of SAC confirming their appointments.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

23. The Council agreed that the next NSMC Health and Food Safety meeting will be held in Autumn 2016.

**Joint Secretariat
20 January 2016**

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