

North South Ministerial Council
Joint Secretariat



An Chomhairle Aireachta
Thuaidh Theas
An Chomhrúnaíocht

PAPER NSMC HEFS 2 (12) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY MEETINGS

**NSMC JOINT SECRETARIAT OFFICES,
ARMAGH**

18 JULY 2012

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The fourteenth North South Ministerial Council Health and Food Safety meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh on 18 July 2012. 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 Michelle O'Neill MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. Minister Reilly chaired the meeting.

Co-operation and Working Together

2. The Council received a presentation on the work of Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT), from Tom Daly, Director General, Bernie McCrory, Chief Officer and Mairead McAlinden, Chief Executive of the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. Ministers noted the launch of the CAWT 2011 Annual Report and congratulated CAWT on its work over the past 20 years on improving the health and well-being of border populations.

3. Ministers welcomed progress made in the implementation of the CAWT managed €30 EU INTERREG IVA project “Putting Patients, Clients and Families First”. Through this project there have been in excess of 20,000 patient and client beneficiaries resulting in improved patient welfare and the delivery of savings to the two health Departments. The participation of CAWT in the Northern Peripheries Programme was also welcomed.

Health Promotion

4. The Council noted the development of strategies in both jurisdictions on alcohol misuse. These include ongoing collaboration on minimum unit price for alcohol and proposals for a North/South Alcohol Forum.
5. Ministers noted measures proposed in the new Northern Ireland ten year tobacco strategy which aim to reduce the availability and appeal of tobacco products to young people. They also noted that legislation prohibiting smoking in cars where children are present is being developed in Ireland.
6. Progress made by the Special Action Group on Obesity in Ireland was also discussed and Ministers noted that the Caloriewise scheme, which aims to encourage consumers to make more informed choices when eating out or on-the-go, is being trialled by eight local businesses in Northern Ireland.

Cancer and Health Research Co-operation

7. The Council noted that the business planning process is well advanced for the establishment of a radiotherapy unit at Altnagelvin. Construction will commence in 2013 with the unit being operational in 2016. Officials are working together to finalise arrangements that will ensure the effective delivery of the project.
8. Ministers discussed progress on implementation of the revised Memorandum of Understanding for the Ireland - Northern Ireland - National Cancer Institute Cancer Consortium and noted that joint research projects undertaken through the previous MOU have indicated improved strategies for cancer prevention or treatment. The three jurisdictions agreed to focus on five workstreams:
 - Capacity Building for Clinical Research
 - Public Health & Wellbeing/Prevention/Health Promotion (to include population-health research)
 - Nursing
 - Palliative and end-of-life care
 - Survivorship
9. Progress on the development of new collaborative health research projects through the US-Ireland R and D Partnership was also noted.

Suicide Prevention

10. Ministers welcomed the publication of the refreshed Protect Life Strategy in Northern Ireland and noted progress on the review of the Reach Out Suicide Prevention strategy in Ireland.
11. The Council welcomed the commencement of the Men's Health Forum pilot projects, one of which will focus on the Colin area in Belfast which has previously suffered from high levels of young male suicide and the second of which leverages social media to reach out to young men in Ireland.
12. Ministers noted that the Registry of Self-Harm is now in place in all hospital trusts in Northern Ireland, which means that there is complete coverage across the island of Ireland. They endorsed revised all-island media guidelines which seek to promote positive reporting of suicide and welcomed the Please Talk campaign which links students who are in distress with college supports and which is operational in campuses in both jurisdictions.

Child Protection

13. The Council noted and welcomed the proposed future work programme for the Child Protection Steering Group which is to be taken forward through five specific work streams focusing on:
 - Knowledge Exchange;
 - Quality and Effectiveness;
 - Deaths of Children in Care;
 - Cultural Correspondence in Safeguarding; and
 - Specialist Services

FOOD SAFETY PROMOTION BOARD (*safefood*)

14. The Council received a presentation on the work of **safefood** from the CEO, Martin Higgins. The report highlighted **safefood**'s scientific and promotional activities and the success of the **safefood** obesity awareness campaign, "Stop the Spread", which won the gold award in the healthcare sector at the 2012 An Post Integrated Direct Marketing Awards.
15. Ministers reviewed progress on the development of the **safefood** Business Plan and Budget 2012 and noted the **safefood** 2011 Annual Report and Accounts.
16. The publication of the **safefood** report "Infectious Intestinal Diseases on the Island of Ireland 2000-2010" was welcomed. Ministers acknowledged **safefood**'s ongoing work on infectious intestinal diseases. They noted that the report, and ongoing studies of trends, advance the epidemiological understanding of foodborne diseases and help to underpin future prevention strategies for **safefood**.

Next Meeting

17. The Council agreed that the next NSMC Health and Food Safety meeting will be held on 21 November 2012.

Joint Secretariat
18 July 2012