

NHPC

1402

RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM:
A CONSULTATION ON THE SCHOOLS (NUTRITION AND
HEALTH PROMOTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL

Please complete the details below and return it with your response. This will help ensure we handle your response appropriately. Thank you for your help.

Name: Craig Clement, Education Department, Angus Council

Postal Address: County Buildings, Market Street, Forfar, DD8 3WE

1. Are you responding: (please delete (a) or (b))

(b) on behalf of a group/organisation?

go to Q3 and then Q4

INDIVIDUALS

2a. Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in the Scottish Executive library and/or on the Scottish Executive website)?

Yes (go to 2b below)

2b. **Where confidentiality is not requested**, we will make your response available to the public on the following basis (**please tick one** of the following)

Yes, make my response, name and address all available

ON BEHALF OF GROUPS OR ORGANISATIONS:

3. The name and address of your organisation **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Executive library and/or on the Scottish Executive website). Are you also content for your **response** to be made available?

Yes

SHARING RESPONSES/FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

4. We will share your response internally with other Scottish Executive policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for the Scottish Executive to contact you again in the future in relation to this consultation response?

Yes

NAPC 1402



CTC/AD/ZD

11 August 2006

Mr Mike Gibson
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EDUCATION

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Dear Mr Gibson

**CONSULTATION ON THE SCHOOLS (NUTRITION AND HEALTH PROMOTION)
(SCOTLAND) BILL**

I refer to your letter of 5 May 2006 regarding the above subject, and my subsequent discussion with Ernie Brown.

I enclose a response from Angus Council, although it should be noted these comments will only be considered by the Education Committee at its meeting of 22 August 2006. Accordingly, the Committee may wish to make additional comments and/or amend the attached response. If this is the case I will let you know as quickly as possible thereafter.

I trust this arrangement is acceptable to you but do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss this or indeed any aspect of the response in more detail.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Craig Clement'.

Craig Clement
Head of Educational Services

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**ANGUS COUNCIL
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

**IMPROVING THE HEALTH AND NUTRITION OF SCOTLAND'S CHILDREN
*Response to consultation on the schools (nutrition and health promotion) (Scotland) bill***

There is general agreement with the principles of the bill and in particular the aim of improving nutritional standards, and promoting school meals. However the consultation document is short on detail and given arrangements currently in place it is not entirely clear why the Scottish Executive believe legislation is required to meet these aims.

Regarding the document itself the following specific comments are made:

Setting wider nutrient standards

Para 36

A key aspect of Hungry for Success: A Whole School Approach to School meals in Scotland was establishing nutritional standards for school meals. These are regularly monitored through the use of the 'Nutmeg' nutritional analysis software. The analysis in respect of Angus school menus is forwarded to the specialist nutrition Associate Assessors working with HMIE which provides an appropriate quality assurance process. It is not clear, therefore, why a short life group is now required to set nutrient standards for all food and drink provided in schools. While the existing arrangements can be improved there is no evidence these need to be radically amended.

Notwithstanding this, it is essential any standards developed by the working group are both realistic and achievable. It is important to ensure a balance is maintained between encouraging healthy eating and discouraging pupils from using the school meals service. It is also important ensure pupils are treated as responsible citizens who can make informed choices based on good information (in the main provided through the curriculum). For example within Angus a variety of options to enhance the current service are being considered, including the provision of a of 'soup and sandwich' choice for pupils. This may not meet rigid nutritional standards but is intended to encourage some pupils, who would otherwise not stay for school lunch, to do so.

Para 37

How will the situation in pre-school partner providers be monitored?

Promoting uptake of school meals

Para 39

The provision of advice to parents and pupils on packed lunches would be welcomed. Guidance would also be useful on how to deal with pupils who bring inappropriate food or drink to schools.

Para 40

The document does not outline how it is expected local authorities will promote an increase in school meals where it is needed.

Who will monitor the position in each authority to decide whether or not promotion is effective? Similarly, what criteria will be used to determine 'where this is needed'? Will target uptake figure be imposed?

Surprisingly in this context no mention is made of the price charged for school meals. Price will obviously impact on demand and therefore uptake. Given defined nutrient standards (including portion size) are in place perhaps guidance on acceptable charges should also be issued.

Para 41

There is complete agreement with objective of providing anonymity for those entitled to free school meals. However, the wording in this paragraph is slightly different from that in Para 35 which provides a caveat to the effect "as far as is practicable". Clarification is required on the expectations which will be placed on schools and what will happen should an individual inadvertently find out information regarding a pupil. For example arrangements for a school trip sometimes involve those entitled to a free lunch receiving a "packed lunch" from the school kitchen while other pupils bring their own.

Power to provide snacks and drinks

Para 42

Within Angus (and indeed other local authorities) a number of schools already provide snacks and drinks other than at lunch time, e.g. breakfast club, tuck shop. It is not clear therefore why a new 'power' is required. It is important that the tuck shops and vending machines, etc, within the school environs are included within the nutritional standards.

Health promoting environments

Para 43

The targeting of breakfast or snacks (free or otherwise) to a group of pupils may conflict with the objective of anonymity outlined in Para 41.

Para 44

It is assumed that the reference to 'health promoting environment' applies to both the learning and physical environment. Accordingly, a definition of environment would be extremely useful, particularly regarding areas outwith the immediate school campus, i.e. will this apply to mobile food vendors and indeed shops selling food within the vicinity of the school.

Para 45

It is unclear as to how the proposals in this bill will by themselves sustain and develop opportunities for local food sectors.

The provider of school meals in Angus (Tayside Contracts) is continually liaising with local suppliers to encourage the provision of good quality locally produced products. However it is not always possible for local providers to meet the required delivery schedule, volume and other necessary quality assurance arrangements.

Financial implications of the bill

Para 46

The consultation document indicates significant funding is already in place for Hungry for Success and accordingly no additional resources required. While this to a certain extent is fair (and indeed the resources already provided are welcomed), without knowing what the revised nutritional standards will be, how can this assertion be made with any certainty? Similarly, if additional monitoring is required, e.g. pre-school partners, this will undoubtedly result in additional costs.

The document indicates that by encouraging uptake the overall cost for school meals may increase but suggests there may be scope for these additional meals to be absorbed within the current provision which would therefore not result in a net increase in cost (i.e. meals prepared by caterers which were not actually consumed). However, assuming promotion is effective the net cost of the service will inevitably increase. While (due to fixed costs of some elements of production) the average cost of producing a school meal would be expected to reduce, it is undoubtedly the case some additional production costs (food, labour, equipment and transport costs) will be incurred.

Para 52

While the general investment by the Scottish Executive in the school estate is to be welcomed, this will be inadequate to enable the expansion of catering facilities. Accordingly additional capital funding is required to ensure dining facilities are fit for purpose.

Para 54

At present all 8 secondary schools and one primary school (Southmuir) have cashless catering systems. To extend this to all other primary schools (or at least schools with a roll in excess of 200) would be substantial. The ongoing costs of maintaining and upgrading systems (e.g. using biometric system rather than card) requires additional investment.

Para 57

To subsidise and indeed promote the establishment of breakfast clubs and other facilities will require funding if it is to be successfully implemented.

Para 58

The important dimension of other initiatives particularly Active Schools as part of the wider health promoting school is well made. It is important therefore that not only funding for Hungry for Success is adequate but Active Schools funding is also sustained in the medium term.

Areas not covered in bill:

- one extremely effective way of increasing demand for school meals would be to lower the charge to pupils/parents, but again this would have financial implications.
- consideration should be given to increasing the availability of free fruit to pupils in P3 – P7 and possibly also S1/S2.