CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT HEALTHY EATING IN SCHOOLS (NUTRITIONAL STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS) (WALES) REGULATIONS

Welsh Government Consultation

British Medical Association Cymru/Wales

INTRODUCTION

BMA Cymru Wales is pleased to provide a response to the consultation by the Welsh Government on the draft Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations.

The British Medical Association represents doctors from all branches of medicine all over the UK; and has a total membership of over 150,000 including more than 3,000 members overseas and over 19,000 medical student members.

The BMA is the largest voluntary professional association of doctors in the UK, which speaks for doctors at home and abroad. It is also an independent trade union.

BMA Cymru Wales represents some 7,000 members in Wales from every branch of the medical profession.

RESPONSE

BMA Cymru Wales is very much supportive of the principle of legislating in order to improve the nutritional standard of food in schools and is pleased to give its support to these draft regulations.

We believe that every child should receive a well-balanced diet in order for them to obtain all the nutrients they require for physical and mental growth and development. Such a diet should provide enough energy and nutrients for optimum health in appropriate quantities. A suitable example is contained within guidelines produced by the Caroline Walker Trust (CWT)1 which provides figures for the recommended nutritional content of an average school meal provided for children over a one week period.

BMA Cymru Wales believes that any such regulations should include a reference to nutritional standards which are assessed on the actual nutritional content of food served to children at school. We believe that what is most important is the implementation of “nutrition” standards, i.e. specifying the proportions of nutrients pupils should receive from an average day’s school lunch as well as the overall calorific value that should be provided, rather than the implementation of “food” standards, i.e. specifying what particular foods can be served when and how often.

As such, we strongly support the proposals outlined within Schedule 4 of the draft regulations (Nutritional standards for lunch in maintained primary and secondary schools). We do recognise that also specifying food standards can act as an aid to the implementation of these nutrition standards, although we do not offer specific views on the individual proposals contained within the draft regulations. We would instead express our broad support to the overall approach that is advocated.

1 http://www.cwt.org.uk

Welsh Secretary: Dr Richard JP Lewis, CSU MB CHB MRCGP Dip IMC RCS (Ed)
Chief Executive/Secretary: Tony Bourne

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Further detail regarding the BMA’s views on nutrition in schools, and its contribution towards tackling childhood obesity, can be found within the BMA report, *Preventing childhood obesity*², which was published in June 2005.

**Contact for further information:**
Rodney Berman  
E-mail: RIBerman@bma.org.uk  
Tel: 029 2047 4620  
Fax: 029 2047 4600  
Mobile: 07867 356106

²http://bmaopachosted.exlibrisgroup.com/exlibris/aleph/a21_1/apache_media/G8RN2M79LBYDG5YAH6LBN78F5G1.pdf