



PAPER NSMC HEFS 1 (09) JC

NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY SECTORAL FORMATS

FARMLEIGH HOUSE

DUBLIN

10 JUNE 2009

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The eighth North South Ministerial Council meeting in the Health and Food Safety sectoral formats was held in Dublin on Wednesday 10 June 2009. The meeting was attended by Mary Harney, TD, Minister for Health and Children, Barry Andrews TD Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Michael McGimpsey MLA, Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and Michelle Gildernew MP, MLA, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. Minister Harney chaired the meeting.
2. Ministers welcomed the recent award by the Special European Union Programmes Body of funding amounting to £24 million (circa €30 million) for Health and Social Care Services under the Interreg IVA Programme. The project will be managed jointly by both health Departments, and delivered on their behalf by Co-Operation and Working Together (CAWT). Ministers looked forward to receiving a progress report on the implementation of the project at a future meeting..
3. Ministers reviewed the close co-operation on the recent Influenza A/H1N1 outbreak. They recognised that there must be equally effective measures to contain the spread of the virus in both parts of the island. While the outbreak has affected both jurisdictions, fortunately the number of cases remains low.

HEALTH

Health Promotion

4. Ministers discussed the priorities for health promotion on the basis of a paper prepared by the Institute of Public Health. They agreed that future priorities for co-

operation will take account of feasibility and sustainability, especially in the current economic climate.

Suicide Prevention

5. Ministers welcomed progress to date on suicide prevention. They endorsed proposals for the Irish Association of Suicidology and the Samaritans in association with the Department of Health Social Service and Public Safety and the Department of Health and Children to issue revised media guidelines to incorporate advice on new technologies including internet related suicides.

Child Protection

6. Ministers welcomed progress on the implementation of an NSMC plenary decision to develop a work programme to intensify co-operation on Child Protection. Ministers welcomed the very valuable exchange of information and ideas on issues such as internet safety; the development of a protocol for the movement of vulnerable children and families across borders, and the development of advice and guidance material for parents, carers and employers aimed at strengthening safeguarding arrangements on both sides of the border. The Council also welcomed the continuing collaborative work within both jurisdictions on the management of sex offenders.

FOOD SAFETY PROMOTION BOARD (safefood)

safefood Progress Report

7. Ministers received a progress report on the work of **safefood** since the last meeting in May 2008. This was presented by the Chairperson Mr John Dardis, the Vice Chairperson Mr Campbell Tweedie and the Chief Executive Mr Martin Higgins.
8. The Council noted the following points:
 - Progress made on the development of the Obesity Action Forum which the Council had endorsed at its meeting in May 2008.
 - The range of promotional activities undertaken by **safefood** including a healthy eating campaign targeted at parents and various seasonal campaigns. The range of scientific activities undertaken by the Body including on salt intake, dietary patterns and food poverty.
 - The completion of three consumer focused reviews in 2008 – on beef, milk and pork. These reviews highlighted that consumer confidence in these products remains high.

9. Ministers also received a presentation on proposals for the development of an enteric reference service for the island of Ireland. They noted the work done to date by **safefood**.

safefood Business Plan

10. The Council also discussed **safefood's** Business Plan for 2009, and noted **safefood's** annual report and accounts for 2007.

Next Meeting

11. The Council agreed to hold its next meeting in Health and Food Safety sectoral formats in October 2009.

Joint Secretariat

10 June 2009