

SOSCN response to Scottish Government's consultation on "Nutritional requirements for food and drink in schools"

Increase access to fruit and vegetables

1 What are your views on our intention to amend the current school food and drink Regulations to ensure children and young people are able to access more fruit and vegetables as part of their school day?

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If fruit and vegetables are offered as separate entities then it is reliant on children and young people choosing them- we do not believe that access to fruit and vegetables in this way would necessarily create a greater uptake.

Furthermore, if fruit and vegetables are not eaten then this creates waste and school meal providers may be less inclined to provide them as it could potentially be seen as being economically unviable.

We believe that it would be better for more fruit and vegetables to be incorporated as key ingredients in the food offered thus it does not become a choice but is simply part of a nutritious meal.

Reduce the sugar content of school food and drink provided in schools

2 What are your views on our intention to amend the current school food and drink Regulations to ensure the amount of sugar children and young people can access over the course of the school day is reduced?

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We agree with these proposals.

Provision of red and red processed meat

3 What are your views on our intention to amend the school food and drink Regulations to set a maximum for red and red processed meat in primary school lunches and for overall provision in secondary schools?

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What will the maximum level be? We need details before we can fully comment.

In general, we believe there should be a wider and more varied menu available- it is not simply about reducing red meat consumption but also increasing the offer of healthier alternatives such as fish, vegetarian and also vegan lunches. Children have reported to us that there are often

insufficient vegetarian/pescatarian options available meaning that if they are near last to being served there are no suitable lunch options available to them.

In terms of red and red processed meat meals, the meat content can often be reduced and the vegetable content increased without significantly changing the taste, look or texture of the dish e.g. chilli.

If we want truly healthier children and young people we need to take a more creative and joined-up approach to providing truly healthy meals.

A change to the application of nutrient standards in secondary schools

4 What are your views on our intention to amend the school food and drink Regulations to enable caterers to provide a service which better supports secondary age pupils to make balanced and nutritious food and drink choices as part of their school day?

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Secondary school pupils are more likely to want to eat 'portable lunches', can this not be reflected by creating pre-prepared 'grab-and-go' lunches? It could be similar to the lunch box deals that you often see for younger children in many food outlets where you are allowed a choice of 4/5 items from a selection of healthy foods and drinks.

Any other comments

5 Do you have anything else you wish to comment on in relation to the nutritional content of food and drink provided in local authority, and grant maintained, schools in Scotland via the School food and drink Regulations?

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To make real change we believe the focus should actually be on the quality of healthy ingredients and balance of these within meals- make the food dishes themselves healthier and tastier.