

High Level Steering Group 15 May: Item 5.

Calorie reduction: building engagement and developing good practice

Introduction

1. An initial tranche of 17 signatories to the calorie reduction pledge was announced on 24 March. This included the 'big four' supermarkets; many of the largest manufacturers; the largest sandwich shop chain together with a major contract caterer and a leading restaurant brand. This represents a very promising start in gaining sign-up from across the food industry, and media coverage of the announcement was correspondingly positive.
2. At Annex A is the Department's press release of 24 March, listing the signatories and giving brief details of their commitments. Formal delivery plans are due to be sent to the Department by 15 May and will be published as a group on the Responsibility Deal website shortly after this date, alongside other pledges.
3. This paper turns to the issues of building further engagement – particularly growing the number of signatories – but also embedding this initiative into wider goals and activity linked to the 'Call to Action on Obesity' and developing good practice to ensure the strongest set of contributions come forward.

Building engagement – growing the number of signatories

4. The tranche of initial signatories includes representatives from the retail, manufacturing and catering sectors. In fairly crude terms of scale of operation, existing signatories from **retail** cover a large portion of the market, leaving a very small number of remaining major retailers currently unsigned. The latter include the 'budget supermarkets'. We propose working actively to sign-up the remaining major retailers including the budget supermarkets – which is important to ensure that the calorie reduction initiative reaches across all socio-economic groups.
5. Many of the country's (indeed the world's) largest food **manufacturers** are among the initial tranche of signatories. Since the announcement, United Biscuits have also signed-up to the pledge, increasing the representation of this sector.
6. According to our figures, there are fewer than twenty additional manufacturers each supplying more than 0.5% of calories via sales of branded foodstuffs. These businesses represent a diverse range of sectors which are likely to face different possibilities in terms of calorie reduction options open to them. For the most part we propose to approach these companies individually. However we think there is merit in working with some sub-sectors and the relevant trade bodies (e.g. the

dairy firms, and Dairy UK) to explore the scope for action and mobilise support around their particular food groups.

7. The **catering** sector, including contract catering and suppliers, is relatively under-represented at present and it is important that progress is made across this sector including the major pub/ restaurant chains, quick service and takeaway, casual dining, and coffee and sandwich shops. Anecdotally we understand that the roll-out of calorie labelling has, in some cases, prompted a wider look at the composition of menus and individual dishes and we will give further thought to a continued and co-ordinated effort to engage businesses on these related pledges. Similarly, we plan to discuss with the Health at Work network the scope for complementary actions, including engaging with public sector customers in the health service and local government.
8. In addition to the above analysis there are a range of other venues where calories are sold/consumed, including newsagents and leisure outlets, such as cinemas.
9. In moving forward, we will give further thought to the style and substance of further announcements depending on the nature and scale of commitments offered. This may mean announcement of further 'tranches' of signatories or more specific publicity. Alongside this activity, Government will continue to play its own part (e.g. the 'behaviours' and priorities of the Change4Life campaign are currently being reviewed to ensure best fit with calorie reduction and other key nutritional and health priorities), and to put in place the necessary data and analysis to understand progress at the aggregate level.

Developing good practice

10. Alongside considering roll-out of calorie reduction in terms of raw numbers of signatories, there is the issue of stimulating the best – including the most innovative – commitments and actions. At previous meetings, the idea of building up a body of 'good practice' has been raised. Whereas partners' delivery plans will not be subject to a 'vetting' procedure, we have offered to provide informal feedback on draft delivery plans ahead of submission if signatories would find this helpful. We are also aware of potentially complementary work that could add to a base of good practice such as the IGD's current work on portion sizes.
11. One way in which innovation may be stimulated is by drawing on the expertise of the Behaviour Change Network and embedding this within the Food Network (see separate paper). This is part of a broader move to make more effective use of expertise in behaviour change and to evaluate new ideas. As a starting point we are considering holding one or more facilitated workshops, involving BCN members, academics and industry representatives, and these could look at calorie reduction specifically.

Other actions

12. Over the coming months we will also be refining our plans to measure progress at the aggregate level. As we have said previously, this will involve a matrix of indicators including data from the Health Survey for England, the National Diet and Nutrition Survey, the Expenditure and Food Survey, and commercially available data (Kantar), augmented with additional data to improve coverage of the catering sector. Analysis of this data will give an overall indication of progress at population level - taking into account the range of other initiatives and influences bearing on consumer behaviour – including some useful insights into the actions being delivered by business as a whole.

Questions for discussion

13. Views from HLSG members would be welcome on the above issues of building engagement and developing good practice. Questions include:

- ***Does our analysis of the market accord with your knowledge/perceptions?***
- ***Based on this analysis, do you agree with the proposed targeted approach to the continued roll-out of calorie reduction***
- ***What can you do to assist the wider roll-out? Who else can help secure sign-up?***
- ***What platforms can be utilised/ created to spread engagement and build the sense of importance of this area for action?***
- ***How can a body of good practice best be built up? Can ‘beacons’ be identified? What other complementary work can be brought into play?***
- ***Are there any particular aspects of calorie reduction where behaviour change expertise might be useful, and in what way might it best be deployed to support business?***
- ***What can business/ others reasonably be expected to do to measure and evaluate their efforts? How can the burden and outputs be effectively shared?***

Annex A: DH Press release “Calories to be capped and cut”, 24 March 2012

The country’s biggest supermarkets, food manufacturers, caterers and food outlets are joining forces to help cut five billion calories from the nation’s daily diet, the Health Secretary Andrew Lansley announced today.

Asda, Marks & Spencer, Morrisons, Sainsbury’s, Tesco, Waitrose, Coca-Cola Great Britain, Kerry Foods, Kraft, Mars, Nestle, PepsiCo, Premier Foods, Unilever, Beefeater (Whitbread), Subway and contract caterer Compass have all joined the fight against obesity and are leading the way in signing up to the Responsibility Deal’s calorie reduction pledge.

England has one of the highest rates of obesity in Europe and some of the highest rates in the developed world. Over 60 per cent of adults and a third of 10 and 11 year olds are overweight or obese. Consuming too many calories is at the heart of the problem.

Making commitments today to cut and cap calories are some of the world’s biggest food and drink manufacturers and best known brands. More than three-quarters of the retail market has signed up. In addition, among the first signatories are some of the top caterers providing meals in thousands of out of home settings, including Subway’s 1,423 stores – ranked number two by total meals sold. The impact of these commitments will help millions of people eat and drink fewer calories.

The following examples highlight some of the initiatives being taken, which include companies actively promoting and incentivising customers to choose lower calorie options. For many these examples are just one part of a wider calorie reduction strategy.

The commitments include:

Asda will develop a new reduced calorie brand across a wide range of products that will contain at least 30 per cent fewer calories than their core Chosen by you brand;

Coca-Cola Great Britain will reduce the calories in some of its soft drinks brands by at least 30 per cent by 2014;

Mars will cap the calories of their chocolate items to 250 calories per portion by the end of 2013;

Morrisons will launch a range of healthier products developed by their chefs and nutritionists. More than 300 lines will be introduced, including low calorie and high fibre offerings. Key to this range will be an easy to read and understand labelling system;

Premier Foods, manufacturers of brands including Ambrosia, Batchelors, Hovis, Loyd Grossman, Mr.Kipling, and Sharwood’s, will reduce calories in

one third of their sales by the end of 2014 and at least 30 per cent of new products will be lower calorie choices;

The Subway brand has committed to offer five out of their nine Low Fat Range Subs, each with fewer than 370 calories, as part of their £3 lunch offer; and

Tesco is on track to remove 1.8 billion calories from its soft drinks, will expand its Eat, Live and Enjoy range of low-calorie meals and is making it easier for shoppers to spot low-calorie options through its “Green Ping” labels.

Health Secretary, Andrew Lansley said:

“Eating and drinking too many calories is at the heart of the nation’s obesity problem. We all have a role to play – from individuals to public, private and non-governmental organisations – if we are going to cut five billion calories from our national diet. It is an ambitious challenge but the Responsibility Deal has made a great start. This pledge is just the start of what must be a bigger, broader commitment from the food industry. But it is a great step in the right direction and will help million of us eat and drink fewer calories.”

Chair of the Responsibility Deal Food Network Dr Susan Jebb said:

“I am delighted that these first companies are leading the way on this calorie reduction programme which is vital to tackle obesity and improve public health. This is a very encouraging start displaying some creative and varied ways to encourage behaviour change. I am impatient to make progress, but it will take time to change the eating habits of the nation. This is a marathon not a sprint and we all have to commit to support this programme of work for years to come. I know some other companies are already developing their plans but we need everyone, all companies – from all sectors and all sizes – to step up and act for the good of the nation’s health.”

British Retail Consortium Food Director, Andrew Opie, said:

“Responsible retailers are dedicated to helping people make healthier choices. The new commitments on calorie reduction complement other work retailers are doing in areas such as calorie information, salt reduction and alcohol units. The next phase must be to consolidate the excellent foundation which so many businesses have helped to put in place.”

FDF Director General, Melanie Leech said:

“Recognising the importance of the government’s Call to Action on Obesity in England, FDF has been working constructively alongside other stakeholders through the Public Health Responsibility Deal to develop a calorie reduction pledge. We welcome the approach of a menu of options, which should allow as many companies as possible to support improved public health whilst continuing to make a major contribution to the UK’s economic recovery. A number of FDF companies are making immediate commitments to support the

calorie reduction pledge and we would expect other companies from right across the food and drink industry to join them over the next few months.”

Notes to Editors

Other initiatives include:

Beefeater Grill (Whitbread) will promote 20 per cent of their menu with calorie capped meals, and continue to reduce calories year on year in their top selling lines;

Compass Group UK will over the next 18 months reformulate their standard recipes to decrease energy density and subsequently remove up to 10 per cent of calories from these recipes;

Kerry Foods will deliver activity in a number of different ways, including reducing energy density;

Kraft will introduce resealable packaging on many of our chocolate brands, including Cadbury’s Dairy Milk;

M&S will continue to grow its range of calorie controlled options across prepared meals, desserts, sandwiches and snacks, which are designed to help customers reduce their intake of calories;

Nestlé will continue its programme of product reformulation and increase its support for education and training programmes in schools, colleges and at the workplace, to teach the basic principles of health and nutrition, including calorie management;

PepsiCo UK will introduce a calorie cap of 160 Calories across single serve savoury snacks without significant positive nutrition, by 2015;

Sainsbury’s have publicly committed to reduce sugar, fat, saturated fat and salt in own brand products;

Unilever UK is already reducing calories; recently it conducted reformulation within its spreads portfolio, significantly reducing the number of calories and the amount of saturated fat. It will complement this with further reformulation and consumer information; and

Waitrose will build on the work it has already done to reduce calories with no compromise on taste or quality. It will continue to make calorie reductions in a variety of ways, including reviewing energy density, and will continue to encourage a balanced diet and exercise.