

National Assembly For Wales

Report By The Health and Social Services Committee On

The Healthy Start Scheme (Description of Healthy Start Food) (Wales) Regulations 2006

1. The Committee considered the above Regulations at its meeting on 11 October 2006. They were considered in accordance with the protocol for dealing with secondary legislation agreed by the Committee on 11 June 2003, whereby Members notify in advance any queries or amendments they wish to make to the Regulations.

2. No amendments had been notified, but there were five points of clarification to which the Minister responded as reported below.

Helen Mary Jones AM:

i. What are the value of tokens under the existing Welfare Food Scheme, and what foods are available?

Response:

There is no monetary value to the tokens, they are exchanged for food items.

ii. Can the Minister clarify how breast-feeding will be promoted under the new scheme?

Response:

It will be promoted by the maternity services including midwives. There will be less promotion of infant formula.

iii. What is the budget for the current WFS, and what will be the budget for the new HSS, and how will the budget increase in subsequent years?

Response:

There will not be any significant change to the current budget of £9 million.

iv. What is the anticipated take-up of the scheme?

Response:

It is hoped that wider choice of foods, with less emphasis on milk, will attract more people to take-up the scheme. Department of Health has primary responsibility for administering the scheme and they are expected to run press promotion targeted at food retailers, including the smaller chains and co-operatives.

Jenny Randerson AM:

v. Why has the upper age limit for children to receive vouchers for this scheme been reduced from age five to age four?

Response:

The age limit was set by Department of Health and the National Assembly does not have the powers to vary this. Many children nowadays have started school by the age of four.

3. In response to a question from Lynne Neagle AM, the Minister said that £2.80p could purchase a substantial variety of fruit and vegetables, especially through food co-operatives. The higher rate in a baby's first year includes the needs of the mother. The Minister agreed to provide further information on how the levels were derived.

4. The Committee was content with the regulations as drafted.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM
Chair
September 2006