

Wales Centre
for Health



Canolfan
Iechyd Cymru

Food and Well Being:
A Nutrition network for Wales
Stage One

Draft for consultation

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Executive summary and recommendations

Diet is one of the broader determinants of health, if the nation is to meet the 'Health Challenge' set out by the first Minister it is necessary to address the need for the population to eat more healthily. A nutrition network as recommended in 'Food and Well Being' and 'The Scoping Project of Education and Training for Health and Related Professions' is key to supporting individuals and organisations who are delivering improvements to diet.

Consultation is fundamental to the success of any network; this document describes the outcome and recommendations of the consultation on the development of a Nutrition network for Wales. A four step consultation process was designed to give partners an opportunity to contribute toward developing the network purpose, structure, identity and information infrastructure. Step one was to define the relationship between a nutrition network and the developing National Network for Health (working title) (NNH); step two, to identify potential partners and key activities; step three, to engage partners through consultation interviews then at a workshop and step four to define the infrastructure necessary to support the network.

A NNH (working title) is being established for Wales; it will incorporate and strengthen the public health function. The NNH will broadly link public health functions, one of which will be public health nutrition. High level key partners e.g. Food Standards Agency Wales and Welsh Assembly Government, Health Promotion Division, will be engaged in the early stages of network development.

For the purposes of consulting other key partners a total of 36 interviews were conducted. The information gathered from these conversations has been formulated into recommendations for discussion by the wider public health nutrition community in Wales.

Partners expressed detailed opinions on the nutrition network. These are reflected in the full report. It is important to note that many interviewees considered that it is important that there is high level policy activity to support the function of the network and joined up policy between government departments. Others thought that the function of a nutrition network should be to add value to activities on the ground. Some individuals took the view that a network could serve both functions. While this is out with the scope of this work it is suggested that consideration should be given to how the higher level policy advisory mechanism joins to the nutrition network function. In summary partners would like to enjoy 'joined up' thinking and action.

Recommendations

Recommendations on a Nutrition network for Wales have been summarised and are presented below. These are categorised into: purpose, structure, identity and information infrastructure.

Purpose

It is recommended that:

- The Nutrition network for Wales should bring together all networks in Wales that work in nutrition or related fields
- Where appropriate the network should develop links with nutrition and related organisations that work within Wales but are not necessarily based in the Principality
- The Nutrition Network should be designed as a sub network within the overarching framework of the NNH
- The function of the Nutrition network for Wales should be to provide information and a communication mechanism to add value to the role of networks without reducing ownership.

Structure

It is recommended that:

- In the first instance the network should be constructed to support those working in the field. Consideration should be given to how the network can link with the policy advisory structure
- It is recommended that the proposed network be designed in a way that is sufficiently flexible to create advantageous partnerships as necessary e.g. links to the proposed Physical Activity Network
- The network should have both a physical and virtual structure

Physical structure

- Regular workshops should be organised to enable personal networking, to disseminate information within Wales, and to involve external speakers.

Virtual structure

- A web based network should be developed to have the potential of bringing together a range of authoritative information relating to nutrition in one place, it should also facilitate communication
- The Nutrition network for Wales should have a site on the internet, and the site should be linked to the NNH site
- Information provided by the network should be available to both professionals and the public.

Identity

It is recommended that:

- The Nutrition network for Wales should be clearly 'badged' to reflect the following; the network has a Welsh function and origin; that it is an integral part of the NNH
- The 'branding' and presentation of the website will need to be considered.

Supporting Infrastructure

It is recommended that:

- It would be appropriate to initially establish the basic network with simple information links, and later to add further developments in co-ordination with the NNH
- A content manager should be identified, whose responsibilities would include collating and updating the information identified above. The individual will need a background in nutrition
- The technical support could be contracted from an existing provider in order to ensure coordination with related initiatives
- The website should have bilingual presentation, and graphics.

1. Background

'Improving the health of the population and reducing inequalities by tackling the underlying causes of ill health is top of the Welsh Assembly Government's agenda.' Food and Well Being (2003)

Diet is one of the broader determinants of health and if the nation is to meet the Health Challenge set out by the first Minister we must address the need for the population to be eating a healthier diet.

Welsh Assembly Government details its commitment to improving the health of the population of Wales and reducing inequalities by tackling underlying causes of ill health in 'Well Being in Wales'. The more recent 'Review of Health and Social Care in Wales' (The Wanless Report) emphasises the importance of broader determinants of health in improving the health and well being of the population of Wales. One of the primary recommendations being that in the future there should be a much greater focus on disease prevention and early intervention.

Recognising that diet is one of the broader determinants of health the Minister for Health and Social Services commissioned the writing of a nutrition strategy for Wales. After extensive consultation 'Food and Well Being, reducing inequalities through a nutrition strategy for Wales' was launched in February 2003. The commitment of the Health and Social Services Minister and also the First Minister to improving the health of the population of Wales has been reinforced by the launch in February 2004 of 'Health Challenge Wales'. 'Health Challenge Wales' will provide a new and inclusive national focus to secure greater ownership, commitment and action for better health, as part of a co-ordinated and sustained effort to improve levels of health in Wales. Overall the Challenge identifies five priorities for health improvement; one of the priorities is obesity. A reduction in the prevalence of obesity is integrally linked to improvement in diet.

To deliver an improvement in diet it is recognised that an integrated and broad health and social care approach is needed and that key partners require nutrition information and training. To meet this need the Food Standards Agency Wales (FSAW) and Welsh Assembly Government were tasked to take forward recommendation five, action one of 'Food and Well Being': to develop a nutrition network involving health professionals, teachers, voluntary organisations and others.

Network form is being increasingly recognised as a structure that, given the appropriate environment and legitimacy, supports individuals and organisations to share knowledge and skills flexibly. For this reason networks are being used increasingly as a mechanism for supporting the delivery of health and social care. This document describes the consultation on the development of a Nutrition network for Wales that took place between January and May 2004.

The successful operation of a network organisation is dependent on consultation with and co-operation between partners. A four step consultation process, described below, was designed to give partners an opportunity to contribute toward developing the network purpose, structure and identity, and information infrastructure prior to the establishment of a Nutrition network for Wales.

Step one: To define the relationship between a nutrition network and the developing NNH. Specifically to create formal relationships with the three functions central to the Wales Centre for Health, observatory, partnerships and training, and two major partners in delivering health policy, the FSA and the Welsh Assembly Government.

Step two: To identify potential partners and key activities, such as other organisations and networks, that impact on the dietary health of the people of Wales and that will gain added value from the development of a nutrition network.

Step three: To engage partners. First, by carrying out telephone and face to face consultation with selected partners to gather views, second, to hold a bilingual workshop, in conjunction with the FSA, the purpose of this workshop is to consult more widely on the network.

Step four: To define the infrastructure necessary to support the network by taking advice on the development of an information infrastructure and the writing of a user requirement.

2. The relationship between the National Network for Health and the Nutrition network for Wales

Step one involved defining the relationship between a nutrition network and the developing NNH. Collaborative and clinical networks have been a feature of the delivery of health and social care for several years. A NNH was first proposed in 'Better Health; Better Wales' in 1998. However networks such as professional groups have been in place historically.

Several fora for sharing nutrition knowledge and skills exist in Wales, including a number of public health nutrition networks, for example the NPHS nutrition network, Community Dietitians in Wales, and the network of community food project co-ordinators. The FSA Wales's biannual workshops also support networking. Of related importance are broader networks and network type structures that also contribute to the delivery of health and social care, for example Directors of Public Protection Wales. An additional dimension is added by networks in the UK and internationally, such as the Scottish Diet Action Group and WHO physical education and nutrition network. The numbers of organisations and networks already involved with improving dietary health suggest that a co-ordinated approach through a nutrition network would be appropriate. It is recommended that the Nutrition network for Wales bring together all networks in Wales working in nutrition or related fields. It is also recommended that where appropriate the network links with nutrition and related organisations that work within Wales but are not necessarily based in the Principality.

The nutrition strategy for Wales 'Food and Well Being' endorses the development of a nutrition network in Wales. The development of a nutrition network was further endorsed through consultation with partners in academia as part of the 'a scoping project of education and training for health and related professionals'. It was recommended that a nutrition network be developed to add value to the work already

being undertaken by health and related professions in Wales, and that the network be supported by access to robust information, potentially via a website.

'Better Health; Better Wales' outlined the concept of a NNH, to incorporate and strengthen the Public Health. The core functions of the network as set out in 'Better Health, Better Wales: strategic framework' are to:

- Share expertise and facilitate multi-disciplinary action
- Promulgate best practice, based on evidence and research
- Advise the Chief Medical officer on multi-disciplinary health issues
- Be a source for training initiatives and professional development
- Support the functions of WCH.

While the NNH will act as a focus for public health activity from the totality of areas of public health practice, the purpose of the nutrition network is to share expertise and facilitate multidisciplinary action in public health nutrition. It is envisaged that a nutrition network for Wales would link integrally with the NNH. It would therefore echo the NNH core functions and values.

At the highest level the activities of the FSA and Welsh Assembly Government (Health Promotion Division) are central to improving the diet of the population of Wales. To facilitate the free flow of communication with the larger umbrella network, the NNH, both organisations will be key partners. When the NNH is in place this structure will support the integration of the nutrition network into the structure of a national network. It is recommended that the nutrition network is designed as a sub network within the overarching framework of the NNH.

Several of the key outputs of the establishment of the NNH link directly with the concept of a nutrition network

- To identify and engage key partners who will be instrumental in setting up and driving forward the NNH
- To lay the foundations for the NNH to support the functions of the Wales Centre for Health by promoting a clear focus on cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral working
- To promote the 'added value' that the NNH will bring to organisations and professionals involved in the fields of health and well being, particularly with regard to its focus on cross disciplinary and cross-sectoral working
- To identify relevant individuals, organisations and networks with experience and knowledge in different health and well being fields; to use this information to develop a directory which will be distributed at the first standing conference
- To scope the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support the NNH

- To promote Health Challenge Wales and to assist all network members in taking part in this initiative.

The Nutrition network for Wales will add value to the work of the NNH. Of particular importance is linking with the NNH to use information communication technology. Network organisations are generally 'virtual organisations'. As virtual organisations they do not have a 'bricks and mortar' presence and so it is fundamental to their existence that they have a virtual space to exist in. It is possible to support a network with a communication infrastructure that does not include a web based resource, but the diversity of interests to be served by a Nutrition network for Wales indicate that access to a web based resource would be an effective way in which all partners could interact. It is recommended that the Nutrition network for Wales has a site on the internet and that the site be linked to the NNH site.

3. The Consultation

Step two in the process was to identify potential partners and key activities, including other networks and organisations, that impact on the development of a nutrition network.

Thirty six partners from seven sectors were identified by means of a mapping exercise as representing networks that that would have potential to gain added value from a Nutrition network for Wales. (Appendix 1)

The seven sectors were broadly divided into two types of organisation:

- Organisations that have nutrition as a core function e.g. The British Dietetic Association, the Nutrition Society, the British Nutrition Foundation, The Scottish Diet Action Group
- Organisations that have a role in food/nutrition in their portfolio of activities e.g. academia, local government, health, some voluntary organisations and food producers.

As a third step partners were engaged through telephone interviews. In depth conversations were held with all 36 partners. The purpose of the interviews was two fold; to seek views on the purpose, structure, identity and information infrastructure of a nutrition network and to identify additional partners who could be involved. This paper describes the consensus view on the purpose, structure, identity and information infrastructure of a Nutrition network for Wales.

3.1 Network scope and purpose

Many interviewees considered it to be important that there is high level policy activity to support the function of the network (e.g. food advertising and labelling), and joined up policy between government departments (e.g. nutrition and physical activity). Others thought that the function of a nutrition network should be to add value to activities on the ground. Some individuals took the view that a network could serve both functions. However the Scottish model, part of which is in operation, has been designed with two distinct parts. One part is designed to add value to people operating on the ground and the second part is the policy advisory arm. While this is out with the scope of this work it is suggested that consideration should be given to how the higher level policy advisory mechanism joins to the nutrition network function. In summary partners would like to enjoy 'joined up' thinking and action. The majority of those consulted were of the view that a network should add value to the work already being done on the ground. In light of this it is recommended that in the first instance the network is constructed to support those working in the field at an operational level. It is recommended that additional value could be added to nutrition activity in Wales if the existing advisory structures are enhanced to formally include academia e.g. IFANC.

Many partners from health felt they are well served by a number of overlapping networks (e.g. PHA Cymru and Community Dietitians in Wales). While partners from outside health (e.g. Welsh Development Agency, UWIC, and UWCM) felt that there are currently few nutrition networks to which they can link. It is therefore recommended that this network should bring together partners from a range of sectors that impact on diet and nutrition; also that this network should provide added value by co-ordinating communication between other networks without reducing ownership.

It was considered that bringing partners together in a network would add value to nutrition activities in Wales by providing information and training to key players. It was suggested that the network could support the following activities and outputs: to enable access to information, to share information, and to support communication:

Access to information

- Enable access to authoritative nutrition information to support evidence based practice
- Enable access to policy information
- Enable access to nutrition related data
- Inform health professionals and the public
- Address food safety as well as diet.

Share information

- Feed information into 'the system' – Wales and UK
- Timely dissemination of research
- Disseminate research findings and data
- Provide support for the development of local actions e.g. development of Health, Social Care and Well Being plans.

Support communication

- Find partners for collaboration
- Share information on best practice

- Identify areas for priority action
- Provide links with others in the field that allow discussions to take place
- Access other networks
- Co-ordinate messages across all sectors
- Exchange information with others.

The overall purpose of the network will be to support the reduction of inequalities in health and to improve health and well being through diet. The focus of the proposed network will be diet, but it is recognised that links with activities other than diet would add value to the network; for example, physical activity and behaviour change will impact on the reduction of the prevalence of obesity.

3.2 Network structure

Discussions on the nutrition network described the proposed links with the NNH. Partners expressed a wish that the nutrition network should be a sub network within the overarching framework of NNH.

Partners were asked how a network could add value to their current activities. They described ten network functions that would be required to meet their needs:

- Web based links to relevant policy/strategy reports, for example the Welsh nutrition strategy (Food and Well Being), national service frameworks, reports on obesity (e.g. Royal Colleges, National Obesity Forum)
- A summary of, and links to, best evidence (e.g. National Electronic Library for Health)
- A summary of Welsh research projects (Bangor University is establishing an academic network based on research, education and policy development)
- Lists of educational resources (and reviews where available)
- Practical guidance, for example on the nutrition element of Local Health, Social Care and Well Being plans; catering for schools; weight loss; breast feeding; nutrition in pregnancy; special groups etc.
- Lists of projects and contacts
- A 'bulletin board' of new developments, events and dates
- An electronic newsletter, available on a website, and automatically emailed to partners who wish to be on the circulation list
- A feedback and comments section
- Workshops for personal networking (building on the FSA workshops initiated during development of the nutrition strategy).

There was detailed discussion on the most appropriate mode of delivery that is needed to support the network. It was concluded, in line with the literature, that the network will require both an internet presence and a mechanism for face to face communication. It is therefore recommended that the network has both a physical and virtual structure. It is recommended that regular workshops are organised to enable personal networking, to disseminate information within Wales, and to involve external speakers. It is also recommended that a web based network is also developed to have the potential of bringing together a range of information relating to nutrition in one place, and to facilitate communication.

These functions will be reflected in the website design and its user requirement, appendix 3.

Interviewees considered that to function effectively the network needs both organisation and support. All agreed that the network should be accessible to both professionals and the public, with mostly the same content but possibly different entry routes. It is therefore recommended that information provided by the network could be available to both professionals and the public.

3.3 Network identity

Throughout the discussions it was clear that 'branding' of the network is desirable. It was agreed that this would provide an identity that could be associated with the quality of the information available from the network. Partners had no particular preference of how the network should be 'badged'. It was agreed that given the NNH is being re-established, and the nutrition network sits under this network structure the identity of the nutrition network should be reflective of the 'branding' chosen for the NNH.

Whilst being based in Wales, the network would draw on UK and international knowledge and information, and would also act as a resource for UK and international partners. It would therefore be possible to enhance the Welsh content of a number of UK websites. 'Branding' would be important, with particularly in relation to key documents and organisations e.g. to the nutrition strategy and the NNH. It is recommended that the Nutrition network for Wales is clearly 'badged' to reflect the following; the network has a Welsh function and origin; that it is an integral part of the NNH.

4. Supporting information infrastructure

4.1 Background

As described in the previous sections a selected group of 36 partners, most of whom already have networks and information systems, have been interviewed, and feedback has been positive. The following discussion refers to the information

component of the proposed network. A user requirement is set out in Appendix 2. which will need to be costed on the basis of specialist advice.

Having identified key partners in the step two, a number of these key partners identified additional networks or partners that would gain added value from the network. A database of invitees to the workshop has been created using this information. It is intended that all individuals on the database are invited to attend the FSA workshops in May to discuss proposals for the nutrition network. The remainder of this section reflects step four of the process and addresses the information and technical solutions for the project.

4.2 Scope and purpose

The scope and purpose of information and technical solutions is informed by the advice of partners.

The solution for the Nutrition network for Wales will need to be consistent with, and ultimately part of, the NNH. It is likely that the nutrition network will be the first to be established, and therefore future broader developments will need to be considered. A stepwise implementation may therefore be practical, as outlined later in this requirement.

The primary focus of the network is within Wales, but much of the information and some of the partners will be UK based, and some international. Similarly, partners outside Wales may find the network and information useful.

The networks that are already in place tend to share information internally. This is generally achieved through face to face meetings, email, and newsletters or through access to the internet, often via an organisational website (e.g. British Heart Foundation). The Nutrition network for Wales will need to bring together a whole range of information relating to nutrition in one place, including reference to related networks and databases.

Examples of related networks include British Nutrition Foundation, British Heart Foundation, National Public Health Service for Wales, Welsh Food Alliance, amongst many others. These, and other more general sources of information such as the National Electronic Library for Health, will be about 50 in number in the first instance.

The network will need to facilitate communication between the above networks, and also between a wider range of partners such as Local Health Alliances, individual professionals, and the public.

Most of the information should be accessible both to professionals and to the public, possibly through separate routes with appropriate presentation. There may be a closed member discussion area (e.g. for 'eGroups').

4.3 Options

Specific solutions will require specialist advice on the basis of the above requirements. However, a broad range of options for consideration is set out below.

The above requirements could be accommodated on a website. An existing site would be most appropriate, and the proposed relationship with the NNH would suggest that the host site could be the Wales Centre for Health. This would have the benefit of making the most efficient use of both content management and technical resources. It would also have the benefit of linking with other relevant networks.

It is recommended that a content manager is identified, whose responsibilities would include collating the information identified above; updating information; further development; and editing the newsletter. The individual will need a background in nutrition.

Criteria for inclusion of information, including educational resources, will need to be agreed, and would be co-ordinated by the content manager.

The 'branding' and presentation of the website will need to be considered. This will include bilingual presentation, and graphics, both of which will have resource implications.

If simple links to about 50 other websites are required, it is likely that this could be accommodated on existing computer systems. If a searching facility for keywords were added, additional bespoke software and/or an additional SQL server might be required.

It might be appropriate to establish the basic network with simple links, and to add further developments in co-ordination with the NNH.

The technical support could be contracted from an existing provider, such as Health Solutions Wales, in order to ensure co-ordination with related initiatives.

5. Conclusion

New and innovative ways of working are increasingly being used to improve the health and well being of the people of Wales. The large numbers of individuals and networks of people who are delivering improved well being through diet work in a wide variety of ways and in numerous locations. While it is apparent that the work is interconnected the nature of this interconnection can often appear complex. On the other hand it is clear that sharing information and resources brings real added value for all individuals working in the field. It is for this reason that it was originally recommended that a nutrition network would serve the purpose of bringing together individuals and networks and also provide a viable organisational structure for sustained communication.

A Nutrition network for Wales sits logically as a sub network of the NNH, naturally under the umbrella organisation that facilitates free flow of communication between health and social care. The true viability of a network depends on individuals being

engaged with the purpose, structure, identity and information infrastructure. For this reason consultation is a primary requirement of engagement. The recommendations in this document are the result of extensive consultation, it is also planned to extend this consultation process so that everyone involved in the public health nutrition field in Wales has the opportunity of contributing to the development of a Nutrition network for Wales. The concept of a network was welcomed by most partners, the major reservation focused on the function of the network and its links with policy makers. It is clear that at the interface between health and social care a nutrition network for Wales would be welcomed. To this end we are pleased to facilitate wider consultation on the nutrition network by means of the recommendations in this report.

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Appendix 1.

Partners to the consultation

Organisation	Individual consulted
Brakes Bakery	Eileen Steinbock
British Dietetic Association	Jane Eaton
British Heart Foundation, Wales	David Napier
British Nutrition Foundation	Professor Robert Pickard
Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre (Wales)	Dr Roland Salmon
Community Dietitians in Wales	Judith John
Community Practitioners and Health Visitors' Association	Ann Owen
Consumers' Association	Sue Davies
National Public Health Service (Dental)	Dr Tony Glenn
University of Wales College of Medicine, Dental Public Health	Professor Elizabeth Treasure
Design and Technology Association	Jenny Jupe
Directors of Public Protection in Wales	Lester Lewis
Food and Agricultural Standards Group for Wales	Dafydd Roberts
Food and Drink Federation	Gaynor Bussell
Hospital Caterers' Association	Chris Church
Ifanc (Institute of Food and Active Living Cymru)	Dr Claire Paisley
Intercollegiate Group on Nutrition	Professor Alan Shenkin
Local Authority Caterers' Association	Anne Bull
McHarrison Society	David Smith
Meat and Live Stock Commission (Wales)	Elwen Roberts
National Federation of Women's Institutes, Wales	Rhian Connick
National Public Health Service and Public Health Association Cymru	Dr Paul Walker
University of Wales College of Medicine, Nurse Education	Margaret John
Nutrition Society	Professional Advisory Committee
University College Cardiff and National Public Health Service, Pharmacy	Professor Roger Walker
Public Health Association Cymru/UK Public Health Association	Malcolm Ward
Scottish Executive of the Department of Health	Gillian Kynoch
Local Health Board Chairs	Dr Lyndon Miles
Society of Health Education and Health Promotion Specialists	William Beer
University of Wales Institute Cardiff, Nutrition and Dietetics	Alison Nicholls
Welsh Assembly Government (Health Promotion Division)	Maureen Howell
Welsh Consumer Council	Lindsay Kearton
Welsh Development Agency (Food Directorate)	Robert Morgan
Welsh Food Alliance	Hilda Smith
Welsh Food Safety Technical Panel	Beverly Cadwallader
National Obesity Forum (Welsh representative)	Dr Richard Stott

Appendix 2.

Individuals consulted on the information infrastructure

Organisation	Individual consulted
Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre	Dr Ray Henry
Health Solutions Wales	Steve Finn
Velindre NHS Trust	Kevyn Lock
Wales Centre for Health	Andrew Cleves

Appendix 3.

Nutrition network for Wales

Information and IT User Requirement

Background

Food Standards Agency Wales has commissioned the Wales Centre for Health to produce proposals for the establishment of a network, which will be in the context of a broader NNH.

The project has four main areas of activity: Scope and purpose; Partners; Information and IT; and Consultation. Initial proposals are to be produced by 31 March 2004, and a summary will be produced for consultation at workshops to be held in May.

A selected group of 36 partners, most of whom already have networks and information systems, have been interviewed, and feedback has been positive. An important element could be the organisation of regular workshops to enable personal networking, but in addition a web based network is also seen to have the potential of bringing together a range of information relating to nutrition in one place, and to facilitate communication.

The following requirements refer to the web based component of the proposed network.

Scope and purpose

The solution for the Nutrition network for Wales will need to be consistent with, and ultimately part of, the NNH. It is likely that the Nutrition network for Wales will be the first to be established, and therefore future broader developments will need to be considered. A stepwise implementation may therefore be practical, as outlined later in this requirement.

The primary focus of the network is within Wales, but much of the information and some of the partners will be UK based, and some international. Similarly, partners outside Wales may find the network and information useful.

The Nutrition network for Wales will need to bring together a range of information relating to nutrition in one place, including reference to related networks and databases.

Examples of related networks include British Nutrition Foundation, British Heart Foundation, National Public Health Service for Wales, Welsh Food Alliance, amongst many others. These, and other more general sources of information such as the National Electronic Library for Health, will be about 50 in number in the first instance.

The network will need to facilitate communication between the above networks, and also between a wider range of partners such as Local Health Alliances, individual professionals, and the public.

Most of the information will be accessible both to professionals and to the public, possibly through separate routes with appropriate presentation. There may be a closed member discussion area (e.g. for 'eGroups').

The types of information are set out below:

- A summary of, and links to, relevant policy/strategy reports, for example the Welsh nutrition strategy (Food and Wellbeing), national service frameworks, reports on obesity (e.g. Royal Colleges, National Obesity Forum)
- A summary of, and links to, best evidence (e.g. National Electronic Library for Health)
- A summary of Welsh research projects (Bangor University is establishing an academic network based on research, education and policy development)
- Lists of educational resources (and reviews where available)
- Practical guidance, for example on the nutrition element of Local Health and Wellbeing Plans; catering for schools; weight loss; breast feeding; nutrition in pregnancy; special groups
- Lists of contacts (with their permission) and their interests
- A 'bulletin board' of new developments, events and dates
- An electronic newsletter, available on a website, and automatically emailed to partners who wish to be on the circulation list
- A feedback and comments section.

Options

Specific solutions will require specialist advice on the basis of the above requirements. However, a broad range of options for consideration is set out below.

The above requirements could be accommodated on a website. An existing site would be most appropriate, and the proposed relationship with the NNH would suggest that the host site could be the Wales Centre for Health. This would have the benefit of making the most efficient use of both editorial and technical resources. It would also have the benefit of linking the range of other relevant networks.

If possible the website should be managed via an appropriate Content Management System.

It would be necessary to identify a content manager, whose responsibilities would include collating the information identified above; updating information; further development; and editing the newsletter. The individual will need a background in nutrition.

Criteria for inclusion of information, including educational resources, will need to be agreed, and would be coordinated by the website manager.

e-GIF interoperability and e-GMS metadata standards will need to be followed. Tagging of all published resources should be made against appropriate Public Health thesauri.

The 'branding' and presentation of the website will need to be considered. This will include bilingual presentation, and graphics, both of which will have resource implications.

If simple links to about 50 other websites are required, it is likely that this could be accommodated on existing computer systems. If a searching facility for keywords were added, additional be-spoke software and/or an additional SQL server might be required.

It might be appropriate to establish the basic network with simple links, and to add further developments in co-ordination with the NNH.

The technical support could be contracted from an existing provider, such as Health Solutions Wales, in order to ensure co-ordination with related initiatives.

Resources

The following headings will form the basis for more detailed costing:

Content Management System

Part time content manager

Translation

Graphics

SQL server (if required)

Technical support