

FSA Vending machine pilot study

Aim

1. The aim of this study was to investigate the economic viability of healthier drink vending provision in schools. A draft final report has been received and the final report will be published shortly.

Coverage

2. Twelve schools participated, three each from the following areas: Devon, Hertfordshire, Cumbria and Pembrokeshire. The schools were chosen to reflect both urban and rural locations and to offer an appropriate mix of size, area and character – single – sex/mixed/selective/comprehensive.

Approach

3. The Health Education Trust (HET), commissioned to undertake the project, procured and provided the selected schools with vending machines. Throughout the project pupils, teachers, parents and caterers were engaged in consultation to ensure ownership and to influence the products vended in each school. The HET continued to support the schools catering management during the project, though the schools had autonomy to manage the vending machines.

Outputs and Continuity

4. A report that assesses the development phase and addresses the viability of introducing healthier vending machines into the schools is due to be published shortly. The Agency will make the report widely available to relevant stakeholders including head teachers and school governors. The recommendations from the report will contribute towards the development of guidance on developing, gaining ownership, establishing and running economically viable (healthier) drinks vending in schools.

The HET in partnership with the National Dairy Council will take forward the next phase of the study (due to report summer 2004), which will include the dissemination of guidance and sustainability. This phase of the project will also identify a model for rolling out guidance into other schools and areas promoting a greater uptake of healthier drinks during the school day. It will also help schools to identify how this fits in with the “whole school approach” to diet and nutrition and feed into DH Food in Schools Vending project.