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Ar faidhle/Our ref: A20645085

1 June 2018

If you use the school service, have a child or young person who does so, are involved in the provision of school food and drink to education authority schools in Scotland or have an interest in school food and drink provision, you may wish to be aware of some work which is currently underway to change what food and drink children and young people are able to access during their school day.

All food and drink served in local authority run primary, secondary or special schools, at lunchtime, at breakfast clubs, in vending machines, in tuck shops, at morning break or other times of the school day, must meet the strict nutritional requirements set out in the Nutritional requirements for food and drink in schools (Scotland) Regulations 2008 (the Regulations).

The aim of this legislation is to ensure the school catering service offers a range of food and drink that will allow children and young people to see what a balanced and nutritious menu should look like over the course of a week, and to support their health and wellbeing to help prevent diet related conditions and diseases such as diabetes, dental problems and issues associated with being overweight.

When the Regulations were drafted in 2008, they were based on up to date scientific evidence and nutritional advice. Since then, some of that evidence has changed and some of the advice has been updated, for example recommendations in relation to how much sugar should be consumed in a week. As a result, in November 2016, the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, John Swinney MSP, set up a Technical Working Group (TWG) to review the Regulations in light of the manifesto commitment to increase fruit consumption in schools and recent changes to the Scottish Dietary Goals on the advice of Food Standards Scotland.

The remit of the TWG was to undertake a review of the current school food regulations and provide evidence based recommendations on what changes should be made to them in order to drive further improvement to school catering service provision. This review is now complete and the Deputy First Minister is keen to ensure all those who feel they have something to contribute to this issue are provided with the opportunity to do so before work begins to make legislative changes to the current school food regulations.

An online consultation will be launching on 4 June 2018 on the Citizen Space website at <https://consult.gov.scot/support-and-wellbeing/food-and-drink-in-schools> and will remain open for 12 weeks until 29 August 2018. This is a great opportunity to have your say about school food and drink provision in your school and what changes you would like to see in order to ensure our children and young people have access to a school catering service which will support them as they grow and learn.

The consultation will comprise of questions which will allow you to say as much or as little as you wish about school food and drink. The report and detailed recommendations written by the TWG will be published at the same time as the consultation but you will not have to read them in order to be able to contribute to the consultation. Each question is set out under a theme and will be accompanied by an introduction designed to explain why the question is being asked.

A report will be published in response to the consultation contributions received.

I very much hope you will take the time to participate in this consultation and look forward to hearing what you have to say.

Yours sincerely

**STUART DOWNES**

Policy Manager (Interim), Support and Wellbeing Unit