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# PHE sugars reduction – Baseline report

### Summary

PHE held a meeting on 20th January 2017 to outline their proposals for the baseline report on the sugars reduction work which is due to be published in March 2017. Of particular note:

* ‘Targets’ and baseline report are on track for a March 2017 publication.
* The baseline data will be from 2015, but 2014 data will be considered and commented on where significant sugars reductions can be seen.
* The category barometer proposal is still under discussion but will not appear in the baseline report.
* Baseline data considers sales weighted averages for both gram/100gram sugars and single serve portion sizes (calories and weight), as well as a measure for total sugars sold
* Category data will be published for the nine sugars reduction categories and for soft drinks.

PHE has asked for any comments on the baseline report by the end of January. FDF will hold a discussion with a sub-group of Nutrition Committee this week and then circulate a draft response, if necessary, to HWSG and Nutrition Committee.

Best wishes

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### Details

PHE held a meeting for food manufacturers on 20th January 2017 to discuss their proposal for the sugars reduction baseline report, due to be published in March 2017. Additional meetings to discuss the progress reports will be held after the baseline report has been published. PHE met with retailers and their representative bodies on the same day, and will be meeting with the Out of Home (OOH) sector in February. NGOs, health bodies and FSA Northern Ireland also attended the meetings, although did not join in the discussion. The meeting was well attended with approximately thirty manufactures and four representative bodies, along with Action on Sugar, British Dental Association, British Dietetic Association, and Obesity Health Alliance.

The meeting was Chaired by Clare Perkins, PHE Director of the Knowledge and Intelligence Team (North West), with most of the discussion led by Alison Tedstone (AT), PHE Chief Nutritionist, Victoria Targett (VT), Team Leader for the reformulation work plus a presentation from a PHE analyst. Slides and a meeting note from PHE will be made available in approximately one week.

**Background**

AT confirmed that the baseline report, along with guidance on sales weighted average reductions and calorie caps for single serves would be published in March 2017. AT also confirmed they were trying to find alternative language to ‘targets’, something FDF had requested in our consultation response. The first progress report to contain data would be published in March 2018, and this would look at achievements from baseline until August 2017. PHE would hold further meetings in 2017 to discuss these reports and this meeting focused on the content of the baseline report only.

AT provided a recap of information previously provided at the category specific meetings in November 2016. This included that the baseline data would be Kantar World Panel data, using a year of sales ending December 2015. They would only use ‘real’ data, that is data Kantar has collected from labels. PHE would also analyse Kantar data from 2014 and if it is apparent a substantive change had happened to reduce sugars in a category this would be highlighted in the baseline report as they were ‘keen to celebrate early leaders’ in this work. PHE asked for companies to inform them if they thought a significant change was made in this time, and will circulate a template shortly for companies to complete. To note there will be a short turn-around time for this data to be completed as PHE will require it by mid-February 2017.

Data from OOH has been collected from public facing websites and is currently still being collected from companies. In addition, volume data has been purchased from NP Crest. Due to differences in the data, OOH baseline data would be published separately to that for retailers and manufacturers, but the same reductions would be sought across all sectors.

It is intended the baseline report will provide data at a category level only and it will not provide data on individual companies nor will it publish a ‘category barometer’. The final decision on this approach will be taken by the Minister. The category barometer will be discussed further with companies and may appear in subsequent progress reports. Similarly, a decision on an NPD target has yet to be made.

**Data in Report**

Information on data to be provide for each category was given using chocolate confectionery as an example. It included a summary of the contribution the category makes to dietary sugars intake for children and adults using NDNS data. It is proposed the following Kantar data for 2015 is provided for the category, with data for 2014 also being available to draw comparisons:

* Baseline sales weighted average total sugars (g/100g)
* Top 15 market leaders at or below baseline (%)
* Range of total sugars (g/100g)
* Range of total sugars in top 20 products by volume (g/100g)
* Total weight sugars sold (kg)
* Sales weighted average calories (kcal/per portion)
* Products in category with real data (%)

Distribution graphs for % products by volume and by number were then shown for:

* Sugars (g/100g)
* Calories (kcal/portion)
* Calories (grams/portion)

**Discussion**

There were several points of discussion / clarification, including:

Total sugars will be measured, although for some categories (most notably yogurts) discussions were ongoing as to how best to make an allowance for intrinsic sugars. If intrinsic sugars are a factor in other categories, this will be communicated in the narrative of the report.

‘Real’ data was discussed as a particular concern in the cakes and morning goods category. PHE acknowledged concerns but were clear that industry was being given the opportunity to input data and that it would be setting SWA reductions regardless of the level of data achieved. VT also commented that there had been similar levels of real data when setting sodium targets in this category, but companies contested that due to the variation in sugars compared to sodium, this was much more of a concern for this work than it was for sodium targets. Any additional data from industry would be required within days of the meeting, as the reports need to be drafted by the middle of February in order to meet the March deadlines.

It was questioned whether sugars are calories was the overall measure of success. PHE is considering giving guidance around this point at a category level. It also indicated providing a total sugars tonnage figure would give an overarching measure of success as this combines work on reformulation, product mix and portion reduction. To note, this was not further discussed in the manufacturer meeting but was the main point of discussion in the retailer meeting, where retailers expressed concerns due to sales implications (i.e. a product could half the amount of sugars it contains but if it sells triple total sugars still goes up). Whilst PHE has not indicated it is looking to set a target reduction on total sugars sold, clearly this is an overall measure they are interested in. **Please can members consider their views on a total sugars figure being included in the baseline report.**

The inclusion of information on portion sizes was welcomed. PHE indicated it was taking a pragmatic judgement on what constituted a single serve, in the chocolate confectionery category this was 100grams. Data was included for single serve portions sold separately as well as those in multi packs. Information was provided per portion for both sales weighted average calorie content as well as weight. It was generally considered the energy per portion was more pertinent, although the weight may provide some secondary insights.

AT noted at the end of the meeting that as well as data for the nine sugars reduction categories, equivalent data would be published for soft drinks at the request of HMT. Data would be included for all drinks including those sold in OOH. Any sub-categorisation of the data, e.g. those subject to levy vs those not, had not yet been determined.

**Further considerations and next steps**

From the discussion at the meeting it is our belief that whilst PHE has taken on board many of our comments with respect to data analysis it will still seek 20% reductions by 2020 in all categories. It also appears that a decision on new product development targets has yet to be taken, and that PHE still likes the idea of a product barometer, although this will not appear in the baseline report. It was also clear that final decisions as to what will be published lay at a senior level at Department of Health, possibly Ministerial, and not with PHE, although clearly their recommendations would be taken very seriously.

FDF will hold a teleconference with a subgroup of Nutrition Committee next week and then circulate a draft response to the proposed baseline report to HWSG and Nutrition Committee. Please note deadlines for responses are likely to be very short as PHE has requested comments by the end of January. In my absence Louise Allen, louise.allen@fdf.org.uk, will be the main point of contact for this work.

At HWSG we will discuss our proposed response to the likely publication in March.