

Responsibility Deal

On 15 March 2011 the UK Department of Health launched the Public Health Responsibility Deal with members of the voluntary sector, business, industry and the retail sector.

The 'Deal' is an attempt to get all parties involved, including industry and the individual, to work together to promote public health. This fact sheet looks at the history and background behind the Responsibility Deal, what it entails and the implications for the food and drink industry. To discuss this further, please contact Sue Keenan - sue.keenan@campdenbri.co.uk +44 (0)1386 842291

History and Background

There has been concern about the state of the nation's health and wellbeing particularly rising levels of obesity, alcohol misuse and physical inactivity. As well as the impact on individuals' lives, these are associated with costs to both the NHS and the wider economy. In response to these concerns the Department of Health published a White Paper on 30 November 2010 *Healthy Lives, Healthy People*. This represents the UK Government's strategy for public health in England. An online consultation was also undertaken. The White Paper promises a new approach to changing adults' behaviour with the aim of reducing premature death, illness and costs to society. In particular, it stresses the importance of working collaboratively with business and the voluntary sector.

Central to this is the view that everyone has a role to play in improving public health, including government, business, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and individuals themselves. It is recognised that businesses have a powerful influence on people's lives in a number of ways – as employers and through commercial and community actions. Businesses are seen as having the technical expertise to make healthier products and the marketing skills to influence purchasing habits. It was felt therefore that great benefits could be realised if these technical and marketing skills could be directed towards activities to encourage and enable people to make healthier choices. The Deal also aims to bring together a number of diverse organisations, including those from the public sector, commercial, non-governmental and academic organisations, to determine business activities that would assist in the achievement of public health goals. In this way the Responsibility Deal is seen as a way of harnessing the contribution that business can make to delivering the priorities for action to improve public health. The concept is not new as previously businesses, Government and public health groups have worked together on salt reduction. The Responsibility Deal intends to apply this process to a broader range of areas.

What does the Deal entail?

Structure

A plenary group chaired by the Rt Hon Andrew Lansley and including representatives from the business community, NGOs, public health organisations and local government oversees the development of the Public Health Responsibility Deal.

Alongside this are five networks which deal with the particular areas of food, alcohol, physical activity, health at work and behavioural change. One of the first tasks of the first four of these networks was the development of pledges for action related to their particular areas. The behaviour change network differs in that it is not concerned with developing pledges for action but rather provides expertise on behavioural science to the other networks: for example, on the negative compensatory behaviour when product offerings change and how to mitigate this.

The networks are each supported by an appropriate member of the UK government and have members from a diverse range of organisations relevant to that particular sector. Partners decide which Food Networks they wish to belong to.

Commitments

The Responsibility Deal is open to any interested organisations that are able to fulfil the sign-up requirements. Approximately 170 companies have pledged to take action to improve the health of customers and, where relevant, their staff. The central parts of the Deal involve:

- Core commitments (Compulsory)
- Collective (at least one) and individual (optional) pledges
- Supporting pledges (Compulsory)
- Registration with the Department of Health (Compulsory)

Core commitments

There are five core commitments which define the scope, purpose and high level ambitions of the Responsibility Deal. All Responsibility Deal partners sign up to the core commitments and, in so doing, are confirming their support for the Deal's ambitions and committing to support them where they can.

The five core commitments are as follows:

1. We recognise that we have a vital role to play in improving people's health.
2. We will encourage and enable people to adopt a healthier diet.
3. We will foster a culture of responsible drinking, which will help people drink within guidelines.
4. We will encourage and assist people to become more physically active.
5. We will actively support our workforce to lead healthier lives.

Collective pledges

In addition the individual networks develop collective pledges that represent the collectively agreed action that members of a given sector will take in support of a particular core commitment. All partners are required to sign up to deliver at least one of the collective pledges designed and developed by the networks, and approved by the relevant network chairs and the Department of Health.

The Collective pledges agreed by the individual networks are summarised in the diagrams following this text.

Individual pledges

Individual pledges are optional. They are specific to a particular organisation or sub-group within a sector and have been developed by them and approved by the relevant network chairs and the Department of Health. The intention is that by making an individual pledge an organisation can demonstrate leadership in their sector by going further than collective action can at present or by making a commitment in an area where collective action is not appropriate.

Individual pledges are again summarised at the end of this text.

Supporting pledges

All the collective and individual pledges are underpinned by five supporting pledges which define the operating principles and process of the Deal:

- a) We will support the approach of the Public Health Responsibility Deal and encourage other organisations to sign up.
- b) We acknowledge that the Deal's strength comes from organisations of different types across varying sectors working together to improve people's health.
- c) We will contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of progress against pledges
- d) Where we offer people information to help make healthier choices, we will use messages which are consistent with Government public health service advice.
- e) We will broaden and deepen the impact of the Public Health Responsibility Deal by working to develop further pledges in support of the five core commitments.

Accountability

Accountability is required to:

- Confirm that the actions organisations have pledged to have been completed
- Demonstrate the impact the Deal has in changing behaviour and / or improving health outcomes.

Partners have agreed to fulfil the monitoring and evaluation requirements for each pledge to which they have signed up. These include:

- Publishing their progress on the pledges to which they are committed, using the agreed indicators, as part of the annual reporting mechanisms that they already use;
- Setting out where they intend to report progress on their pledges along with a web link (where appropriate), for publication on the Department of Health website;
- Submitting updates on their progress on the pledges they have made to the Department of Health on an annual basis; and
- (if required) making additional data available to support independent assessment or evaluation where this has been agreed within the network.

Details of the Deal partners and the pledges on which they have committed to take action are provided in an online registry available via the Department of Health website.

Each Network publishes a newsletter giving details of the activities of the network and of any developments.

Acceptability

Not all organisations are convinced about the usefulness and outcomes of the Responsibility Deal. A number of the health groups including Alcohol Concern, the British Medical Association, the Royal College of Physicians, British Heart Foundation and Diabetes UK have concerns that the pledges are not specific or measurable enough.

In introducing the Responsibility Deal Andrew Lansley commented that “by working in partnership public health, commercial and voluntary organisations can agree practical actions to secure progress more quickly with less cost than legislation” and that “commercial organisations can reach individuals in ways that other organisations, Government included, cannot”.

The Government has also indicated that it will legislate if the voluntary approach fails to produce results.

Summary

Healthy Lives, Healthy People

30 November 2010



Responsibility Deal

15 March 2011



Plenary Group

Chair: Rt Hon Lansley CBE MP , Secretary of State for Health

Senior representatives from:

Business community, NGOs, Public health organisations, Local government

Oversees the development of the Public Health Responsibility Deal



Networks

*Five networks – Food, Alcohol, Physical Activity, Health at Work and Behaviour Change.
Focus on particular health challenges and lead the development of pledges.*

Food Network

Chair: Dr Susan Jebb, MRC Human Research Nutrition Unit

Supported by:

Rt Hon Andrew Lansley

Representatives from:

Catering, Retail, Manufacturing sectors, NGOs, Public Health Experts, Local Government

Scope: 4 main areas

- Information to consumers
- Content of food
- Improving the availability of healthy food
- Promotion of healthier food choices

Future:

Improve access to fruit and vegetables

Support reduction on calorie intake

Health at Work

Chair: Dame Carol Black (National Director for Health & Work, Chair Nuffield Trust)

Supported by:

Earl Howe, Parliamentary undersecretary of State for Quality.

Representatives from:

Private sector, Central and local government and the third sector.

Scope: Working groups -

- Health and wellbeing local business partnerships
- Engaging SMEs
- Managing chronic conditions guidelines
- Occupational health

Physical Activity

Chair: Fred Turok (Fitness Industry Association)

Supported by:

Rt Hon Simon Burns MP, Minister of State for Health

Representatives from:

Indoor, outdoor and active travel sectors, business, academia and sporting associations.

Scope:

- Support and enable people to be more active
- Support and enable people to understand the benefits of regular physical activity
- Facilitate effective partnerships
- Focus on least active groups
- Raising public awareness

Alcohol Network

Chair: Jeremy Beadles (Wine and Spirit Trade Association) and Mark Bellis (Faculty of Health)

Supported by:

Paul Burstow MP, Minister of State - Care Services

Representatives from:

Retailers, producers, industry representative organisations and health NGOs alongside observers from Scotland, Wales and NI govts.

Scope:

- Foster a culture of responsible drinking
- Help people drink within guidelines

Behavioural Change

Chair: Paul Lincoln, Chief Executive, National Heart Forum

Supported by: Anne Milton MP, Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Public Health

Representatives from:

Experts in behavioural change from social marketing, advertising, academia, public health delivery and business

Scope:

- To provide behavioural science expertise to the other networks.

Core Commitments

Define the Scope, Purpose and High Level Ambitions of the Responsibility Deal

Signed up to by all Responsibility Deal Partners

- We recognise that we have a vital role to play in improving people's health
- We will encourage and enable people to adopt a healthier diet
- We will foster a culture of responsible drinking which will help people to drink within guidelines
- We will encourage and assist people to become more physically active
- We will actively support our workforce to lead healthier lives

Collective and Individual Pledges

Collective Pledges

Collectively agreed action that members of a given sector will take in support of a particular core commitment. All partners sign up to deliver at least one of the collective pledges.

Food Pledges

"We will promote and enable people to adopt a healthier diet"

- F1 Out of home calorie labelling
- F2 Salt reduction
- F3 Artificial trans fats removal

Health at Work Pledges

"We will actively support our workforce to lead healthier lives"

- H1 Chronic conditions guide
- H2 Occupational health standards
- H3 Health & wellbeing report
- H4 Healthier staff restaurants

Physical Activity Pledges

"We will use our local presence to get more children and adults more active, more often including in engaging communities in planning and delivery"

- P1 Physical activity: Community
- P2 Physical activity guidelines
- P3 Active travel
- P4 Physical activity in the workplace
- P5 Physical activity: Inclusion

Alcohol Pledges

"We will foster a culture of responsible drinking, which will help people to drink within guidelines:

- A1 Alcohol labelling
- A2 Awareness of alcohol units in the on-trade
- A3 Awareness of alcohol units, calories and other information in the off-trade
- A4 Tackling under-age alcohol sales
- A5 Support for Drinkaware
- A6 Advertising and marketing of alcohol
- A7 Community actions to tackle alcohol harms

Individual pledges

Optional. Specific to a particular organisation or sub-group within a sector, and developed by them and approved by the relevant network chairs and the Department of Health

Individual pledges to date:

- Food: F1 – The Association of Convenience Stores
- Alcohol: A1 – ASDA, Heineken
- Physical Activity: P1 Tesco, NHS Sport & Physical Activity Champion, Fitness Industry Association, The Premier League, The Sport & Recreation Alliance, Sporting Equal, Ramblers/Walk England
- Health at Work: H1 Mars UK, Novo Nordisk, Unilever, A Development Group including Let's Get Healthy, Zest People, Samworth Brothers (Ginsters), Business in the Community, Nestle, American Express Services Europe.

Supporting pledges

Underpin all the collective and individual pledges. Define the operating principles and process of the Deal:

- We will support the approach of the Public Health Responsibility Deal and encourage other organisations to sign
- We acknowledge that the Deal's strength comes from organisations of different types across varying sectors working together to improve people's health
- We will contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of progress against the pledges
- Where we offer people information to help make healthier choices, we will use messages which are consistent with Government public health advice
- We will broaden and deepen the impact of the Public Health Responsibility Deal by working to develop further pledges in support of the five core commitments.

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