



# THE BRITISH DIETETIC ASSOCIATION

*The Professional Association for Registered Dietitians*  
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# Media Release

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The British Dietetic Association fully supports the moves to make substantial improvements to food in schools, including additional funding to improve school meals in England, and the development of the Food in Schools Toolkit, and welcomes measures to improve the standards, and monitoring, of school meals.

Dietitians have long supported the importance of a whole school approach to food, which includes healthy vending options and school meals derived from nutrient-based guidelines, learning about food within the structure of the curriculum, and developing food skills that can contribute to improved diet later in life. For some time, dietitians have been actively involved with a wide range of school-based initiatives; for instance, many community dietitians contribute to School Nutrition Action Groups, and their input has made a real difference. However, more funding is required to roll out the excellent work already being done to more schools across Local Education Authorities. Dietitians welcome the announcement, made today, that a further £280 million will be spent to improve school meals in England and eagerly await the launch of nutritional standards, which will be mandatory from September 2006.

Whilst the efforts of celebrity chef, Jamie Oliver, have clearly been instrumental in raising awareness of the need to tackle the current dire nature of meals served in some schools, it is also clear that, to help improve children's nutritional health, more needs to be done than simply change lunchtime menus. We strongly support the need to engage parents, teachers, governors, schools inspectors, as well as caterers and the food industry, together with a sustainable commitment from Government to provide the necessary infrastructure that underpins the planned improvements.

In addition to the extra funding for school meals, dietitians also welcome the launch, today, of the Department of Health's Food in Schools Toolkit. The Toolkit, developed with input from dietitians, aims to support, guide and inspire schools in taking a 'whole-school' approach to healthy eating and drinking, as well as addressing some of the wider issues in improving children's diets.

Dietitians are key contributors to the implementation of the changes needed to improve school meals. They can be consulted on both local and national levels to ensure that the changes being delivered are nutritionally sound and based on models which have been shown to work.

Dr Frankie Phillips, National Public Relations Officer for The British Dietetic Association said: "At a time of life when a good diet is essential, dietitians agree that the contribution made by foods eaten at school is vital, and needs to be subject to tougher controls".

**Website: <http://www.bda.uk.com>**

Carol Weir, of The British Dietetic Association's Community Nutrition Group said: "School food provides more than nutrients; it helps develop social and life skills, and plays a pivotal role in promoting healthier eating. It is essential to enable children to make healthy choices, and to make the healthy choice the easy choice."

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For more information contact:

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- **The Dietetic Department at your local hospital or health centre**
- visit *WeightWise* on [www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com)

#### **Notes to Editors**

The British Dietetic Association, founded in 1936, is the professional association for Registered Dietitians (RDs) in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It is the nation's largest organisation of food and nutrition professionals, with over 5,000 members. About two thirds of their members are employed in the National Health Service. The remaining dietitians work in education, industry, research and sports settings or as freelance consultants.

RDs hold the only legally recognised graduate qualification in nutrition and dietetics. They interpret and translate the science of nutrition into practical ways of promoting nutritional well-being, disease treatment and the prevention of nutrition-related health problems. Their advice is evidenced based.

Registration, awarded by The Health Professions Council, is an indication that a Dietitian is competent to practise and must work within an agreed Statement of Conduct.

To access this press release and other details about the British Dietetic Association, please visit our Website: <http://www.bda.uk.com>

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