

Western Trust
Staff Excel
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Awards
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The Health Promotion Munchbox Challenge 2008

The Munch Box Challenge is a major initiative led by the Western Health and Social Care Trust's Health Promotion Department. It aims to promote healthy eating habits and to improve oral health amongst primary school children. 110 primary schools in the Western area have now been awarded for their participation in the 'Munch Box Challenge'.

Speaking at the Award Ceremonies, Avril Morrow, Health Promotion Officer with the Western Trust, said: "It is encouraging to see that almost 60% of schools in the West have adopted this initiative, as healthy eating habits among children and young people contributes to growth and development in the short-term and is an investment in their health for future years." She continued: "Trying to change young peoples eating habits is not an easy task, therefore the participating schools are to be congratulated for taking part in this initiative. Early education is a key element, as eating patterns established in childhood usually follow through into later life and schools are in an ideal position to promote a healthy balanced diet throughout the school day."



Marshall Kilgore, Principal of Drumachose Primary School, Limavady pictured with pupils and Avril Morrow, Health Promotion Officer, WH&SC Trust at the Healthy Munchbox Challenge Awards 2008.

Many parents are often faced with the dilemma of what to put into their child's lunch box. The Healthy Munch Box Challenge provides schools with information to distribute to parents, so that they can pack a lunch, which is nutritious, tasty and attractive, and make an informed choice about the food they are sending with their children to school. The challenge aims to change the content of lunch boxes to include a healthy food portion from each of the four main food groups and reduce fat, sugar and salt content. Schools and parents have been extremely supportive of the challenge which to date has affected approximately 10,000

lunchboxes. Assessment of the schools proved that the Challenge is extremely successful with 100% of schools participating, observing a positive change in the content of the children's lunch boxes.

With the increase in obesity levels in children within the Western area, it is anticipated that this initiative will contribute to the government target of halting the rise in obesity levels by 2010 and consequently help to reduce the many complications that can arise from obesity, such as heart disease, diabetes and stroke.

Policy for Prescribing Intravenous Fluids to Children

Trust Board approved the Policy for Prescribing Intravenous Fluids to children this month. In presenting the policy at Trust Board, Medical Director, Anne Kilgallen, said: "The policy sets out recommended practice for everyone who looks after children receiving intravenous fluids. It is based on regional and national guidance, ongoing clinical audit and the published literature."

She continued: "It is the professional responsibility of all who look after children to ensure that they have received adequate training in intravenous fluids appropriate to their role. They should be familiar with the Trust's Fluid Therapy Algorithm and accompanying prescribing material. All medical and nursing staff must understand the three modalities for giving intravenous fluids and their responsibilities with regard to monitoring." The Policy can be obtained by logging onto the Trust's Intranet.

For further information about the Western Health & Social Care Trust or if you have any comments regarding the NOW Staff Newsletter please contact Oliver Kelly, Head of Communications at 7161 1188 or email oliver.kelly@westerntrust.hscni.net.

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Minister Acknowledges Continued Progress in Hospital Waiting Times



Health Minister, Michael McGimpsey, recently welcomed further reductions in hospital waiting times, but added more still needs to be done.

Validated figures published in March 2008 show that the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for a first outpatient appointment has reduced from almost 22,000 at March 2007 to less than 3,000 at the end of December 2007.

In relation to patients waiting for inpatient and daycase treatment, there were almost 2,000 patients waiting over 21 weeks at March 2007. This has reduced to 455 at the end of December 2007.

Commenting on the latest waiting list statistics, Health Minister, Michael McGimpsey, said: "Excellent progress continues to be made to reduce hospital waiting times and I commend healthcare staff for their efforts in delivering a high quality health service and real benefits for patients. The number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for an outpatient appointment has fallen by almost 90% compared with the end of March 2007, and the number waiting over 21 weeks for surgery by almost 80%."

In relation to the number of patients waiting over six months the Minister added: "It is however, unacceptable that a number of patients were waiting longer than six months for a first outpatient appointment and for surgery at the end of December. Almost all of these patients were waiting to be assessed or treated by an independent sector provider. I have taken steps to ensure that all of these patients are seen or treated as quickly as possible, in most cases before the end of this month."

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