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Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke
Friday, 15 December 2006

In light of the impact of Modified Package 1 in particular on the revenues of music channels, Ofcom is seeking views on Modified Package 1 in so far as it extends the controls contained in Package 1 to children up to 16.

Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the Modified Package 1.

With regard to the proposals put forward from the first consultation, Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke acknowledges the progress that has been made to date, *i.e.* controls will be geared to children up to the age of 16 and the Food Standards Agency nutrient profiling model will be used.

Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke reiterates its understanding that controls in HFSS advertising to children are part of an overall holistic approach to reducing obesity and improving childhood dietary habits.

We note that under this proposal, HFSS advertising will be removed from youth-orientated music programmes and some other general entertainment programmes (particularly those scheduled in the early evening).

Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke queries why Ofcom are putting forward controls that “would have the effect of removing all advertisements for products that are high in fat, salt and sugar from all programmes broadcast **at any time of day or night**, which hold particular appeal for children up to the age of 16”.

Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke would like to know:

- how ‘general entertainment’ programmes will be defined
- how ‘early evening’ will be defined
- how programmes ‘which hold a particular appeal for children up to the age of 16’ will be defined.

Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke questions why proposals have been put forward which will impact **at any time of day or night**. This appears to contradict the regulatory objective of avoiding intrusive regulation of advertising during adult airtime. Health campaigners have not called for round-the-clock controls.

It is widely accepted that 9pm is the watershed for children’s/adults’ programmes. It is unlikely in the extreme that programmes beyond 9pm will hold particular appeal for children up to the age of 16.

Instead of putting forward an option which will require extra work in terms of monitoring and definitions, it seems to Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke that the most straightforward approach would be to implement comprehensive controls on advertising HFSS food prior to the 9pm watershed.

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This will ensure that all programmes that have been shown to appeal to children, outwith adult viewing time, are covered by unambiguous HFSS food controls.

Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke is disappointed that controls on brand advertising have not been put forward.

Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke questions whether it is feasible for one organisation to protect the interests of the consumer and the citizen on the one hand, and at the same time continue to be the friend of the advertising industry and commercial broadcast organisation on the other. These two objectives surely place an unbearable strain on Ofcom.