

Our ref: TO00000728226

Richmond House  
79 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2NS

Tel: 020 7210 4850

Councillor Mel Shepherd  
Chairman of the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee  
Nottinghamshire County Council  
County Hall  
West Bridgford  
Nottingham NG2 7QP

15 OCT 2012

Dear Councillor Shepherd,

Thank you for your letter of 21 September to Jeremy Hunt about health messages and eating disorders. I have been asked to reply on Mr Hunt's behalf.

The Government recommends a healthy balanced diet, as shown in the UK's national food guide 'the eatwell plate'. As you will be aware, the eatwell plate defines the Government's recommendations on a healthy diet. It makes healthy eating easier to understand by giving a visual representation of the types and proportions of foods needed for a healthy balanced diet.

The eatwell plate shows that, for a healthy balanced diet, people should try to eat a variety of foods from the four main food groups, including plenty of starchy foods, fruit and vegetables, some milk, dairy, meat, fish and other non-dairy sources of protein and only small amounts of food and drinks high in fat or sugar.

I also note your concerns about long-term research into the effect of messages on obesity. As you may be aware, the Government published a *Call to action on obesity in England* in October 2011. This set out how obesity will be tackled in the new public health and NHS systems, and the role of key partners. The call to action presents a clear vision of what action needs to be taken to tackle obesity across four main areas including improving the evidence base.

The Department has also continued investment in data collection, improving the evidence base, and dissemination through the National Obesity Observatory and Obesity Learning Centre. Information about these bodies is available online at [www.noo.org.uk](http://www.noo.org.uk) and [www.obesitylearningcentre-nhf.org.uk](http://www.obesitylearningcentre-nhf.org.uk) respectively.

Finally, I would suggest that you raise your concerns about healthy eating in schools with the Department for Education directly. The contact details are:

Department for Education  
Castle View House  
East Lane  
Runcorn WA7 2GJ

Tel: 0370 000 2288

Website: [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CHH', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chris Hall  
Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries