

Nutrition North – Regional Nutrition Research Collaborative

Tuesday 10th February 2026

1.30pm – 3.00pm

Via Teams

Chair: Prof Bernard Corfe

Meeting Notes and Actions

In Attendance:

Bernard Corfe (BC), Newcastle University

Amelia Lake (AL), Teesside University

Iain Brownlee (IB), Northumbria University

John McLaughlin (JM), University of Manchester

Ben Martyn (BMa), The NHSA

Greta Defeyter (GD), Northumbria University

Heather Brown (HB), Lancaster University

Suzanne Spence (SS), Newcastle University

Jibin He (JH), Teesside University

Bernadette Moore (BM), University of Liverpool

Wendy Burton (WB), University of York

Lucie Nield (LN), University of Sheffield

Liz Williams (LW), University of Sheffield

Jordan Beaumont (JB), Sheffield Hallam University

Jo Smith (JS), Teesside University

Deepan Shah (DS), Centre for Process Innovation (CPI)

Jonathan Rand (JR), Centre for Process Innovation (CPI)

Sarah Hill (SH), The NHSA

1. Welcome and Introductions

BC opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Apologies were noted.

2. Review of actions from the previous meeting

- **Food and Drink Federation Engagement:** BMa reported limited progress in engaging the Food and Drink Federation regarding nutritional information on packaging. BC suggested no further investment at this time.

- **Nutrition Bulletin Editorial Update:** IB confirmed that the editorial for Nutrition Bulletin is progressing, with minor updates pending and publication expected soon.
- **Three Schools Prevention Research Programme Applications:** SH noted that some information on Nutrition North applications to the Three Schools Prevention Research Programme had been kindly provided by LN and AL. AL further noted that many applications were not successful and the outcomes have not been widely reported.
- **NAPIC Funding and Collaboration:** BMa updated the group on discussions with NAPIC regarding funding opportunities in the novel protein space, with plans for further meetings to explore project collaboration.
- **NHSA Communications Coordination:** BMa and SH have been maintaining regular communication with the NHSA comms team to ensure Nutrition North activities and reports are highlighted. Plans are underway to refresh the NHSA website (Led by Charlotte Thompson, NHSA Comms Manager). This could potentially include a NN research montage video as suggested by KT at the previous NN council meeting. Webinars were also discussed.

Further Action (SH/BMa): To re-explore with Charlotte Thompson the idea of producing a Nutrition North research montage video and hosting webinars once the NHSA website has been updated.

- **National Cancer Plan Commentary:** A working group including Kieran Tuohy (KT), LW, AL, IB, JM and BC was pre-emptively assembled ready to comment on the government's National Cancer Plan (released 4th February 2026). The group discussed the National Cancer Plan's references to nutrition, with LW highlighting the positive inclusion of nutrition and food system topics. BC and BM also noted the emphasis on prevention but felt this could go further and raised concerns over GLP-1 reliance. It was agreed that a collective Nutrition North-branded response would be valuable.

Further Action (SH): To coordinate responses from the members of the working group and submit a collective commentary to NHSA Head of Comms (Ruth Boston) for dissemination on NHSA platforms.

Updates from Workstreams

3. Nutrition Bulletin Report

(discussed above)

4. School Nutrition

SS, GD, and WB discussed progress on the development of a new report on school nutrition in the North. They acknowledged the need to meet and clarify the focus and structure of the proposed report, whilst remaining aware of current capacity. GD informed the group about an imminent All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on school food. She suggested Nutrition North could prepare a submission for this and highlighted the urgent state of the school food system, currently. AL and SH emphasised the value of dividing labour among contributors, drawing on previous successful models, and SH offered NHS support for coordinating report development.

Action (SH): To contact GD about potentially coordinating a Nutrition North School Food piece with the launch of the School Food APPG.

5. Nutrition and Cancer

(See discussion above on the National Cancer Plan)

6. Food Innovation North

Horizon Programme and Alternative Proteins: DS and JR described CPI involvement in Horizon farm-to-fork programmes, focusing on alternative proteins and nutrition, and the need for nutritionist and dietitian input in project consortia.

Novel Food Taste Trials: The group discussed recent Food Safety Authority guidance on conducting taste trials for cell-based novel foods, including regulatory requirements, risk assessment, and the need for qualified personnel.

Regional Sensory Testing Capacity: JH and JB outlined the sensory testing facilities at Teesside University and Sheffield Hallam University. They spoke about challenges in recruiting trained panellists and the potential benefits of multi-centre trials to capture diverse taste profiles.

Standard Operating Procedures: BC proposed that regional centres collaborate with CPI to develop SOPs for taste trials, ensuring compliance with regulatory and ethical requirements, and leveraging the network's collective expertise.

7. National Planning Policy Framework Consultation

AL reported on plans underway with the Obesity Health Alliance (OHA) to respond to the National Planning Policy Framework and encouraged broad participation from the network.

Policy Definition Issues: HB noted that the framework lacks a clear definition of fast food outlets and does not specify density thresholds, leading to potential ambiguity in planning decisions.

Coordinated Response: AL committed to drafting a response, involving relevant members of Nutrition North and encouraged colleagues with expertise in planning and spatial food environments to contribute.

Action (AL/SH): To coordinate a response to the NPPF from Nutrition North to be included in the submission from the Obesity Health Alliance (OHA).

8. Academy of Medical Sciences Cross Sectoral Networking Programme – Northern Hub

BMa announced that the Academy of Medical Sciences has selected the NHTA to host the North of England cross-sector regional networking hub, with plans for three major events focused on gene therapies, prevention, and women’s health. BMa particularly invited Nutrition North input on the prevention agenda.

Event Planning and Themes: The hub will host three regional networking events in the coming year, with the first focused on gene therapies, the second on prevention, and the third on women’s health, aiming to bring together diverse stakeholders.

Prevention Agenda Development: BMa asked the group for potential calls to action for the prevention event. AL and IB suggested a focus on inequalities, food insecurity, and the need for granular data on health behaviours.

Stakeholder Engagement: BC and BMa discussed involving regional directors of public health and balancing event agendas to ensure broad representation of child health, mental health, and nutrition.

9. Update on Funding Opportunities

BBSRC Defra Diet and Health Innovation Call: The group reviewed the new BBSRC Defra funding call.

[Notification of intent: Diet and health: collaborative research and development grants – UKRI](#)

Call Priorities and Eligibility: BC outlined the call’s focus on improving nutritional quality, food processing, and reducing waste, with eligibility requiring both academic and industry partners. He noted that CPI were eligible only as a subcontractor.

Industry Partnership Challenges: JH and BM highlighted difficulties in securing industry partners willing to provide the required financial contribution, noting that the call favours established collaborations may exclude SMEs.

Innovation Versus Basic Research: JM and IB explained that the BBSRC’s emphasis is on mechanistic and innovation-driven research, with less support for behavioural or social science projects, and that the funding structure may not support large regional consortia.

Collaboration and Next Steps: The group agreed to circulate the call among their networks, explore potential collaborations, and consider CPI's role as a partner or contractor, while acknowledging the competitive and time-constrained nature of the opportunity.

10. Ideas for new programmes and reports

GLP-1 Agonist Research: Members of the group expressed interest in exploring research and interventions related to GLP-1 agonists, with plans to convene interested parties for a potential report.

BM and SH volunteered to help convene a group focused on GLP-1 agonist research with LN, JB, JH, JM and JS expressing interest in participating.

Research Focus and Regional Needs: The group identified opportunities to assess regional differences in access and use of GLP-1 agonists, with potential for collaborative interventions and a report.

11. Any other business

With no other business the meeting was closed.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 10th June 2026, 10.00 – 11.30am (via Teams)

List of Actions from 10-02-2026

1. Action (SH/BMa): To re-explore with Charlotte Thompson the idea of producing a Nutrition North research montage video and hosting webinars once the NHSA website has been updated.
2. Action (SH): To coordinate responses from the members of the working group and submit a collective commentary to NHSA Head of Comms (Ruth Boston) for dissemination on NHSA platforms.
3. Action (SH): To contact GD about potentially coordinating a Nutrition North School Food piece with the launch of the School Food APPG.
4. Action (AL/SH): To coordinate a response to the NPPF from Nutrition North to be included in the submission from the Obesity Health Alliance (OHA).
5. Action (BC/NN Exec): To circulate potential project ideas for the BBSRC Defra Diet and Health Innovation funding call, and identify and connect potential academic and industry partners swiftly due to the tight deadline.
6. Action (BM/SH): To convene an initial brainstorming meeting for colleagues interested in GLP-1 agonist research.

Meeting Chat - Nutrition North Council Meeting 10-02-2016

Amelia Lake

<https://www.thenhsa.co.uk/what-we-do-nhsa/nutrition-north/>
Nutrition North - The NHSA

A post from Hannah Davies on The NHSA provided by: <https://www.thenhsa.co.uk>
happy to discuss how we did it

Lucie Nield

I spoke to Jo Pearce at Sheffield Hallam Uni and she's keen to be involved too- but again, capacity issues!

Amelia Lake

also can follow the model for the APPG report
good idea Greta

Suzanne Spence

Yes, I am involved in new standards but need to be careful/clear too

Bernadette Moore

<https://news.cancerresearchuk.org/2026/02/04/breaking-down-the-national-cancer-plan-for-england/>

A turning point for cancer? Breaking down the National Cancer Plan for England -
Cancer Research UK - Cancer News

The UK Government has launched a National Cancer Plan for England. Will it be the turning point for cancer that we need?

Greta Defeyter

School food parliamentary group pledges inquiry into service closures | Public Sector Catering

Chair of the APPG, Sharon Hodgson MP, said: "There is clear need for a full and thorough investigation into what needs to happen for school food to operate sustainably for the years to come.

Bernadette Moore

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/blogs/national-cancer-plan-for-england>

Ben Martyn

Bernard Corfe, I think NAPIC would be relevant for this conversation?

Heather Brown

The specific question that would be of interest to this group is: Do you have any views on whether further clarity is required to improve the application of this policy, including the term 'fast food outlets', and the types of uses to which it applies? question 161

Ben Martyn

aaa<https://acmedsci.ac.uk/more/news/academy-medical-sciences-northern-hub-health-research>

Jordan Beaumont

Thanks Amelia - Lucie and I are considering submitting also as part of the advertising community of practice group!

Amelia Lake

good - important to get lots of responses to this

Bernadette Moore

my thought was they were targeting folks active in the ORICs?
but the industry collab will be in place

Liz Williams

Webinar for the BBSRC- DEFRA is on Thurs 12th @11am.

Bernadette Moore

Also a £500K grant, thats £150K requirement for industry partner

John McLaughlin

I was on the BBSRC strategy panel that led to this:
Bioscience for an Integrated Understanding of Health Strategic Research and Innovation Framework 20...

Bernadette Moore

big ask for SME

Jordan Beaumont

We have industry partners through the Advanced Food Innovation Centre... worth exploring potential input, but not sure if they're in a place to commit so much... we have been having informal discussions, but capacity is always a limiting factor!

Lucie Nield

Also happy to be involved in GLP-1 work

John McLaughlin

Happy to help GLP-1 things too, from a gastroenterology perspective

Lucie Nield

We've been evaluating their use in children and young people
(and all the inequalities...)

Jordan Beaumont

Ditto!

Jo Smith

Happy to support from a mental health perspective too

Jibin He

Post GLP diet/nutrition plan ?