

BAI seeks views on advertising of food and drink to children

The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) has today (30th August 2011) launched a public consultation on how food and drink should be commercially promoted to children in the broadcast media.

The public consultation is part of a review by the BAI on the diet and nutrition rules contained in its Children's Commercial Communications Code. Under the existing rules, commercial communications which are of particular interest to children or those broadcast during children's programmes are required to be responsible in their messaging and portrayal of food and drink to those aged under 18. Commercial communications include advertising, sponsorship and product placement.

Launching the public consultation today, the Chairperson of the BAI, Bob Collins, said: "This is a very important review for the BAI and we are casting the net as wide as possible to secure a broad base of views. As well as industry groups, health organisations, groups that represent parents and children, advertisers and broadcasters, we are keen to receive input from members of the public. Any person with a view about how advertising of food and drink is promoted to children in the broadcast media is invited to be part of the consultation: you don't necessarily need to be an expert.

"In approaching this review, we will give due regard to all responses received. We must also take into account public health concerns and ensure that – if there are changes to existing rules – they are proportionate and resilient," said Mr. Collins.

Once this initial public consultation is completed, all responses will be considered by the BAI. If a clear requirement emerges to amend the existing rules on diet and nutrition, the BAI will produce a draft set of revised rules. These will be put to a second public consultation to determine their final shape.

In preparation for the initial public consultation, the BAI convened an expert working group to examine health concerns for children in Ireland and to determine if the promotion of certain food or drink should be restricted. The expert group – comprising BAI personnel as well as representatives from the Department of Health; *safefood*; the HSE and the Food Safety Authority – produced a report and a set of recommendations that is available to everyone interested in taking part in the consultation. The expert working group's report will also be considered by the BAI in tandem with responses to the consultation as part of the overall review.

"The aim of the report of the expert working group is to contribute to a deeper understanding of the profile of children's health in Ireland and how – if at all – this is influenced by broadcast advertising. While the BAI has not adopted the recommendations of the working group, we hope they will act as a focal point for responses from stakeholders and the wider public," said Mr. Collins.

The full report of the expert working group in addition to a detailed consultation document outlining the background, scope and process of the review is available in English and Irish.

[Consultation Document](#)

[Doiciméad Comhairliúcháin](#)

Responses to the consultation will be accepted by email or by post to the BAI as follows:

Children's Code Consultation,
Broadcasting Authority of Ireland,
2 – 5 Warrington Place, Dublin 2

or email: sowens@bai.ie.

The deadline for submitting responses is **5pm on Thursday, 6th October**.

As part of promoting the consultation, the BAI is undertaking a direct mail-shot to potentially interested stakeholders; a media campaign, including use of social media to promote aspects of the consultation (please note: comments on social media will not be considered as a formal response to the consultation, and those wishing to engage with the consultation are advised to submit their response in writing by post/email).