

# Obesity lobby

**R**oyal Public Affairs, a lobbying consultancy specialising in influencing government policy, is consulting to test initial reaction to a proposal to set up an Associate All-Party Parliamentary Group on childhood obesity. This is prompted by:

- the recent World Health Organisation (WHO) report that the food industry is contributing to the childhood obesity epidemic
- findings by Imperial College, London that the UK has the highest rate of child obesity in Western Europe, costing about £4.2bn a year
- a report from the Education Select Committee showing a sharp decline in PE
- recommendations by the Government-commissioned School Food Plan that packed lunches should be banned as less nutritious than school meals.

The proposed Group aims to promote evidence-based discussion on all aspects of childhood obesity, inform policy decisions and public debate and facilitate communication between interested parties and relevant parliamentarians.

The Group, which aims to include Members from both Houses of Parliament, would operate via a mix of speaker meetings, debates and robust, objective reports to inform policy-makers.

If you would like to get involved or receive updates, contact Helen Clark, Associate Director; Royal Public Affairs at LinkedIn. ■



Left: Divisional director Louise Copson and Andy appraise the winning soup

Below: Linda's a winner, says Andy Bennett



## Soup, glorious soup!

**N**ourishing soup is not just a good way of getting children to eat vegetables, but, as a filling meal, can help to combat the growing obesity trend. With this in mind, Busy Bees ran a nationwide Sensational Soup competition for its chefs, culminating in a Master-Chef style finals at Marco Pierre White's Carnarvon Arms, Newbury.

The winner was Linda Redman from Just Learning Sunderland, whose roast carrot and cauliflower soup with homemade beetroot bread was so highly rated by Andy Bennett, executive chef at the Carnarvon Arms, that he featured it on his menu that evening.

Recipes for the finalists' soups will be featured on the Busy Bees website. ■

## Nursery-tested software

Astec Solutions has developed a new software package for nurseries, the Prism Touch Screen Solution, which, unusually, has been developed and tested in Rainbow Smiles Nursery, its partner business. As a result, its development has been guided by the responses of the practitioners who use it.

Essentially, Prism gives the nursery an integrated real-time view of its core business processes right across the nursery, thanks to touch points throughout the setting. These also enable practitioners to complete their administrative duties in the rooms, which frees up more time to spend with the children. At the same time, key information is shared by all relevant parties, promoting teamwork across the nursery.

One of its key features is the in-depth reports that users can create, which can be immediately accessed by parents through the portal website. Parents too will eventually feed

into the system via the portal. So, they will be able to provide all the information that is needed for the care of their child. To date, parental feedback, particularly that of fathers who report feeling more involved than ever before, has been very positive.

Rainbow Smiles reports that real-time reporting on staff performance not only alerts management to areas of concern, but makes them better placed to support staff development. On top of that, the setting has found that the increased efficiency has resulted in reduced operational costs.

- For more details, see [www.astecsolutionsltd.com](http://www.astecsolutionsltd.com)  
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