Appendix 4 - Educational buildings and Smart Meters

Image source: Grant Cochrane, http://www.freedigitalphotos.net/images/view_photog.php?photogid=2365

"*Pupil's education, health and wellbeing should be at the centre of any initiatives to introduce new technologies into schools. The technologies need to be adding value and need to be safe*."
WFIS (2011).

Anecdotal evidence and peer-reviewed studies, investigating radiation similar to that emitted by specific types of Smart Meters and related devices, indicate that exposures to some EMF regimes may be linked to reduced learning abilities and a number of health ailments – *Refer to section on 'Health Matters'.*

It appears prudent to adopt the 'Precautionary Principle' with regard to Smart Meter rollouts in kindergartens, schools and colleges, and use wired alternatives to standard RF/microwave emitting technologies where feasible.

United Kingdom

"*Everyone in the education system must do what is sensible to keep pupils safe and healthy. This includes making the school environment as safe as possible*. …"
Directgov (2011).

At present the UK Government is having Smart Meters installed in all schools (SM.com 2010).

As a result of the UK Government's resolve on making learning environments "*as safe as possible*", and its adherence to the 'Jakarta Declaration on Leading Health Promotion into the 21st Century' (WHO 1997) – it appears crucial to ensure that Smart Meters (and other items of electrical equipment) are specified, or retrofitted, with this in mind.

Europe

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) recommends that the member states of the Council of Europe take "*all reasonable measures*" to reduce the exposure of children and young people to manmade electromagnetic fields to those that are 'As Low As Reasonably Achievable' (ALARA).

Whilst not discussing Smart Meters specifically, PACE suggests that for schools preference should be given to adopting wired as opposed to wireless connections to reduce potential exposures (PACE 2011).

United States

The American Public Health Association (APHA) - in recognition of the Rio Declaration on Environment - states the 'Precautionary Principle' should be the foundation of US public health policy to protection children's health. It also "*calls for explicit inclusion of the precautionary approach in all federal, state, and local legislation, rules, or policies… that may impact the health of children* …" (APHA 2001).

International

"*Studies confirm the importance of a school's physical and psychosocial environment to the health of the students and staff and the success or failure of school health programmes* …" WHO ECCSH (1997).

"*Schools can make a substantial contribution to a student's health and well-being. This has been increasingly recognised by many international initiatives including those from the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, UNESCO, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) and others*." IUHPE (2009).

Health Promoting Schools (HPS)

The presence or absence of environmental pollutants, such as electromagnetic pollution, may significantly impact on the learning and wellbeing of some individuals.

"*Healthy students learn better. The core business of a school is maximising learning outcomes. Effective Health Promoting Schools (HPS) make a major contribution to schools achieving their educational and social goals*." IUHPE (2010).

The essential elements required in HPS, based on the WHO's Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (WHO 1986), include having 'Healthy school policies' that are clearly defined in documents or accepted best practices which promote health and well-being; and that the school's physical environment (buildings, grounds and equipment) help promote health.

Another of the essential elements required in HPS is that potential environmental contaminants detrimental to health are addressed (IUHPE 2009).

It is proposed that Health Promoting Schools should ideally seek to adopt metering (and ICT) regimes that are indicated as being the most 'biologically friendly'.

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