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Healthy Weight – Healthy Wales – Healthy Wallets

Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales:

The Scale of the Problem

Wales is facing a public health crisis. Rates of overweight and obesity are climbing, resulting in diet related ill health across the population. In Wales 66% of men, 56% of women¹ and 27% of children² have a weight defined as overweight or obese.

Obesity affects the poorest in our society the worst, contributing to stark economic and health inequalities. Obesity among adults in the most deprived groups in Wales is 32%, compared with 20% in the least deprived groups.³ 17.2% of children aged 4–5 in Merthyr Tydfil had obesity in 2019 compared to 7.8% in the Vale of Glamorgan.⁴

Given the need to urgently address overweight and obesity in Wales, Obesity Alliance Cymru (OAC) welcomes the Welsh Government's commitment to legislate against in-store marketing tactics designed to increase spend, increase consumption, and drive overweight and obesity in Wales.

Welsh Government has consulted on product placement and price promotions used to encourage consumers to purchase the unhealthiest foods. Instead, our food environment should be rebalanced to support people to make healthier choices.

Healthy Weight, Healthy Wallets:

The Truth About Price Promotions

Misinformation about the price promotions legislation has been common in the media, with concerns about the impact of the legislation on the cost-of-living crisis. However, evidence clearly shows that restricting price promotions on unhealthy food will save families money and support people to make healthier choices.

- Price promotions do not save consumers money. Items bought on promotion are usually unplanned purchases causing each household to spend an additional 22% on average⁵ – an extra £774.69 per household, per year.⁶
- Price promotions are not free gifts; they are marketing tools used to drive sales⁷ and encourage excess consumption.^{8,9} In 2018 86% of Welsh adults felt that multi-buy promotions cause people to buy more unhealthy food.¹⁰
- Price promotions are currently used to promote the unhealthiest foods *not* core staples.¹¹ Market data shows 33.9% of price promotions are on biscuits and 36.1% are on confectionary.¹²
- Restricting price promotions on unhealthy foods *will not* ban meal deals – it will rebalance meal deals so consumers have healthier options.

Healthy Wales:

Legislate for Future Generations

Wales is in the midst of a public health and cost of living crisis. Improving our food environment would be a huge step towards alleviating economic and health inequalities. Delaying this legislation may be catastrophic for our future generations.

- Over half of the children born in 2020 in the UK will experience diet related ill health by the time they are 65 years old – like coronary heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes and high blood pressure.¹³
- The Food Foundation found that 1 in 4 children born in the UK last year will suffer overweight or obesity by the time they start school.¹⁴
- If current trends continue overweight and obesity will cost the NHS in Wales £465 million by 2050.¹⁵



Recommendation:

Wales must introduce legislation as the earliest opportunity to make the healthiest choice the easiest choice for everyone across Wales.



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Obesity Alliance Cymru (OAC) is a group of leading national charities, professional bodies, campaign groups and membership bodies working together to improve public health in Wales.

We are a unified, influential, and independent voice for action on obesity. We have over twenty members with a strong and comprehensive evidence base:

**Bowel Cancer UK
British Dietetic Association
British Heart Foundation
British Medical Association
British Psychological Society
Cancer Research UK
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
Diabetes UK
Nesta
Nutrition Skills for Life
Royal College of General Practitioners
Royal College of Nursing
Royal College of Occupational Therapists
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
Royal College of Physicians
Royal College of Podiatry
Royal College of Surgeons of England
Tenovus Cancer Care
Welsh NHS Confederation**

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- 2 Public Health Wales (2019) 'Child Measurement Programme for Wales'. <https://publichealthwales.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/child-measurement-programme/>
- 3 Public Health Wales (2020) 'National Survey for Wales 2019-20'. <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2020-07/adult-lifestyle-national-survey-wales-april-2019-march-2020-390.pdf>
- 4 Public Health Wales (2019) 'Child Measurement Programme for Wales'. <https://publichealthwales.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/child-measurement-programme/>
- 5 UK Government, 'Sugar reduction: from evidence into action'. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sugar-reduction-from-evidence-into-action>
- 6 Calculation by OAC based on Nimble Fins Average UK Household cost of food (<https://www.nimblefins.co.uk/average-uk-household-cost-food>) and UK Government evidence that price promotions increases spend by 22% (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sugar-reduction-from-evidence-into-action>)
- 7 Public Health England (2016) 'Sugar Reduction: The evidence for action'. http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/470175/Annexe_4_Analysis_of_price_promotions.pdf
- 8 NHS Health Scotland (2017) 'Rapid evidence review – restriction of price promotions'. <http://www.healthscotland.scot/media/1611/rapid-evidence-review-restriction-of-price-promotions.pdf>
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