

Failure to tackle obesity is threatening the country's prosperity

● Report card shows progress in addressing issue has been sluggish

By **LIZZY BUCHAN**
Health correspondent

Scotland has “failed to turn the tide of obesity” despite major efforts to tackle diet and exercise over the last six years, according to top doctors.

Public health leaders have spoken out over soaring weight problems, which they said will have a significant impact on Scotland's future prosperity.

Ministers announced a new blueprint for tackling obesity in 2010, but obesity campaigners have found progress in tackling poor diet and deprivation has been sluggish.

Members of Obesity Action Scotland (OAS) published a damning report card of the nation's record yesterday, which found four out of six goals have not been met.

Dr Drew Walker, NHS Tayside's public health director, who leads on obesity for the Scottish Directors of Public Health, said: “If we do not halt that epidemic, the physical and mental health of Scots will deteriorate, our health and social care services will struggle to cope ... and children will be less likely to achieve their full potential. The Scottish economy will underperform, the cost of obesity to Scotland will increase – currently up to

£4.6 billion – and Scotland will be a less successful ... less happy nation.”

Rates of adult obesity and being overweight have remained at 65 per cent, and more than 30 per cent of children are still overweight, the report card found.

Dr Emilia Crighton, OAS member and interim public health director at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, said: “The report card tells the painful truth that our efforts to date have failed to turn the tide.

“It's time to take bold action based on the evidence and let's start by tackling the Scottish diet by restricting marketing and promotions, reducing sugar and fat content of foods, pricing measures such as a sugar tax and improving the labelling of foods bought in shops and restaurants.”

Public health minister Maureen Watt acknowledged that Scotland was at the start of a long road to tackle obesity but said there had been encouraging advances in sport and exercise.

She said: “We are concerned by the growing evidence that obesity, and particularly child obesity, is linked to inequality. That's why our approach to tackling inequalities is rooted in tackling the root causes of these inequalities, rather than simply trying to address its consequences.”

She also said the Scottish Government is working with the food and drink industry to reformulate products and improve healthy eating.



↑ Currently, more than 30 per cent of children are overweight, the

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