

ACHIEVING HEALTHY WEIGHT FOR ALL IN SCOTLAND

A manifesto for the next Scottish Parliament

The current situation

Rates of overweight and obesity in Scotland remain unacceptably high¹ and this continues to pose a significant challenge for public health and health inequalities. Obesity shortens life and increases the risk of type 2 diabetes, 13 types of cancer, cardiovascular disease and many other non-communicable diseases.² We now know that obesity is also a factor in the severity of Covid-19.³ We must take urgent preventative action to achieve healthy weight in the Scottish population.



2 in 3 adults aged 16-75+ have overweight or obesity



More than 1 in 4 adults have clinical obesity



Almost 1/3 of children aged 2-15 are at risk of overweight or obesity



16% of children aged 2-15 are at risk of obesity



Inequalities in overweight and obesity are worsening. Over recent years Scotland has seen a widening gap in childhood overweight and obesity.⁴ In 2019, this gap reached 12% in prevalence between children from the most and the least deprived areas of society.⁵ We are not getting it right for every child.

Achieving healthy weight

Obesity is a complex condition influenced by many factors including food consumption, food production, individual psychology, societal influences, physiology, individual activity and the physical activity environment.⁷ Action is required across all these domains.

The fact that we have been missing dietary targets for nearly 20 years in Scotland is hardly surprising because food and drink which is high in fat, salt and sugar is cheap, widely available and heavily promoted.⁸

We need to improve this food environment to improve national diet and health.

The commitment to halve childhood obesity by 2030 is not on track to be achieved. Since the commitment was announced, over 18,000 **more** children have fallen into the 'at risk of obesity' category.⁶



OUR ASKS OF THE NEXT SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

The first step in achieving healthy weight for all is to improve the food environment to ensure the healthy choice is the easy choice for everyone.

The following actions are required:

Promotions

The Scottish Parliament and Government should seek to pass a Bill to restrict the use of promotions on food and drink high in fat, sugar and/or salt urgently in the next session.

Advertising

The Scottish Parliament and Government should restrict the advertising of food and drink high in fat, sugar and/or salt in Scotland where they can. This should include outdoor advertising such as billboards, public transport, digital media advertising, and sponsorship of professional sports and events.

Out of Home

The Scottish Government should ensure that the adaptation and recovery of the food and catering out-of-home sector from the Covid-19 pandemic happens in a way that supports and enables improved healthier food options and a shift to healthier, more sustainable foods.

The Scottish Parliament and Government should improve planning and registration arrangements for the out-of-home sector, to limit access to unhealthy foods.

The Scottish Parliament and Government should introduce mandatory calorie labelling and control of portion sizes

We call on the next Scottish Parliament and Government to urgently progress actions to improve the food environment in Scotland.

1. Scottish Government (2020) Scottish Health Survey 2019
2. Obesity Action Scotland (2019) Obesity in Scotland - Prevalence and Evidence Base - Nov 2019
3. Obesity Action Scotland (2020) Obesity and COVID-19: an update of the evidence - Aug 2020
4. ISD (2019) Body Mass Index of Primary 1 Children in Scotland. School Year 2018/19
5. Scottish Government (2020) Scottish Health Survey 2019
6. Obesity Action Scotland (2020) Blog: Protecting Scotland's Children: is tackling childhood obesity more vital than ever?
7. Butland, B., et al (2007) Foresight. Tackling Obesities: Future Choices - Project Report. 2nd Edition
8. Food Standards Scotland (2020) Scottish Diet: It Needs to Change. 2020 Update

