



Scottish Obesity Alliance

Advocating for healthy weight

Scottish Obesity Alliance

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The First Minister
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
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Dear First Minister

Legislate this year on HFSS multi-buy price promotions

Urgent action is needed to restrict price promotions on food and drink high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) in Scotland. Members of the Scottish Obesity Alliance are calling for these proposals to be put in legislation this year as part of your Programme for Government. This is a vital step in creating a Scotland where everyone can enjoy a healthy weight. To delay will undermine your Government's determination to tackle health inequalities and reduce childhood obesity by 50% by 2030.

Scotland has some of the highest incidences of obesity across OECD countriesⁱ. 29% of adults and 13% of children aged 2 to 15 years old are obese, and even more are overweight and at high of risk of obesity later in lifeⁱⁱ. Whilst the rate of childhood obesity levels has slowed down, it has not stopped or started to decline. This is a major public health crisis.

We are bombarded by promotions on food and drink products that contain excessive amounts of calories, fat, sugar and saltⁱⁱⁱ. Multi-buy promotions such as 'buy one, get one free' and 'three for the price of two', encourage people to buy a greater number of unhealthy products^{iv}. Half of all sugary soft drinks, savoury snacks and crisps, 40% of desserts and puddings and over a third of all cakes and pastries were bought on price promotion from retailers in a 12-month period from June 2015^v.

Restriction is needed across all types of price promotions (multi-buys, temporary price reductions and extra free) on HFSS products, but regulation to restrict multi-buy price promotions should be prioritised in the first instance as part of a multi-stage approach. There is strong public support for a ban on junk food price promotions^{viii}.

It is time to be bold, for the Scottish Government to introduce legislation this year to regulate HFSS multi-buy price promotions in this autumn's Programme for Government. You will have the overwhelming support of the public and public health professionals if you act without delay.

Yours sincerely,

ELMA MURRAY OBE
Chair, Scottish Obesity Alliance

➤ list members organisations

ⁱ OECD (2017). Obesity Update 2017 <http://www.oecd.org/health/health-systems/Obesity-Update-2017.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ The Scottish Government. (2018) Obesity indicators, progress report - October.

ⁱⁱⁱ Food Standards Scotland (2018). Situation Report. The Scottish Diet: It needs to change. 2018 update.

^{iv} Sparks L and Burt S (2017). Identifying and Understanding the Factors that can Transform the Retail Environment to Enable Healthier Purchasing by Consumers.

^v McKeivitt, F (2016). UK leads as third-largest adopter of online grocery shopping.

<https://uk.kantar.com/consumer/shoppers/2016/kantar-worldpanel-ecommerce-grocery-market-data/> Accessed 25 January 2019

^{vi} Food Standards Scotland (2018). Food in Scotland Consumer Tracking Survey: Wave 6. Summary Report.

^{vii} Cancer Research UK, UK Health Forum (2016). Short and sweet: Why the government should introduce a sugary drinks tax.