

Richard Watson, CEO Nestlé UK and Ireland
1 City Place
Gatwick, RH6 0PA
United Kingdom

Dear Richard Watson

We write in response to the launch of Nestlé's promotional campaign for its new KitKat cereal, which in our view is deeply irresponsible. The marketing promotes chocolate at breakfast, claims this makes for a 'nutritious choice' despite the product itself being a quarter sugar.

Nestlé, as the world's largest food and drink manufacturer, has repeatedly said in public that it is committed to selling healthier food, yet in private, it continues to research and develop new ways of selling sugar, before spending millions on advertising and promoting them in alluring packaging with misleading claims. Nestlé UK and Ireland company's mission statement states that it wants to "constantly explore and push the boundaries of what is possible with foods, beverages, and nutritional health solutions to enhance quality of life and contribute to a healthier future." How can promoting a cereal, a 30g serving of which provides almost 30% of the recommended sugar intake for a seven year old (and 40% for a 6 year old) fit with that statement?

The UK government has had successive opportunities to tackle the flood of unhealthy food, but has failed to take appropriate action. The Government's 2020 obesity strategy, which included measures to limit the advertising and promotion of highly processed sugary foods should have been implemented in full. Instead, rates of diet-related disease continue to grow unchecked.

Recent research published by the World Obesity Federation showed that more than half of the world's population will be living with overweight or obesity by 2035 unless serious and immediate action is taken. Businesses, particularly large multinationals with a global footprint such as Nestlé, must decide which side of history it wishes to be on. Can it be part of the solution, rather than drive the problem?

Nestlé's recent move to disclose the percentage of its portfolio that is comprised of less healthy, HFSS, foods is to be applauded in terms of a commitment to business transparency, but it needs to demonstrate that it is not simply paying lip service to health and that it remains committed to supporting better health and nutrition. To continue developing foods that contribute to a health crisis is not only irresponsible but strategically foolish. Nestlé risks investing millions in product lines that a future government will be forced, in the face of overwhelming evidence, to take action against. Polling has repeatedly shown high public support for Government action.

Nestlé removed its spurious nutritional claim from parts of its website following a consumer backlash but our food system should not be governed that way. If it were really following its mission statement, Nestlé would never have developed that product in the first place. There is no way that it could be seen as "enhanc(ing) quality of life for everyone, today and for generations to come."

We hope the introduction of your new policy not to advertise to children under 16 will shepherd in a more responsible era for Nestlé, and that you will get behind future calls for Government intervention to create a level playing field for good business practice.

Signed: Ben Reynolds, Deputy Chief Executive, Sustain; Katharine Jenner, Director, Obesity Health Alliance; Anna Taylor, Executive Director, The Food Foundation; Eddie Crouch, Chair, British Dental Association; John Maingay, Director of Policy and Influencing, British Heart Foundation; James Toop, Bite Back 2030; Jonathan Pauling, Chief Executive, Alexandra Rose Charity; Professor Graham MacGregor, Chair, Action on Sugar and Salt; Louis Bedwell, Managing Director, Mission Ventures