

The Obesity Health Alliance Manifesto



We have a huge opportunity to improve the UK's health, tackle growing inequalities between our communities, enhance economic productivity and reduce long-term pressures on the NHS. The Obesity Health Alliance calls on all political parties to commit to taking bold, effective action to address the high levels of diet-related ill health in the UK and the effect this is having on our economy and society.

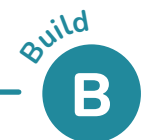


Prioritise Children's Health

It should be easy for everyone to eat healthily, especially children. It isn't. It is of the utmost importance that the UK Government takes action to protect future generations from developing excess weight and achieves a significant reduction in existing excess weight across our population. The public wants action from politicians to create a healthier environment for every child. How we achieve this must be led by evidence, not ideology.

Asks for Government:

- Renew the UK Government's existing commitment to halve childhood obesity by 2030, alongside tangible measures to achieve this.
- Deliver on existing policy commitments not yet implemented, particularly delayed plans to protect children from junk food advertising on TV and online.
- Bring forward an effective cross-government strategy to reduce health inequalities, recognising the key role that excess weight plays in driving these inequalities.



Build on What Works

We must redesign our broken food system to put health first. The Soft Drinks Industry Levy (SDIL) has been an enormous success, reducing sugar intake across all socio-economic groups without leading to a fall in sales. We must build on this success to ensure that the healthy option is the most affordable and accessible option for everyone.

Asks for Government:

- Use the successful model of SDIL to design further fiscal measures that incentivise industry to sell healthier food and drink options.
- Invest revenue raised from these fiscal measures, like SDIL, in funding policies to improve children's health, especially for those on lower incomes. This could include expanding access to cheaper, healthier food (like school breakfast clubs), to healthy start vouchers, and to breastfeeding support.



Empower Local Communities

All children have the right to grow up healthy, no matter where they live. Across the country, especially in the most deprived areas, local leaders are eager to make their communities healthier, but often lack the powers and resources to do so.

Asks for Government:

- Update planning laws to enable local authorities to increase the number of healthy food and drink options, and reduce the prevalence of unhealthy food outlets.
- Increase the powers of local authorities to tackle the flood of unhealthy food and drink advertising in outdoor areas, especially near places children congregate.
- Invest £1.5 billion in the public health grant to local authorities, to reverse the real terms cut to this funding since 2016. This should be a part of a wider initiative to ensure that all areas of the country provide a full range of effective and patient-appropriate weight management services.
- Support the creation of a Food Partnership in every local area, as recommended by the Government's Food Strategy.

The Obesity Health Alliance is a coalition of over 50 health organisations including the British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK, Diabetes UK, the British Medical Association and Medical Royal Colleges, all working together to turn the tide on obesity.

The vision of the Obesity Health Alliance is to prevent obesity-related ill-health by supporting evidence-based population level policies to help address the wider environmental factors that lead to excess weight. For more information, contact: alfred.slade@obesityhealthalliance.org.uk