

# SUGAR SMART

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## Open letter:

### Let's spread holiday cheer, not diet-related diseases, this festive season.

We write to you to express our deep concern over the Coca-Cola's company's continued promotion of sugary drinks to children, young people and the general population during the holiday season. At a time when childhood obesity rates have reached record highs, such promotional tactics are not just in poor taste – they urgently need to be brought to a halt.

The signatories of this letter include Directors of Public Health, elected members, public health advocacy organisations and local healthy eating campaign coordinators, and **we collectively request that Coca-Cola change its current Christmas Truck Tour promotional strategy by stopping the free distribution of Coca-Cola original taste.**

Childhood obesity figures have again risen this year and show no signs of slowing down. The latest figures reveal that almost one in four children are overweight or obese when they start primary school and over one in three by the time they leave primary school<sup>1</sup>. If we don't take drastic action, half of all UK children will be overweight or obese by 2020.

This year is also marked by a rise in hospital admissions for tooth extraction – up to 26,111 hospital admissions for tooth decay among five to nine-year-olds, and tooth decay is the leading cause of admissions for this age group<sup>2</sup>. And nearly a half of 15 year olds in the UK have tooth decay in their permanent teeth.

Even more worryingly, the above figures are dramatically worse for children and young people living in deprived communities.

While there is a growing network of SUGAR SMART campaigns across the UK working with local organisations, education settings, businesses and individuals to reduce sugar overconsumption and improve local food environments, their brilliant work is being undone by such marketing tactics promoting products high in sugar. Even one 150ml can of Classic Coke contains over 16 grams of sugar, nearly the entire maximum daily limit for a 6-year-old. And of course, there is no safe sugar limit to avoid tooth decay.

It's with these less than cheerful figures in mind that we ask you to stop promoting sugary drinks during the Coca-Cola Christmas Truck Tour to the general public this year - in particular to children.

Wishing you and everyone in the UK a holiday season in good health,

The Undersigned

(Full list of signatories continues on the following pages.)

1. NHS Digital (2018) National Child Measurement Programme, England - 2017/18 School Year [PAS]

2. NHS Digital (2018) Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity, 2017-18

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## **86 PUBLIC HEALTH ADVOCATES, DIRECTORS OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ELECTED MEMBERS REPRESENTING THE FOLLOWING 30 CITIES AND REGIONS:**

### Bath & North East Somerset

Bruce Laurence, Director of Public Health, Bath & North East Somerset Council

Claire Davies, Health Improvement Officer, SUGAR SMART B&NES Coordinator, Bath & North East Somerset Council

Denice Burton, Assistant Director (Health Improvement), Bath & North East Somerset Council

### Birmingham

Becky Pollard, Interim Director of Public Health, Birmingham City Council

### Blackpool

Dr Arif Rajpura, Director of Public Health, Blackpool Council

### Bournemouth & Poole

Councillor Jane Kelly, Council Cabinet Member for Public Health and Regeneration, Bournemouth Borough Council

Paul Cartwright, Sustainable Food City Partnership Chairman, Bournemouth & Poole

Sarah Watson, Sustainable Food City Partnership Manager, Bournemouth & Poole

### Bristol

Susan Milner, Interim Director of Public Health, Bristol City Council

### Calderdale

Paul Butcher, Director of Public Health, Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council

### Cheshire West and Chester

Ian Ashworth, Director of Public Health, Cheshire West and Chester Council

Councillor Louise Gittins, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing, Cheshire West and Chester Council

### Devon

Professor Virginia Pearson, Director of Public Health, Devon County Council

Councillor Roger Croad, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Devon County Council

### Doncaster

Rupert Suckling, Director of Public Health, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council

### Dorset

Sam Crowe, Director of Public Health, Dorset County Council

### Durham

Dr Liz Charles, Project Manager, Food Durham, SUGAR SMART Durham, Sustainable Food Cities

### Glasgow

Dr Linda de Caestecker, Director of Public Health, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

Abi Mordin, Chair, Glasgow Community Food Network, Sustainable Food Cities

Greig Sandilands, Project Manager, North Glasgow Community Food Initiative, SUGAR SMART Glasgow

### Halton

Eileen O'Meara, Director of Public Health, Halton Borough Council

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## Harrogate

Paul Campbell, Director of Community, Harrogate Borough Council

## Isle of Man

Dr Henrietta Ewart, Director of Public Health, Isle of Man Government, Department of Health and Social Care

## Leeds

Sonja Woodcock, Sustainable Food Cities Coordinator, Leeds Food Partnership

## Liverpool

Councillor Richard Kemp CBE, Leader of Liverpool Liberal Democrats, Liverpool Council

Dr Emma Boyland, Senior Lecturer in Appetite and Obesity, University of Liverpool

## London Borough of Croydon

Rachel Flowers, Director of Public Health, Croydon Council

## London Borough of Greenwich

Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Greenwich Council

David Gardner, Deputy Leader, Greenwich Council

## London Borough of Hackney

Mary Atkinson, Secretary, Hackney Food Partnership, Sustainable Food Cities

## London Borough of Lewisham

Danny Ruta, Director of Public Health, NHS Lewisham

## Manchester

David Regan, Director of Population Health, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning

Councillor Bev Craig, Executive Member for Adult Health & Wellbeing, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning

Ian Williamson, Chief Accountable Officer, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning

## Middlesbrough

Mark Fishpool, Chair, Middlesbrough Food Partnership, Sustainable Food Cities

Councillor Julia Rostron, Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, Middlesbrough Council

## Newcastle

Bev Bookless, Chair, Food Newcastle, Sustainable Food Cities

Charlotte Hawkins, North East Refill Co-ordinator, City to Sea

Debora Howe, Chair, Newcastle SUGAR SMART Group

Jamie Sadler, Managing Director, Food Nation

## North Yorkshire

Dr Lincoln Sargeant, Director of Public Health, North Yorkshire County Council

Councillor Caroline Dickinson, Executive Member for Public Health, Prevention and Supported Housing, North Yorkshire County Council

## Plymouth

Ruth Harrell, Director of Public Health, Plymouth City Council

Ian Smith, Director, Food Plymouth CIC, Sustainable Food Cities

Claire Pettinger, Lecturer in Public Health Dietetics, University of Plymouth

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## Sandwell

Ansaf Azhar, Interim Director of Public Health, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Councillor Elaine Costigan, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Protection, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

## South Gloucestershire

Sara Blackmore, Director of Public Health, South Gloucestershire Council

Mark Pietroni, Director of Public Health, South Gloucestershire Council

## Swindon

Cherry Jones, Director of Public Health, Swindon Borough Council

Councillor Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Adults, Swindon Borough Council

## Waltham Forest

Joe McDonnell, Director of Public Health, London Borough of Waltham Forest

## National Organisations and Campaigners:

Andy Burman, Chief Executive, British Dietetic Association

Anka Johnston, Vice Chair, Caroline Walker Trust

Anna Taylor, Executive Director, Food Foundation

Ben Reynolds, Deputy Chief Executive, Sustain

Baroness Rosie Boycott, British journalist and campaigner

Caroline Cerny, Alliance Lead, Obesity Health Alliance

Dan Parker, Chief Executive, Living Loud

Dr Derek Richards, President, British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry

Dr Giota Mitrou, Acting Director of Research and Public Affairs, World Cancer Research Fund International

Dr Ian Mills, Dean, The Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK)

Dr Jennifer Mindell, Professor of Public Health, University College London

Dr Nigel Carter OBE, CEO, Oral Health Foundation and Chair, Platform for Better Oral Health in Europe

Dr Simon Williams, Chair, Association for the Study of Obesity

Dr Stephen Watkins, Vice-President (Policy), UK Faculty of Public Health

Fiona Ellwood, Chair, National Oral Health Promotion Group

Frances Jackson, Chairman, Institute for Food, Brain & Behaviour

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Graham MacGregor, Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine at Queen Mary University of London and Chairman of Action on Sugar

Gus Hoyt, Refill Programme Manager, City to Sea

James Cashmore, Director, Soil Association Food for Life

Julie Deverick, President Elect, British Society of Dental Hygiene & Therapy

Kim Roberts, Chief Executive, HENRY

Liz Roebuck, President, British Society of Paediatric Dentistry

Marjon Willers, Director, Health Education Trust

Matthew Philpott, Executive Director, Food Active

Mick Armstrong, Chair, British Dental Association

Professor Michael Escudier, Dean, Faculty of Dental Surgery at the Royal College of Surgeons

Rend Platings, CEO, Sugarwise

Professor Russell Viner, President, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health

Sally Bunday MBE, Director, Hyperactive Children's Support Group

Sara Jayne Stanes OBE, Chief Executive, Royal Academy of Culinary Arts and the Adopt a School Trust

Shirley Cramer CBE, Chief Executive, Royal Society for Public Health

Stephanie Wood, CEO, School Food Matters

Tom Andrews, Director of Sustainable Food Cities, Soil Association

Vera Zakharov, SUGAR SMART UK Campaign Coordinator

Victoria Williams, Director, Food Matters