

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

14 July 2020

Re: Obesity treatment and prevention

Dear Prime Minister,

We are delighted you have decided to take action to address obesity, a health condition millions of adults and children are living with in the UK.

Living with obesity increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, non-alcohol related fatty liver disease and thirteen types of cancer, as well as worsening the outcomes for COVID-19. Treatment costs to the NHS are currently £6.1bn per year, with an estimated cost to the wider economy of £27bn. There is also a huge, often ignored personal cost to individuals; those living with obesity are more likely to live with mental health issues and face stigma, worsening their prospects in all areas of life. This is not a societal cost we need to bear: obesity can be both treated and prevented and families can be healthier as a result. Poor diet, in particular sugar consumption, also leads to dental decay, with a disproportionate impact on the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children.

While there is an element of personal responsibility in both the treatment and prevention of obesity, dental decay and other diet-related diseases, this can only be achieved if the environment enables healthier choices and if everyone in society has equitable access to healthy, affordable food. Government also recognises this, with these issues forming the basis of the UK's Childhood Obesity Plan, the first chapter of which was released in 2016. However, four years on we've seen far more lengthy consultation processes than we've seen action, despite the clear benefit the measures would have on the health of children and adults alike.

We are encouraged that you are ready to take much-needed action to address obesity but the three chapters of the Childhood Obesity Plan cannot be forgotten. Our traffic-light **Scorecard 2020: *The road to preventing obesity*** shows how close many of the recommendations are to becoming a reality to improve the lives of both children and adults living with obesity.

Prime Minister: only you can ensure progress on this leading plan and secure a healthy future for the next generation. The time has come to give the Childhood Obesity Plan the green light.

Signed:

Professor Graham MacGregor, Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine, Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine, **Barts & The London School of Medicine and Dentistry**

Professor Feng He, Professor of Global Health Research, Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine, **Barts & The London School of Medicine and Dentistry**

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

Professor Simon Capewell, Public Health and Policy, **University of Liverpool**
Professor Franco Cappuccio, Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine & Epidemiology, **Warwick Medical School**

Professor Jack Cuzick, Institute Director and Head of Centre for Cancer Prevention, Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine, **Barts & The London School of Medicine and Dentistry**

Professor Paul Dodson, Consultant Physician in Diabetes, **Heartlands Hospital, Birmingham**

Professor Jacob George, Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine and Therapeutics, **Ninewells Hospital, Dundee** and Director of R&D, **NHS Tayside**

Professor W. Philip T. James, Public Health Policy Group, **International Obesity Taskforce**

Professor Tim Lang, Professor of Food Policy, **City, University of London**

Dr Robert Lustig, Professor of Paediatrics, Division of Endocrinology, **University of California**

Professor Klim McPherson, Professor of Public Health Epidemiology, **University of Oxford**

Professor Borislava Mihaylova, Professor of Health Economics, Centre for Primary Care and Public Health, **Barts & the London School of Medicine and Dentistry**

Professor Christopher Millett, Professor of Public Health, **Imperial College London**

Professor Neil Poulter, Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine, **School of Public Health, Imperial College London**

Professor Peter Sever, Professor of Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics, Faculty of Medicine, National Heart & Lung Institute, **Imperial College London**

Dr Wayne Sunman, Consultant in Geriatric Medicine, **Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust**

Professor Jack Winkler, Emeritus Professor of Nutrition Policy, **London Metropolitan University**

Professor David Haslam, Physician in Obesity Management, **International Obesity Forum**

Neville Rigby, Convener, **International Obesity Forum**

Katharine Jenner, Chief Executive, **Blood Pressure UK**

Caroline Cerny, Obesity Health Alliance Lead, **Obesity Health Alliance**

Barbara Crowther, Coordinator, **Children's Food Campaign**

Dr Maria Bryant, Associate Professor of Diet and Obesity, University of Leeds, Chair of the **Association for the Study of Obesity (ASO)**

Anthony Davidson, Founder, **BigBarn CIC**

Dr Charlotte Jeavons, Oral Health Promotion Lead and Maria Morgan, President Elect, **British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry (BASCD)**

Mick Armstrong, Chair, **British Dental Association**

Andy Burman, Chief Executive, **British Dietetic Association**

John Maingay, Director of Policy and Influencing, **British Heart Foundation**

Pamela Healy OBE, Chief Executive, **British Liver Trust**

Harpreet Brrang, Information & Research Hub Manager, **Children's Liver Disease Foundation**

Chris Askew, Chief Executive, **Diabetes UK**

Mr Matthew Garrett, Dean of the **Faculty of Dental Surgery at the Royal College of Surgeons of England**

Dr Helen Crawley, Director, **First Steps Nutrition Trust**

Louise T Davies, Founder, **Food Teachers Centre**

Sarah Hickey, Programme Director – Childhood Obesity, **Guy’s and St. Thomas’ Charity**

Marjon Willers, Director, **Health Education Trust**

Matthew Philpott, Executive Director, **Health Equalities Group (Food Active and Healthy Stadia)**

Kim Roberts, Chief Executive, **HENRY**

Sally Bunday, Director, **The Hyperactive Children’s Support Group**

Tam Fry, Chair, **National Obesity Forum**

Dr Nigel Carter OBE, Chief Executive, **Oral Health Foundation**

Debora Howe, Chair, **National Oral Health Promotion Group**

Christina Marriott, Chief Executive, **Royal Society for Public Health**

Ellie Chapman, Head of Food and Health, **ShareAction**

Rob Percival, Head of Policy, **Soil Association**

Kate Oldridge-Turner, Head of Policy, **World Cancer Research Fund**

CC:

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport