



CASSH

Consensus Action on
Salt, Sugar & Health

Annual Report

Nutrition Research in Action

May 22 — April 23



Consensus Action on Salt, Sugar and Health (CASSH) is a registered charity dedicated to reducing dietary salt, sugar and calorie consumption to improve the health of populations in the UK and worldwide. The charity is formed of three research and advocacy groups: **Action on Salt**, **Action on Sugar** and **World Action on Salt, Sugar & Health (WASSH)**.



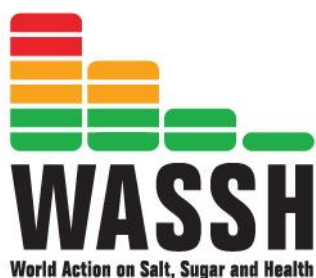
Action on Salt is successfully working to reach a consensus with the food industry and Government over the harmful effects of a high salt diet, and bring about a reduction in the amount of salt in processed foods as well as salt added to cooking, and the table. To date, many supermarkets and food manufacturers have chosen to adopt a policy of gradually reducing the salt content of their products.

Action on Salt is supported by 23 expert scientific members.



Action on Sugar is working to reach a consensus with the food industry and Government over the harmful effects of a high sugar diet, and bring about a reduction in the amount of sugars in food and drink products. By working to reach a consensus with food manufacturers and Government that there is strong evidence that free sugars are a major cause of obesity and have other adverse health effects, we aim to create sustainable policies and systems that enable reduced free sugars intake.

Action on Sugar is supported by 24 expert advisors.



WASSH's mission is to improve the health of populations throughout the world by achieving reductions in salt, sugar and calorie intake. WASSH provides resources and expert advice to enable the development and implementation of salt, sugar and calorie reduction programmes worldwide.

WASSH is a global network of more than 600 expert members in 100 countries.

CASSH Team

Prof Graham MacGregor

Sonia Pombo, RNutr

Dr Kawther Hashem RNutr

Mhairi Brown RNutr

Zoe Davies ANutr

Sheena Bhageerutty ANutr

Harriet Burt ANutr

Trustee, Chairman, CASSH

Campaign Lead and Research Fellow, Action on Salt

Campaign Lead and Research Fellow, Action on Sugar

Policy & Public Affairs Manager, Action on Salt & Action on Sugar / Programme Lead, WASSH

Nutritionist, Action on Salt and Action on Sugar

Assistant Nutritionist, Action on Salt and Action on Sugar

Senior Policy and International Projects Officer, WASSH

Action on Salt Members

Trustee

Prof PS Sever

Member

Prof T Lang

Trustee

Prof MR Law

Member

Prof MEJ Lean

Trustee

Prof F He

Member

Prof Sir M Marmot

Member

Prof G Beevers

Member

Prof K McPherson

Member

Prof S Capewell

Member

Prof C Millett

Member

Prof FP Cappuccio

Member

Prof O Oyeboode

Member

Prof PM Dodson

Member

Prof NP Poulter

Member

Prof P Elliott

Member

Prof S Shahar

Member

Prof J George

Member

Dr W Sunman

Member

Prof WPT James

Member

Prof Sir N Wald

Member

Mr M Kane

Member

Prof J Winkler

Member

Prof KT Khaw

Action on Sugar Advisors

Advisor

Prof S Capewell

Advisor

Dr M Rayner

Advisor

Prof J Cuzick

Advisor

Prof O Oyeboode

Advisor

Prof A Garde

Advisor

Mr N Rigby

Advisor

Prof F He

Advisor

Prof A Rugg-Gunn

Advisor

Prof P James

Advisor

Prof P Sever

Advisor

Prof RJ Johnson

Advisor

Prof Dr S Shahar

Advisor

Mr M Kane

Advisor

Prof B Swinburn

Advisor

Prof T Lang

Advisor

Prof Sir N Wald

Advisor

Dr C Llewellyn

Advisor

Prof J Wass

Advisor

Prof R Lustig

Advisor

Prof P Whincup

Advisor

Prof C Millett

Advisor

Prof J Winkler

Advisor

Ms M Mwatsama

Contents

<i>Welcome</i>	5
<i>Our Year in Summary.....</i>	6
<i>Surveys.....</i>	8
<i>CASSH Projects.....</i>	10
<i>Sugar Awareness Week: 8 – 14th November 2022.....</i>	12
<i>Salt Awareness Week 2023</i>	15
<i>World Action on Salt, Sugar and Health</i>	16
<i>Our Research</i>	19
<i>Building Relationships.....</i>	20
<i>Funding</i>	21

Welcome

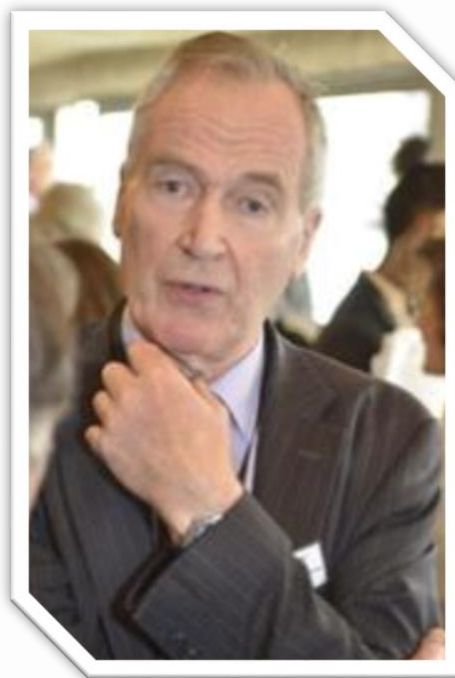
This year has been marked by some significant policy developments, despite the unprecedented changes in Government leadership leading to disappointing delays.

Kellogg's made a bold move and initiated a legal dispute with the government, contesting regulations concerning cereals high in saturated fat, salt, and sugar (HFSS). This speaks volumes to the efforts that companies are willing make to avoid improving the nutritional quality of their products.

Thankfully, the High Court ruled in favour of the government, setting a significant precedent in product regulation of HFSS food and drink. This gave us all hope that nutrition policies were finally starting to take shape, but whilst location restrictions for HFSS products became operational in October, the introduction of volume-based promotions, and advertising restrictions saw further delays until October 2025, stirring concerns and uncertainties for future regulations under this government.

Following our Freedom of Information requests, the government published their final Sugar Reduction report in December, which analysed the progress of the Sugar Reduction Programme. It unveiled dismal reductions in total sugar content of categories under the voluntary programme, but emphasised the huge impact of the Soft Drinks Industry Levy in reducing sugar sales from soft drinks.

Whilst the evidence linking poor diets to worsening health outcomes continues to grow, leaders and policy makers remain unconvinced, throwing doubt and delays at every pivotal moment. Talks of a general election in 2024 give us hope of a public health shake up, but for now our fight continues, drawing attention to the benefit of reformulation, not only on population health, but on businesses and the economy as a whole.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graham MacGregor'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a light-colored background.

Professor Graham MacGregor
Chairman of CASSH

Our Year in Summary

5

Surveys of salt, sugar and excess calorie content of popular food and drink

>250

Pieces of media coverage, across TV, radio, national print media and online

1

Global awareness week, with support from

17

health organisations

7

Collaborative projects in UK, Malaysia, Eastern Mediterranean Region and South East Asia

5

Peer reviewed publications

>30

Meetings with food companies to challenge their progress with salt and sugar reduction

Timeline of Events

May

Government delays restrictions on multi-buy deals and advertising on TV pre-9pm and online for products high in fat, salt or sugar (HFSS).

Graham said: "Boris Johnson could have left a legacy of being the first Prime Minister to address obesity in a meaningful way, particularly in restricting advertising and promotion of unhealthy food which were one of his flagship policies. Instead, he has given in to his own MPs, and an aggressive food industry, who, ironically, were starting to comply with these new policies."

June

Government issues its **Food Strategy** in response to the independent National Food Strategy review, a disappointing and very watered down strategy with no proposals for improving early years' products.

July

Kellogg's lose their battle in court over rules which would ban supermarkets from prominently displaying their unhealthy cereals high in fat, salt and/or sugar (HFSS). Sonia said: "Let this be a lesson to other big food companies using their money to try and overturn health policies – don't be part of the problem, be part of the solution."

November

Department of Health and Social Care announces **£20 million research boost** to develop new obesity treatments and technology.

Zoe said: "Treatment cannot be effective long term if we do not address the environment that encourages an unhealthy lifestyle - this means improving access to and affordability of healthy food and drink."

October

Rishi Sunak appointed as Prime Minister. Restrictions on placement of HFSS products in prominent retail locations including near checkouts, store entrances and end of aisles starts.

September

Action on Salt & Action on Sugar joined 70 health charities, medical organisations and health professionals in raising our concern over allegations that **Prime Minister Liz Truss and her Government will scrap existing and forthcoming nutrition policies.**

December

The Government's final report of the Sugar Reduction Programme was released. The report assessed food industry progress towards the voluntary reduction target of 20% in the food and drink products contributing most towards children's sugar intake from a 2015 baseline to the programme end in 2020, with disappointing results.

Government delayed implementation of advertising restrictions on HFSS food and drink again, this time to October 2025.

2023

January

The Government announced a **new strategy on major conditions**, aiming to increase healthy life expectancy and alleviate the pressure on the health system. The new strategy was intended to replace the **Health Disparities White Paper which was scrapped** at the same time, although preventative measures were lacking.

March

WHO global report on salt reduction published, showing that the world is falling short of achieving its global target of reducing salt intake by 30% by 2025. Hattie said: "This report should serve as a wake-up call to the UK government as it highlights just how far the UK is from safe levels of salt intake. Reducing salt is one of the simplest and most cost-effective public health measures, so why is the government not jumping at this opportunity?"

February

Government launches the Food Data Transparency Partnership, aiming to improve the availability, quality and comparability of data in the food supply chain to create a positive change in the food system towards the production and sale of more environmentally sustainable and healthier food and drink.

Surveys

Over the last 12 months, we have worked on several surveys, some of which have been built into comprehensive technical reports to guide industry into further action.

July 2022 – Children’s Meals



In July, we surveyed children’s meals in restaurants and found some are still serving up dishes to children which are unnecessarily high in salt, despite previous calls by health professionals and the Government to improve them.

Call to action: Stricter standards for child health to include mandatory regulation on salt, sugar and calorie levels in foods intended for child consumption.

Industry comments:

Prezzo - *“Reducing salt content is a key priority for Prezzo, and critical component of our Nutrition Strategy...as part of our strategy to provide nutritionally balanced meals for children, we have developed an additional option for children under 6 with a very low level of sodium. We will continue to review our levels of salt and identify ways in which it can be reduced without compromising our food quality, safety and flavour.”*

Whitbread - *“We have been longstanding supporters of the Government’s salt reduction programmes and have constantly strived to meet the targets for each of these...Whilst we are already meeting the 2024 Government targets on salt, we will continue to engage with stakeholders including Action on Salt and to champion salt*

reduction with our suppliers and teams ensuring that we don’t compromise on the safety, quality and taste of our dishes.”

November 2022 – Baby & Toddler Breakfasts



Our sugar awareness week report revealed the high sugar content in baby and toddler breakfast items. Over 80% of breakfast products surveyed featured nutrition and health claims on foods which still contain sugars from fruit purees, concentrates and juice - a main cause of tooth decay. We spoke to parents of small children who raised concerns about the levels of sugar in these commercial baby foods, with the majority (87%) saying it would be useful if the sugars added to baby and infant food, including that of processed fruit, was displayed on front of pack.

Call to action: The complete removal of misleading nutrition and health claims on infant food and drink products and for the government to publish and mandate the overdue commercial baby food and drink guidelines.

Industry comments:

Babease - *“...we take infant nutrition very seriously and always consider Department of Health recommendations when developing our products. That’s why we always prioritise vegetables in our pouches and don’t produce any pouches containing 100% fruit...”*

Little Freddie – *“...we do not use the claim ‘no added sugar’ on any of our yoghurts, this is against PHE guidance which we are fully compliant with. We believe our Greek style yoghurt pouches are a great example of offering a balanced and responsible choice for children. We avoid juice*

concentrates, refined sugars and try to use fruit combinations that are lower in sugar. ..."

March 2023 – Bread



We hit the headlines with our report on the salt content of pre-sliced bread. In the UK, bread is the main source of salt, with over 60 loaves of bread brought per person per year. A small 6% reduction in the average salt content of bread would remove 926 tonnes of salt from the UK diet per year, equivalent to the weight of 132 elephants.

Call to action: Set mandatory salt reduction targets in order to create a level playing field across the food industry.

Industry comments:

M&S - *"...we are actively reducing salt to meet PHE 2024 salt targets. This salt reduction activity is part of our reformulation programme to continually improve the nutritional profile of all our foods and we are committed to delivering further salt reductions across our ranges."*

Kingsmill - *"We have been working for many years on gradual salt reduction. Since 2004, we have reduced levels by 25% and by adopting a phased reduction, consumers have been able to get used to the change in flavour without rejecting our products...We remain committed to ongoing recipe optimisation and have learnt a great deal about reformulation over the past two decades..."*

Sainsbury's - *"We are supportive of the government recommendation to reduce salt to 6g/day and are happy that 100% of our sliced bread products meet the 2024 Public Health England salt target."*

Asda - *"We are pleased to say we've already hit the 2024 salt targets across bread and rolls, as well as increasing the number of high fibre 'Live Better' products in the range. We are committed to continuing our work on reformulation across the categories that are most important to Asda customers' diets."*

July 2022 - Breakfast cereals with packaging that may appeal to children



In July, we collaborated on the Food Foundation's Broken Plate report for the 4th consecutive year, assessing the nutritional profile of breakfast cereals, and more recently yogurts, with packaging that appeal to children. Data shows overall, there has not been a significant improvement in the sugar content of foods since 2021. Supermarket own label cereals scored more favourably nutritionally, with greater reductions in both salt and sugar, but it is the branded cereals that often find their home in our kitchen cupboards. Reformulation of these more popular products will have the greatest impact on public health, but unfortunately, many are falling short of the recommendations.

Call to action: A level playing field is urgently needed to give our future generations the best possible start in life. We need more responsible marketing of products to prevent pester power of unhealthy foods, combined with continual reductions in salt, sugar and saturated fat, and increased fibre.

CASSH Projects

This year we continue to be fortunate to receive external funding for a range of projects, which has allowed us to diversify our work and expand our influencing opportunities.

Influencing Early Years Nutrition, April 2022 – April 2024

Action on Sugar were awarded funding by Impact on Urban Health for a two-year project investigating the nutritional profile of food and drinks marketed to early years (i.e. children aged up to 36 months). We have been conducting in-depth data analysis on products marketed to children, with a view to build an evidence base to inform policy on the baby/toddler food market. In doing so, we aim to achieve sustainable changes in the nutrition profile of food and drinks available in the early years – so that the food parents buy and feed their children is healthier.

This year we:

- issued a comment to state how Early years food remains a ‘policy black hole’ in newly published Government Food Strategy.
- conducted a Baby & Toddler Breakfasts survey and issued its findings for Sugar Awareness Week.
- conducted meetings with leading baby and toddler food companies to discuss their stance on the government’s draft commercial baby food guidelines.
- responded to a public sector food and catering procurement standards consultation.
- responded to SACN ‘feeding young children aged 1 to 5 years’ consultation
- held an infant food stakeholder workshop
- liaised with DHSC on defining the scope of infant food in the locations restrictions
- submitted to the prevention inquiry, covering baby/toddler food

- submitted a FOI request and received a response regarding the release of the Commercial Baby Food and Drink Guidelines

Challenging the UK’s excessive sugar beet production and consumption for better soil and health, November 2021 – November 2023

In November 2021, Action on Sugar and Feedback UK were awarded funding by the Esmée Fairburn Foundation for a joint two-year project on the environmental and health implications of sugar beet production in the UK. Feedback UK are a campaign group that exposes systemic problems that have led to the environmentally and socially unsustainable use of resources within the global food system.

In October 2022, we brought together 10 organisations to discuss the health and environmental issues associated with both excess sugar production and consumption. We discussed the potential avenues for change given the challenging political environment and opportunities for future collaboration.

In December 2022, we attended and asked a question at the Associated British Foods (ABF) (British Sugar’s parent company) AGM, challenging the Board on their role in promoting sugar overconsumption. We were successful in securing a meeting with ABF and British Sugar to discuss the project.

In April 2023, we published a joint report with Feedback, exposing how UK supermarkets are driving high sugar sales. We surveyed the UK’s 10 biggest supermarkets to find out if their policies are fit for the task of reducing total sugar sales, finding that nine out of ten UK supermarkets lack any policies to measure total sugar sales across all products. We called on supermarkets to commit to publicly disclosing and reducing overall sugar sales by 50% by 2025 and by two-thirds by 2030, and for Government to drive this by implementing mandatory targets.

Large multinational food companies and their global influence on nutrition July 2022 – March 2023

In collaboration with ShareAction, we identified 100 key 'flagship' products from leading global food and drink companies (Danone, Kellogg's, Kraft Heinz, Nestle and Unilever) and explored just how healthy they really were. In this snapshot report published in July 2022, we found over half were high in saturated fat, salt or sugar (HFSS). In addition, almost a third of these unhealthy products displayed misleading nutrition 'health halo' claims.

As part of our work calling on global food companies to increase the proportion of healthy products across their entire portfolio, we followed up with another survey in March 2023, looking at the nutritional quality of more than 2,000 products produced and sold in three of their biggest markets – Australia, France and Mexico. Using government endorsed definitions of what constitutes a healthier food and drink, we found many of these products would be classified as 'unhealthy' – the exception being Danone with only 35% deemed unhealthy.

We along with ShareAction continue to call on global food manufacturers to set meaningful targets to increase the proportion of healthier food and drink, and improve access and availability for all.

Sugar Awareness Week: 8 – 14th November 2022

Sugar Awareness Week is an opportunity to celebrate emerging policies that will help reduce population sugar intake, while highlighting how much further – and faster – we have to go to ensure population health does not suffer unnecessarily.

'Breakfast. The most important sweet meal of the day.'



Breakfast provides us with a great opportunity to start our day consuming a variety of essential nutrients, but unfortunately, commercial breakfasts such as cereals, pancakes, jams, yogurts, pastries and even porridges are often high in free sugars. It's time to highlight that we shouldn't be sold a dessert for our first meal of the day

UK Cross-sectional Survey: The sugars content of baby and toddler sweet snacks – and the health halo that surrounds them

Childhood is a crucial time to shape food preference and consuming a healthy diet early in life sets a precedent for future eating habits. A diet high in nutrient-dense, minimally processed foods which are high in vitamins and minerals is an important factor in helping children develop a healthy relationship with food, grow to their full potential and thrive in school. It is therefore

important to ensure that all children have access to a healthy diet as early as possible.

Children under 2 years of age aren't recommended to consume any free sugars, with those aged 2+ years recommended to consume no more than 5% of their daily energy intake. However, the main contributor for free sugars for children aged between 4 and 9 months has been found to be commercial infant foods, particularly fruit-based and cereal based foods. Indeed, many infant foods have been shown to exceed the recommended intakes for sugar.

There is currently a gap in legislation for baby and toddler foods & drinks, which warrants highlighting. We surveyed 97 baby and toddler breakfast items across all major retailers, assessing their nutritional quality and use of nutrition and health claims on packaging.

Findings:

- Some products contain up to 14.5g of sugars per serve but there are large variations in sugars content proving that reductions are possible
- The majority (70%) of products are flavoured with fruit, thereby overexposing children to sweet tastes
- Over three quarters claim to have 'no added sugars' or 'only naturally occurring sugars' despite many containing sugars from fruit juices, concentrates and purees

More details can be found in our in depth [report](#).

We spoke to parents across the country, who confirmed the popularity of these products, with many offering them to their child several times a week. The vast majority (91%) also supported stronger government action, to make sure all food and drinks available in the baby aisle are

nutritionally appropriate according to NHS recommendations.

Call to Action

- The report signals a clear need for robust measures to incentivise the food industry to reduce sugar across any product marketed for babies and toddlers.
- Misleading nutrition and health claims have no place on baby and toddler food & drink products, and should be removed completely
- Commercial baby food and drink guidelines are long overdue and should be published without further delay. This will ensure dedicated baby aisles in supermarkets are a 'safe space' for parents.

Industry responses

Babease - *"We take infant nutrition very seriously and always consider Department of Health recommendations when developing our products. That's why we always prioritise vegetables in our pouches and don't produce any pouches containing 100% fruit. We understand that when fruit is pureed, whether at home or commercially, the sugars contained naturally in fruit are classified as 'free sugars'. Because of this we always combine blended fruit with vegetables, yoghurt and/or grains. Meaning none of our pouches have a high sugar content. We are also proud to be transparent with our packaging and always list ingredients in weight order on the front of our packs as well as including an ingredient wheel on the back of the pack. This allows consumers to see, at a glance, what ingredients are included and in what quantities. We also make it clear that the food should be squeezed into a bowl and served with a spoon instead of sucking directly from the pouch."*

Little Freddie - *"We do not use the claim 'no added sugar' on any of our yoghurts, this is against PHE guidance, which we are fully compliant with. We believe our Greek style yoghurt pouches are a great example of offering a balanced and responsible choice for children. We avoid juice*

concentrates, refined sugars and try to use fruit combinations that are lower in sugar."

Blogs and Publications

To coincide with the week, we created content for our website and for external magazines and websites, which was shared and distributed on social media.

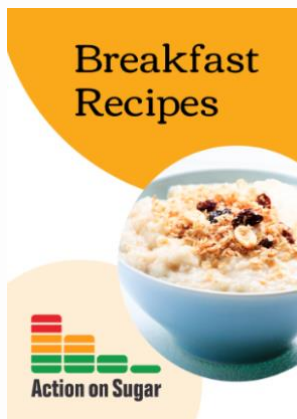
- **Sugar Awareness Week 2022** - Zoe Davies for NHD Magazine
- **Identifying health inequalities within obesity - Peeling back the layers in order to address the issue** - Sheena Bhageerutty for RSPH
- **Baby + Toddler Breakfast Items - Why so much sugar in a 'No Added Sugar' product?** - Zoe Davies for Food Active
- **Making the Baby Aisle a 'Safe Space': Action on Sugar call on government to take action** - Mhairi Brown for Children's Food Campaign
- **The UK must get serious about sugar reduction** - Hattie Burt for Open Access Government
- **Cut the sugar and make the baby aisle a safe space** - Zoe Davies for The Grocer
- **'Sugar reduction: preventing ill health and protecting the NHS via reformulation'** - Hattie Burt, Mhairi Brown, and Professor Graham McGregor for Integrated care systems association

Policy Report

To coincide with the week, we produced a report on the UK's Sugar Reduction Programme, examining why companies have been slow to lower sugar levels in their products. In this, we called on government to implement a simple yet mandatory programme, with specific upper limits for all contributing categories of sugar in the diet.



Recipe Booklet



In collaboration with all our supporters, we produced a recipe booklet, with donated recipes from charities, registered nutritionists and dietitians - all low in sugar

Community Events

Local events took place across the country during the week, to spread awareness and knowledge around the health implications of too much sugar on health.

- Give Help Share, a charity that works with children to give nutritious food parcels, help families in crisis and share food knowledge for a healthier future. They promoted sugar awareness week within their food education workshops, focussing on breakfast.
- The Pantry Catering Company ran staff workshops
- Dietary Health and Nutrition for Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland published a collection of healthy recipes
- Education Partnership North East displayed resources around various college campuses
- Banbridge Academy ran an event during the week
- Compass Group created special menus for sugar awareness week

- One You Hounslow shared a breakfast recipe
- Holroyd Howe ran educational sessions on sugar in drinks and snacks

Supporters

We are grateful for the support from a range of stakeholders and health organisations, adding weight to our policy calls and campaign actions



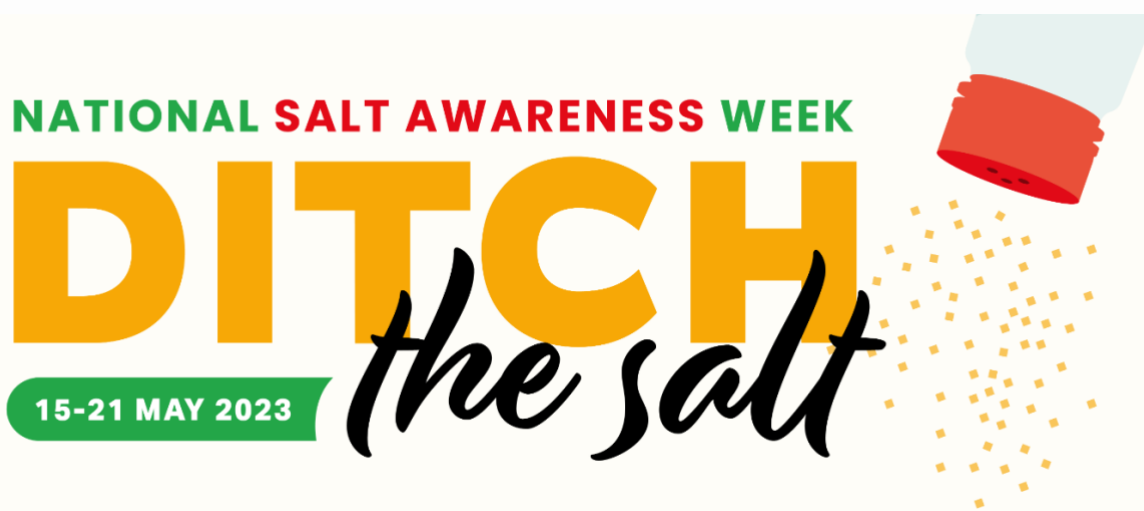
Plus, the support of registered Nutritionists and Dietitians:

- Azmina Govindji, RD
- Charlotte Radcliffe, RNutr
- Charlotte Stirling-Reed, RNutr
- Eli Bircher, ANutr
- Laura Matthews, RNutr
- Priya Tew, RD
- Rhiannon Lambert, RNutr
- Zoe Griffiths, RNutr

Salt Awareness Week 2023

For many years, our annual Salt Awareness Week campaign has been scheduled according to the UK policy calendar in March. We're pleased to announce that the campaign will now take place in the third week of May - every year!

This new and consistent date allows supporters in the UK and internationally to plan their own activities to mark the awareness week ahead of time. We look forward to working with you to get salt reduction onto the global agenda, stay tuned for more information on the theme and resources for the week.



Heart attacks and strokes are the biggest causes of death and disability in the UK, with two people suffering from these often-debilitating conditions every 5 minutes. The strain this is having, not only on the individual and their families, but on our struggling NHS cannot be ignored.

Most cases are entirely preventable, and so it's vital we all take measures to improve our health and prevent these events from happening in the first place. It's a little-known fact that eating less salt is one of the quickest and most effective ways of improving our health, with just 1 less 'pinch' a day saving over 6,000 lives every year in the UK. But how can we cut back on our salt, when everything we buy is full of it?

From sliced bread to biscuits, Friday night takeaways to 'healthy' salads, everything has added salt. In fact, three quarters of the salt we eat is already in the foods we buy, and it's impossible to take it out once it's been added in.

Join us as we call on food companies to Ditch the Salt for the sake of our hearts

World Action on Salt, Sugar and Health

In June 2022, we were commissioned by The WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia to produce a scorecard for salt reduction policies in the region. In January 2023, we completed our salt reduction projects in Malaysia and the Eastern Mediterranean Region. This year also saw the completion of Action on Salt China, and the development of a new project addressing outpatients with mild hypertension.

WASSH Projects

Accelerating Salt Reduction in EMRO, September 2020 – January 2023

As part of a funding package of over £200k received from Resolve to Save Lives, we worked to help accelerate salt reduction initiatives in the Eastern Mediterranean region (EMRO). Last year we:

- Engaged with WHO EMRO to facilitate the adoption of Global Sodium Benchmarks including presenting at with Regional expert meeting on Policy Action for Healthy Diets with in Dubai in February 2023.
- Produced and launched a [regional salt reduction toolkit](#) with simple, step-by-step guidance to guide policy makers in developing and implementing essential components of a salt reduction strategy including measuring population salt intake, developing salt reduction targets, and stakeholder engagement.
- Worked with Morocco on specific, tailored projects to help accelerate their salt reduction progress: development and implementation of an advocacy plan to reduce salt in processed products; study on the use of salt in processed products; development of a legal text on the limitation of salt and sugar in bakers' bread and bakery products; conducted meeting with

the Consumers Federation and Ministry of Health to engage them to advocate for legislation to limit salt in bread.

Malaysia

Developing salt reduction targets and implementing a policy to reduce salt in the out of home sector, September 2020 – January 2023

In addition to our work in EMRO, our funding package received from Resolve to Save Lives enabled us to:

- Develop salt reduction targets for 14 key contributors of salt intake in Malaysia, including sauces and instant noodles, which are now with the Ministry of Health for implementation.
- Complete a specific project to produce a reduced-sodium soy sauce, with an accompanying industry toolkit.
- Start the implementation of the out of home (OOH) strategy for salt reduction, with clear actions assigned to the Ministry of Health and other government departments for implementation.
- Conduct train-the-trainer sessions for food vendors as part of the OOH strategy implementation.
- Launch events for the salt targets, soy sauce reformulation toolkit and out-of-home strategy implementation with food industry collaborators, the Ministry of Health and other researchers in November 2022.

Developing a salt reduction scorecard in SEARO, June - November 2022



In 2022 we were awarded funding by the WHO Southeast Asia Regional Office (WHO SEARO) to develop a scorecard to give the WHO regional office a better overview of salt reduction activity in the region in order to drive further progress. As part of the project, we conducted a systematic review of salt intake and related policies in each country in the region and used this to create a database and scorecard.

China

Action on Salt China, June 2017-2022

The Action on Salt China (ASC) programme, funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), aims to achieve a 15% reduction in population salt intake in China. ASC developed six programs targeting low health literacy related to salt reduction and the three major sources of salt intake in China.

Officially completed in June 2022, ASC has made significant achievements over the past 5 years:

- **Health Education and Promotion:** Various health education materials (posters, leaflets, booklets, and videos) were developed and widely disseminated to improve knowledge and practices related to salt reduction. These materials were recommended and integrated into the national health education resource pool for wide use. In addition, numerous health campaigns were organized throughout the project's lifetime to engage the public.
- **Randomized Control Trials (RCTs):** Four RCTs targeting different groups – schoolchildren, home cooks, restaurants, and a comprehensive study were conducted in 33

study sites in six provinces. These trials, involving over 6000 participants, demonstrated significant reductions in salt intake and improvements in health outcomes.

- **Pre-Packaged Food Salt Reduction:** ASC contributed to the setting of salt targets and improvements in nutrition labelling standards for pre-packaged and restaurant foods. ASC partners developed two national guidelines for (1) salt reduction in home cooking and (2) nutritional assessment for snacks consumed by children.
- **Scale-up of Salt Reduction Activities:** The interventions were expanded across six provinces with more than 1,330 reduction activities conducted and benefiting over 300 million people.
- **Publications:** Over 50 academic papers were published, providing evidence for the feasibility and effectiveness of salt reduction interventions.
- **Capacity Building and Community Engagement:** Substantial training was provided to researchers and local investigators, enhancing their ability to implement and evaluate community-based salt reduction interventions.

School-based education programme to reduce salt: Scaling-up in China (EduSaltS), December 2019 – June 2024

Funded by the UK MRC, the scale up study (MR/T024399/1) aims to identify facilitators and barriers for a large-scale implementation of a school-based education programme to reduce salt in children and their families in China.

The EduSaltS programme was initially launched across 168 schools in Ganzhou and Zhenjiang. There was a delay in the launch of scale up in Qinhuangdao city with 100 schools in Qinhuangdao participating in the study in March 2023. A total of 59,000 students aged 9-10 participated in the EduSalt programme. To allow sufficient time to effectively implement the scale

up package in Qinhuangdao city, a 7-month no-cost extension has been granted extending the current end date from 1st December 2023 to 30th June 2024.

The final evaluation surveys are scheduled to be carried out in Ganzhou and Zhenjiang in June 2023. In Qinhuangdao, the intervention is currently ongoing and is expected to be completed in January 2024, followed by the final evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the scale up strategies.

China: A Hospital-based Education Programme to Reduce Salt Intake in Mild-Moderate Hypertensive outpatients in China (HerSalt), May 2022 – December 2023

In 2022, Professor Feng He and Dr Jing Song were awarded the QMUL-HUST Strategic Partnership Research Funding for a 1.5-year project, alongside researchers from Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) China. The project aims to investigate the current salt intake in the mild-to-moderate hypertensives, and also develop an evidence-based, effective, feasible and scalable salt reduction model for hypertensives that is applicable to the healthcare settings in China.

This research is designed as a pilot randomised controlled trial, with an aim to recruit 50 mild-to-moderate hypertensive outpatients who attended the Wuchang Hospital in Wuhan City. A 3-month intervention will be implemented, including education sessions, leaflets and posters, provision of press-type quantitative salt bottle, regular telephone follow-up of salt intake and lifestyle, and an app-based tool for interactive activities on salt reduction and blood pressure management with the patients.

The primary outcome is the change in 24h urinary sodium excretion, 24h ambulatory blood

pressure, and KAP (knowledge, attitudes and practice) of salt reduction. Adherence, feasibility, acceptance, and challenges and facilitators of the implementation process will also be evaluated using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Our Research

June 2022

- Cappuccio F, Campbell NRC, He FJ, Jacobson MF, MacGregor GA et al. [Sodium and health: old myths and a controversy based on denial](#) (Current Nutrition Reports)
- Burt HE, Brown MK, He FJ and MacGregor GA [Salt: the forgotten foe in UK public health policy](#) (The BMJ)

July 2022

- Tan M, Wang C, Song J, He FJ and MacGregor GA [Spot urinary sodium to monitor relative changes in population salt intake during the UK salt reduction programme](#) (Journal of Hypertension)
- Rahman MJ; Parvez SM, Rahman M, He FJ et al [Urinary Sodium Excretion and Obesity Markers among Bangladeshi Adult Population: Pooled Data from Three Cohort Studies](#). (Nutrients)

August 2022

- Cheng YL, Hu H, Song J, MacGregor GA, He FJ. [Socioeconomic status and dietary sodium intake in children from 2008 to 2019 in the UK](#) (Journal of Hypertension)
- Ma Y, He FJ, Sun Q, Yuan C, Kieneker LM, Curhan, GC, MacGregor GA, et al. [24-Hour Urinary Sodium and Potassium Excretion and Cardiovascular Risk](#). (Journal of Urology)
- Harun Z, Shahar S, You YX, He FJ, Brown MK et al. [Perceptions, Barriers and Enablers on Salt Reduction in Malaysia Out of Home Sectors \(MyOH\): From Point of View of the Policy Makers and Food Industries](#), (Research Square)

September 2022

- Campbell N, He FJ, McLean RM, Cappuccio FP, Woodward M, MacGregor GA et al. [Dietary sodium and cardiovascular disease in China: addressing the authors' response, statements and claims](#) (Journal of Hypertension)

October 2022

- Jones DW, Clark D, Morgan TO, He FJ. [Potassium-enriched salt substitution as a population strategy to prevent cardiovascular disease](#) (Hypertension)
- Fan F, Li Y, Li L, Nie X, Zhang P, Li Y, Luo R, Zhang G, Wang L, He FJ. [Salt-Related Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors and Their Relationship with 24-Hour Urinary Sodium Excretion in Chinese Adults](#) (Nutrients)

November 2022

- Liu M, Xu J, Li Y, He FJ, et al. [A Town-Level Comprehensive Intervention Study to Reduce Salt Intake in China: Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial](#) (Nutrients)

December 2022

- Du W, Zhang P, Zhang J, Li Y, He FJ, et al. [Sodium Reduction in Restaurant Food: A Randomized Controlled Trial in China](#). (Nutrients)

February 2023

- Harun, Z., Shahar, S., He FJ, Brown MK et al. [Perceptions, barriers and enablers of salt reduction in Malaysian out-of-home sectors \(MySaltOH\): from the point of view of policy-makers and food industries](#). (Health Res Policy Sys)

March 2023

- Trieu K, Coyle DH, Rosewarne E, Shahid M, Neal B, He FJ et al. [Estimated Dietary and Health Impact of the World Health Organization's Global Sodium Benchmarks on Packaged Foods in Australia: a Modeling Study](#) (Hypertension)
- McLean RM, He FJ, & MacGregor GA. [Flawed research methods result in misleading conclusions](#). (J Hum Hypertens) 37, 509–510 (2023).

April 2023

- Zhang P, Sun J, Li Y, He FJ. [An mHealth-based school health education system designed to scale up salt reduction in China \(EduSaltS\): A development and preliminary implementation study](#) (Frontiers in Nutrition)

Building Relationships

To stay at forefront of prevention in the UK and worldwide, we have prioritised the development of mutually beneficial alliances with other health charities and organisations. Working collaboratively or alongside other health charities, Action on Salt, Action on Sugar and

WASSH offer comments on health-related media in support of our colleagues, act as co-signatories on campaigning materials and attend numerous meetings, webinars and conferences around the world.

Over the past year, we have worked with:

Adopt a School	Department of Health and Social	Obesity Action Scotland
Alcohol Change UK	Care	Obesity Health Alliance
Alcohol Focus Scotland	Diabetes UK	Oral Health Foundation
American Heart Association	Early Start Nutrition	Office for Health Improvement & Disparities
BiteBack 2030	Eating Better	Polycystic Kidney Disease
Blood Pressure UK	European Salt Action Network	Real Bread Campaign
British Dietetic Association	Faculty of General Dental	Resolve to Save Lives
British Dental Association	Practice	Royal Academy of Culinary Arts
British Heart Foundation	Faculty of Public Health	Royal College of Nursing
British Medical Association	Feedback	Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow
British Society of Paediatric Dentistry	First Steps Nutrition Trust	Royal Society for Public Health
Cancer Research UK	Food Active	Safe Food Advocacy Europe
The Caroline Walker Trust	Food Ethics Council	Scottish Obesity Alliance
Center for Science in the Public Interest	The Food Foundation	ShareAction
Chefs in Schools	The George Institute	Soil Association
Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland	The George Institute for Global Health	Sunway University, Malaysia
Children's Food Campaign	Heart UK	Sustain
China National Centre for Food Safety Risk Assessment	Heart Research UK	Sustainable Restaurant Association
Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention	Institute of Alcohol Studies	Stroke Association
Chinese Centre for Health Education	Jamie Oliver Foundation	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
CRONICAS Peru	Kidney Research UK	University of Malaya
Dental Wellness Trust	LEYF Nurseries	Which?
	Meniere's Society	World Cancer Research Fund
	Ministry of Health Malaysia	World Health Organization and regional offices
	MyNutriWeb	World Hypertension League
	NESTA	
	Nutrition Scotland	

Funding

Thank you to the following funders for their support of our projects this year

Impact
on **Urban
Health**

ShareAction»»



**FEED
BACK**



NIHR | National Institute
for Health Research



Consensus Action on Salt, Sugar and Health

Wolfson Institute of Population Health

Charterhouse Square

London

EC1M 6BQ

CASSH is a Registered Charity No. 1098188

