



The Association of Directors of Public Health

CAP Consultation: food and soft drink advertising to children – ADPH response

The Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) welcomes the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) proposals for further restrictions on the advertising to children of food and soft drink products in non-broadcast media. The CAP consultation states that, “High rates of childhood obesity in the UK are widely considered to be an urgent challenge to children’s quality of life, to health services and to the economy.” The extent of the challenge is demonstrated by the fact that 19.1% of children in Year 6 (aged 10-11) in England are obese, and a further 14.2% are overweight, 9.1 % of children in Reception (aged 4-5) in England are obese and another 12.8% are overweight.¹

Obese children are more likely to be ill, be absent from school due to illness, experience health-related limitations and require more medical care than normal weight children.² Overweight and obese children are also more likely to become obese adults, and have a higher risk of morbidity, disability and premature mortality in adulthood. In addition to the health and wellbeing implications, the cost to the UK economy of overweight and obesity was estimated at £15.8 billion per year in 2007, including £4.2 billion in direct costs to the NHS.³

ADPH therefore support the CAP’s proposed policy recommendations to prohibit the placement of High Fat Sugar or Salt products in media targeted at or likely to appeal particularly to children, this is a positive step forward in helping to reduce children’s awareness of these foods. We would welcome these restrictions being extended to include broadcast media.

It should be noted that while preventing children developing a taste for HFSS foods is crucial in tackling childhood obesity, overall calorie intake is important too. Obesity levels are rising in line with the oversupply of available calories⁴, and while HFSS play an important part in the increase in food energy supply, messages about overall calorie intake do need to be considered. The CAP needs to consider how so-called “healthier” foods are advertised, as over-supply of “healthy” food can still lead to increases in weight.

Further information

The Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) is a Company Limited by guarantee with charity status registered in England and Wales and is the representative body for Directors of Public Health (DsPH) in the UK. The Association is hosted by the UK Health Forum.

It seeks to improve and protect the health of the population through collating and presenting the views of DsPH;

1 [National Child Measurement Programme 2014-15](#)

2 Wijga A, Scholtens S, Bemelmans W, de Jongste J, Kerkhof M, Schipper M, et al. Comorbidities of obesity in school children: a cross-sectional study in the PIAMA birth cohort. *BMC Public Health* 2010;10(1):184

3 Government Office for Science (2007) [Reducing obesity: future choices](#)

4 Stefanie Vandevijvere, Carson C Chow, Kevin D Hall, Elaine Umali, Boyd A Swinburn. Increased food energy supply as a major driver of the obesity epidemic: a global analysis. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 2015; 93 (7): 446



advising on public health policy and legislation at a local, regional, national and international level; facilitating a support network for DsPH; and providing opportunities for DsPH to develop professional practice.

The Association has a rich heritage, its origins dating back more than 150 years. It is a collaborative organisation working in partnership with others to maximise the voice for public health.

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July 2016