

Food Active Policy Calls

Food Active is a programme of work advocating for local, regional and national action to promote healthier weight and reduce health inequalities. Through consultation with the Food Active Northwest local authority network, lobbying and advocacy activities will be framed around the four key policy areas agreed below.

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Advocating for healthy weight in all policies through local, regional and national action.

- Prevent further cuts to the public health grant and review the adequacy of public health funding to ensure local authorities are adequately supported to deliver preventative work. Allocations should be confirmed in a timely manner to assist planning for the year ahead.
- Greater and more effective local powers to influence healthier weight, specifically through planning policy and tackling the commercial determinants of health.

Reducing the availability, marketing and advertising of less healthy food and drink.

- Build on the success of the Soft Drinks Industry Levy and introduce a new levy on less healthy food and drink, ensuring all revenue raised is invested back into increasing access to healthy food.
- Give every child the best start in life; including the protection of infants, children and young people from the advertising and marketing of less healthy food and drink (including commercially available baby food and drinks and energy drinks) – covering TV, online, sports sponsorship, outdoors and marketing by price and place in supermarkets. This also includes extending the ban on advertising infant formula milk to follow-on formula – so marketing cannot be used to undermine breastfeeding or mislead parents.
- Improving packaging of less healthy food and drink (including commercially available baby food and drinks), including the removal of child-friendly characters, misleading health claims and halos, on-pack promotions and presenting clear, easy to understand nutritional labelling.
- Introduce a sales restriction on energy drinks to under 16s.
- Strategies to improve the out of home food environment, such as planning restrictions on takeaway density, calorie labelling and healthier catering schemes, to include 3rd party online food delivery platforms.

Reducing the prevalence of food insecurity and increasing access to a healthy, sustainable and affordable diet for all.

- Increase the value of Healthy Start vouchers in line with inflation, expand eligibility of the scheme to all families on Universal Credit and with no recourse to public funds, and introduce automatic enrolment to the scheme for eligible families.
- Free School Meals for all primary and secondary school children. In the absence of universalism, increase the eligibility threshold to households in receipt of Universal Credit and introduce automatic enrolment to the scheme for eligible families.
- Extend funding for the Holiday Activities and Food Programme to cover half term, to ensure children in receipt of Free School Meals have access to a healthy, nutritious meal during all school holidays.
- Ensure the cost of healthy and sustainable diets is taken into consideration when setting benefits levels and the national minimum wage.

Promoting inclusive healthy weight environments and settings.

- Promote tap water as the default across the home environment, schools, hospitals, care settings, workplaces and the out of home sector.
- Improving the school food environment through reviewing and ringfencing funding for school food provision and increase monitoring of the school food standards to improve compliance.
- Strategies to promote better health and wellbeing in the early years including mandatory food standards in early years settings; ensure universal breastfeeding support programmes are accessible to all families; and sustained funding for children's centres or family hubs in areas of need.
- Measures to increase physical activity through promoting active environments and active travel, including the provision of safe, well-lit accessible walking and cycling routes and green spaces for all and sufficient funding for local authorities.
- Ensure strategies, campaigns and communications take steps to minimise weight stigma, and invest in training to increase awareness of complexities of obesity, with a specific focus on healthcare practitioners.

Food Active is delivered by the Health Equalities Group (registered charity number: 1110067). For more information, please contact info@foodactive.org.uk or visit www.linktr.ee/food_active