

# Actions to address the greatest public health challenge of our generation – obesity – announced

Called '[Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales](#)', the consultation outlines the actions to be taken to help people in Wales maintain a healthy weight.

The UK has one of the highest levels of obesity in Western Europe. In Wales, twenty seven percent of four-five year olds and sixty percent of our adults are overweight.

Being overweight increases the risk of developing major health conditions such as coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers. It is also a risk to people's mental health leading to low self-esteem, depression and anxiety.

The proposals set out in the consultation have a strong focus on prevention and are supported by research and international evidence from Public Health Wales into what can help the people to be a healthy weight.

The evidence has informed the content of the plan which is broken into four themes:

- **Leadership and Enabling Change** – strengthening national and local leadership to deliver change through Local Health Boards, Local Authorities, their partners and with communities themselves.
- **Healthy Environments** – creating an environment that helps everyone to make healthier food choices and creating opportunities in daily life for people to be active. Including to legislate on price promotions, calorie labelling on foods eaten out of the home, banning the sale of energy drinks to children and to bring together a range of programmes to develop active environments across communities.
- **Healthy Settings** – ensuring our education, work and leisure facilities promote and provide opportunities for people in Wales to access healthy meals, snacks and drinks and be physically active. Including strengthening support for early years and schools settings to enable healthy eating and daily physical activity opportunities.
- **Healthy People** – providing the opportunities and inspiring people and communities to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight. Including support for parents and families, focussing on the crucial first 1000 days and early years and to review delivery of the All Wales Obesity Pathway.

Vaughan Gething said:

“Too many people in Wales are overweight or obese.

“Our high rates of overweight four to five year olds is a matter of

national concern. This government is not prepared to let a poor diet or physical inactivity be defining features in the lives of our children and young people.

“We know that many of us want to eat healthier or do more exercise. However, fitting this into our busy lives can appear to be an overwhelming challenge. Creating an environment where it is normal and easy for us all to eat well and be physically active can make a significant difference and nudge us to change our daily routines.

“We want to encourage people to manage their own health and wellbeing, to lose weight and to be active. The long term sustainability of the NHS is at stake.

“We want people in Wales to have long, healthy happy lives. Being a healthy weight is a central part of achieving that goal.

“Tackling the root causes of why people become overweight is complex; it will require intervention at every level. We are under no illusion – there is no quick fix or easy solution to this problem. The proposals outlined today are based on the best evidence available of what could work to turn the tide on obesity.

“This is an issue we simply cannot ignore, it is the greatest public health challenge facing our generation and I urge people to engage fully with this consultation.”