

15.07 2021

National Food Strategy a possible 'game-changer' for children

Strategies that could impact children's oral health and improve the life chances of children living in the most deprived areas of the UK are now within reaching distance thanks to the independent National Food Strategy developed by Henry Dimbleby and published today.

Commissioned by Government in 2019, many of its recommendations include practical suggestions that map to BSPD's policies and position statements, including our oft-repeated call for product reformulation to reduce sugar and salt in many food products.

The report suggests product reformulation can be achieved by a tax on sugar and salt to increase the wholesale cost to food manufacturers. This would hopefully reduce junk food products which are absurdly high in sugar and salt and also damaging to the environment.

BSPD spokesperson Claire Stevens CBE issued a warning that families on low incomes will need to be supported so that healthy, fresh food is more accessible to them.

Three of the report's four strategic objectives relate to food policy:

- Escape the junk food cycle to protect the NHS
- Reduce diet-related inequality
- Create a long-term shift in our food culture

Dr Stevens said: "We hope this report translates into bold action by government. If implemented in full, this report could improve the lives of disadvantaged families and reduce dental decay in children, as well as making them fitter and healthier."

Part One of the National Food Strategy was published last year to guide food strategy through the pandemic. Four of the seven recommendations published in 2020 were acted on but not the recommendation to extend free school meals eligibility to all children in households where a parent is in receipt of Universal Credit or equivalent benefit.

The Government has committed to produce a White Paper in response to the review within six months.

Note to Editors

BSPD position statements on advertising of foods high in fat sugar and salt as well as on dental caries and obesity can be found here:

<https://www.bspd.co.uk/Professionals/Resources/Position-Statement>