



WIG

The Whitehall & Industry Group
connecting the sectors



'Society' Series

A Cross-Sector approach to tackling obesity
in the UK

1 October, 2020

Expert Insight

We were joined by Jenny Oldroyd, Deputy Director for Obesity, Food and Nutrition at the Department Of Health and Social Care for a webinar discussing the priorities and challenges ahead for her team, as the UK shifts towards a more preventive approach to healthcare, and a renewed focus on tackling obesity in the context of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.



Jenny touched upon points including:

- Almost two-thirds of UK adults are above a healthy weight, and 1 in 3 children are leaving primary school already overweight or living with obesity.
- Health inequalities which have lifelong impact are apparent in rates of childhood obesity, which are double in the most deprived areas. The UK Government aims to halve these figures by 2030.
- The new 'tackling obesity' strategy, launched in July 2020, builds on existing interventions and introduces new actions such as: restricting retail promotions and advertising for high fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) products, calorie labelling in restaurants, encouraging conversations about weight in primary care settings which have had demonstrable impact, and increasing availability of NHS Weight management service such as self-care apps.
- Current and upcoming consultations with industry on next steps include; front of pack labelling, alcohol calorie labelling, and marketing of infant foods.

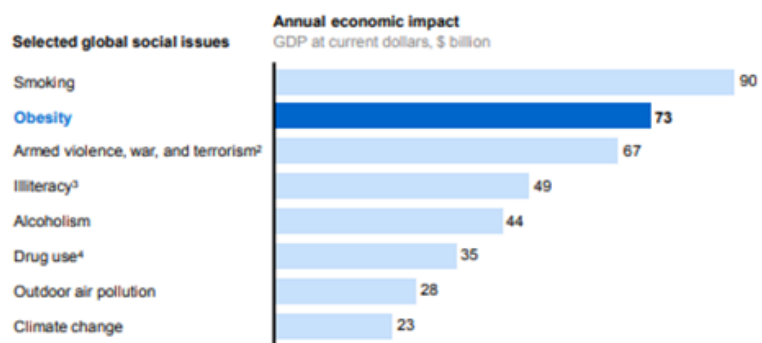
Presentation Spotlight

The costs of obesity in the UK are high, and rising:

- Estimated cost to employers is £4.6 billion per year.
- In 2014, there were 16 million sickness days attributed to obesity.
- Overweight and obesity related conditions across the UK are costing the NHS £6.1 billion each year, a figure which is projected to reach £9.7 billion by 2050.

Obesity is the second-largest human-generated impact on the United Kingdom

Selected social issues, United Kingdom, 2012¹



Jenny's slides are available to WIG members as a pdf [here](#).

Our members' questions

WIG members from across the sectors participated in the session, and posed some challenging questions.

Key issues raised included:

- The importance of early intervention and education to empower and support children, parents and caregivers in making healthy choices.
- The normalisation of unhealthy weights in the UK population, and sensitivities around having difficult conversations with individuals about weight in health and social care settings.
- Ongoing plans for stakeholder and business engagement.

WIG members can listen to Jenny's presentation [here](#)
To see our full programme of webinars, visit www.wig.co.uk