

Statement on behalf of Scottish Directors of Public Health

27 October 2017

A Healthier Future – Action and Ambitions on Diet, Activity and Healthy Weight Consultation Document

The Scottish Directors of Public Health welcome the consultation on Scotland’s new plan to improve diet, activity and healthy weight.

Obesity is one of the greatest public health challenges we have to tackle in Scotland.

Two in every three adults in Scotland are overweight and nearly one in three are obese.¹ One in ten children in Scotland are *already* at risk of obesity at the time they start primary school,² so publication of this new plan is timely.

Halting this epidemic means that widespread action is needed to tackle obesity and to prevent the health inequalities it creates across Scotland. We are encouraged that this is recognised as requiring action across a wide range of people and organisations in the public, private and independent sectors, and in our communities. Preventing overweight and obesity truly is everyone's business.

We welcome the commitment to services for people who have weight problems. We also welcome the recognition of the costs to the health and care services that overweight and its consequent diseases pose to the modern, sustainable health and care system described in Realistic Medicine.³

The Scottish Directors of Public Health have already committed themselves to provide the necessary leadership across Scotland and have agreed to support the consultation process by convening engagement events with key stakeholders. This will ensure that the full range of public health and other professionals - alongside communities themselves – help to achieve lasting, transformational change.

Dr Drew Walker, Director of Public Health in Tayside and Scottish Directors of Public Health Lead on Obesity, said:

“The Scottish Government’s consultation sets out a bold challenge to everyone in Scotland – individuals, communities, and organisations – to help transform our relationship with food and activity and prevent the health inequalities which obesity creates. The Scottish Directors of Public Health share this ambition and are committed to making it happen.”

Sources:

- 1 Scottish Health Survey (2017). Available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Health/scottish-health-survey>
- 2 Obesity: children’s data (2017). Available at: <http://www.scotpho.org.uk/clinical-risk-factors/obesity/data/children/>
- 3 Scottish Government (2015). Realistic Medicine: CMO’s Annual Report for 2014/15. Available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00492520.pdf>