

FROM OUR HOMES TO OUR HIGH STREETS: RECIPE FOR A HEALTHIER GENERATION

We all want to live in a society where every kid has opportunities to be healthy, no matter where they live. It seems pretty simple, right?

But, right now, if you're a kid living in a deprived area in England, you're more than twice as likely to have obesity. This is a tale of two postcodes – and the gap between kids' health in our richest and poorest areas is growing. That doesn't feel fair to me. Why should a kid's postcode shape their health?

Families are up against it. Right now, our high streets, schools, hospitals and supermarket shelves are bursting with unhealthy options. Think about it – if you're walking down a street that's flooded with fast food outlets, all of which have special 'afterschool offers' on price promotions, that street is shaping what you buy. If you're choosing what to buy your family from a cereal aisle where the products are overflowing with hidden sugars positioned right at kids' eye level, that supermarket is shaping what you eat. So, how can we redesign these places to close the floodgates and put kids' health at their heart?

Over the past 20 years there's been loads of amazing change in public health, from the smoking ban to action on air pollution. More recently, the the Soft Drinks Industry Levy has taken a whopping 45m kilograms of sugar off our shelves every single year, with the money going into programmes that support schools to become healthier places. Let's use this momentum to propel a redesign of our food system so we can reach our 2030 goal. We want the next generation to have opportunities to grow up being happy and healthy, and nutritious food is the backbone of that, right?

So here it is – my recipe for changing schools, hospitals, homes and high streets to give kids the chance to grow up with good health, no matter where they live.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

SCHOOLS

LET'S MAKE SURE KIDS LEAVE SCHOOL HEALTHY,
AND WITH THE LIFE SKILLS THEY NEED FOR A
HAPPY, PRODUCTIVE FUTURE.



THIS IS HOW WE COULD DO IT:

- 1 Rename 'Free School Meals' the 'School Meals Allowance'**

Let's rename this to combat stigma. These meals aren't 'free'; they're paid for. Kids think that the fairest way to name this policy is The School Meals Allowance.
- 2 Put the money from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy straight into a health premium**

In addition to the PE & Sports Premium, we should put half of the money raised by the levy into a health premium that can be used by schools to improve the diet of their pupils (through things like installing kitchens and drinking fountains, buying equipment to deliver food education and breakfast clubs). To be eligible to receive this money, schools would have to show they're meeting the School Food Standards – at the moment there's no way for parents to know whether schools are meeting this government requirement.
- 3 Review the £2.30 daily meal allowance for 'Free School Meals'**

The cost of fresh fruit and vegetables rose by 20% in 2018. £2.30 is no longer enough – the Free School Meal allowance hasn't even gone up with inflation. It has been calculated that it should rise to £2.74 per meal.
- 4 Update the School Food Standards to reflect the latest nutritional guidance, and apply to all schools**

School Food Standards must reflect scientific recommendations, outlined in Chapter 2 of the UK government's Action Plan¹. It would make sense to align the standards with Scotland, where all meals will have to include two portions of veg and fruit.
- 5 Inspire excellence through an annual Healthy School Awards**

An awards scheme is a brilliant way to encourage schools to promote health. For example, the Healthy Schools London awards programme saw an increase in opportunities for children to be active, and improved access to healthy packed lunches and snacks.
- 6 End holiday hunger**

Holiday hunger is not about healthy meals; it's about kids not having anything to eat. The 2017 report on UK holiday hunger found that an estimated 3 million children were at risk of going hungry during the summer holidays without access to a school meal. The government should make funds available to ensure that no child in the UK goes hungry.

We've got more to say on this – keep reading!



1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sacn-carbohydrates-and-health-report>

7 Make every school a Daily Mile school

The NHS says 60 minutes of exercise can improve children's general health, bones and muscles, and raise levels of self-esteem. But only one in five children currently manage this. We want the government to promote a national ambition for every primary school to adopt an active mile initiative as a fun, easy way to improve wellbeing and focus in class. Let's do it!

8 Restrict the sale of energy drinks to under-16s

This is now government policy – we just need to make sure it's in legislation, not just on paper! 97% of teachers backed restrictions on the sale of these drinks², describing the negative impact they have on pupils' behaviour and academic performance. The restrictions should apply to any drink that contains 150mg of caffeine per litre (except coffee and tea, which are not packed with the same high levels of sugar, or available for as little as 25p).

9 Extend the Soft Drinks Industry Levy to include milky drinks, and put the funds raised into school health initiatives

The Soft Drinks Industry Levy has removed a whopping 45m kilograms of sugar each year from the industry since 2016. One in four people in the lowest socio-economic groups, and one in five of higher-income groups, say the drinks levy has encouraged them to swap to lower-sugar options.³ Coca-Cola now advertises more of its sugar-free products, and sales have increased dramatically!⁴

10 Make food and nutrition standards for early years settings mandatory

More than one in five children have an unhealthy weight when they start primary school – we need proper food and nutrition standards to help kids right from the start, and give staff the tools to deliver the best options for their health.

2. https://www.sustainweb.org/news/nov18_energydrinks/

3. **The Grocer (2019)** "Soft drinks vs CO2, the sugar tax and the plastic backlash: bumper category report 2019" available at: <https://www.thegrocer.co.uk/category-reports/soft-drinks-vs-co2-the-sugar-tax-and-the-plastic-backlash-bumper-category-report-2019/592773.article>

4. **Brown, R. (2019)** "Reformulated: the soft drinks that have slashed sugar and boosted sales", available at: <https://www.thegrocer.co.uk/soft-drinks/reformulated-the-soft-drinks-that-have-slashed-sugar-and-boosted-sales-/592676.article>

Addy, R. (2019) "Soft drinks levy does industry a favour", Food Manufacture, available at: <https://www.foodmanufacture.co.uk/Article/2019/04/15/Soft-drinks-levy-does-industry-a-favour>

HOSPITALS

LET'S MAKE SURE FOOD IN HOSPITALS IS DELICIOUS AND NOURISHING, AND THAT ALL DOCTORS HAVE PROPER TRAINING IN DIET-RELATED ILLNESS.

THIS IS HOW WE COULD DO IT:

1 **Make sure the updated Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services reflect the latest scientific recommendations**

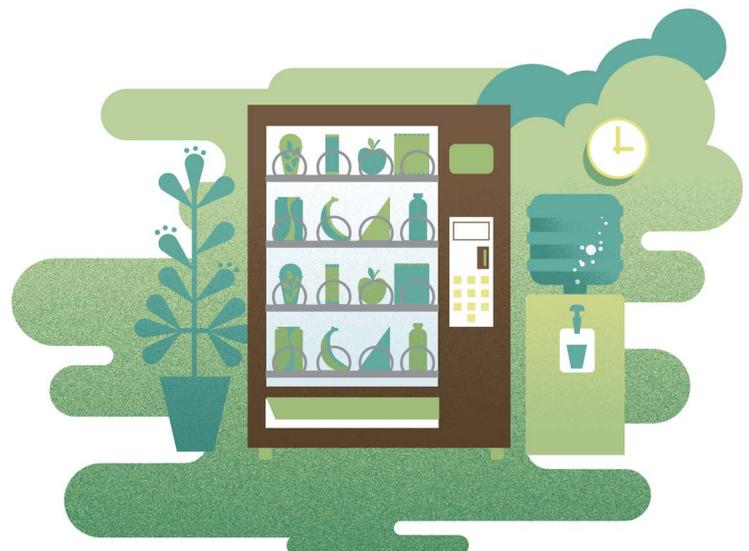
Public places should set the standard for kids' health. There should be two portions of veg in all hospital meals, and mandatory standards to decrease the amount of sugar, and increase fibre. We should make the standards as efficient as possible, by connecting producers and fruit & vegetable growers within the supply chain. We look forward to [the government's review of hospital food](#) with Prue Leith and seeing where it goes.

2 **Give medical students the nutrition training they want and need**

[Current medical students](#) have told us that they get just eight hours of nutrition education across a five- or six-year degree. Let's ensure they have the nutritional knowledge they need to support patients; access to nutrition experts when they need to refer on, and are equipped to identify when and how to talk about weight and dietary habits appropriately.

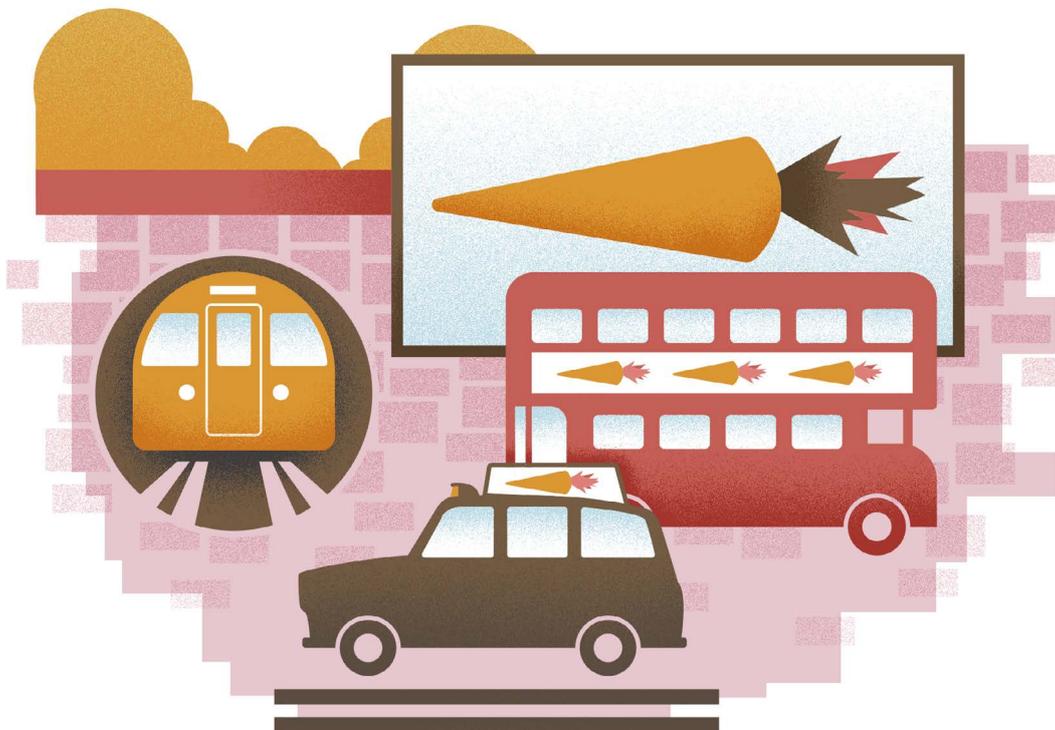
3 **Deliver truly sustainable funding for public health**

Local authorities have some great ideas for how to make their communities healthier, but they need the funding to go with it. This will help them make changes to how the local environment is shaped, through licensing, planning and advertising.



HIGH STREETS

LET'S MAKE SURE SHOPS, RESTAURANTS
AND RETAILERS STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN
PROFITS AND KIDS' HEALTH - IN THEIR
MARKETING AND THEIR PRODUCTS.



THIS IS HOW WE COULD DO IT:

- 1 Introduce clear, consistent and mandatory labelling on food and drink**

Diabetes UK found that nine in 10 people agree that traffic-light nutrition labelling helps us make informed decisions about the food we buy. Why don't we have world-leading nutritional information on every product, to help and empower parents and kids alike?
- 2 Ensure kids have access to drinking water in public places as well as schools**

78% of people want greater availability of free tap water in public spaces. How about more appealing water fountains on our high streets, in restaurants, public buildings and adopting the [London Child Obesity Taskforce's](#) interesting idea about 'water-only schools'?
- 3 Make sure all high-street kids' meals include two portions of vegetables**

The Food Foundation's [Peas Please](#) initiative is working with [Out to Lunch](#) to get two portions of veg into every kids' meal on the high street. This seems like a pretty good idea to us!
- 4 Extend the calorie-reduction programme and set targets in a wider range of products**

Nine in 10 people support the government working with the food industry, from manufacturers to supermarkets, to make everyday foods and drinks healthier. The government has set a target for a 20% calorie reduction in certain products by 2020. If results show that progress is too slow, we should consider stronger incentives.
- 5 Include calorie labels on menus for chains and franchises with five or more locations**

4,000 new takeaways have sprung up in the past three years, and many kids use these spaces to socialise⁵. However, at the moment, many of these places have no information about what's in their products. Three in four British adults agree that cafés and restaurants should display calorie information on their menus, and evidence suggests that calorie labelling can help reduce the number of calories that people consume.⁶
- 6 Use the power of cartoon characters for good, to promote healthy food and drink**

Manufacturers can help make 'pester power' a force for good, by only using licensed characters to promote products that aren't high in saturated fat, sugar or salt. Action on Sugar and Action on Salt found that half of the 526 products featuring animated characters on their packets were so unhealthy they would not be allowed to be advertised during children's TV!⁷

We've got more to say
on this – keep reading!



5. <https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/jul/25/large-rise-takeaway-shops-highlights-dominance-fast-food-deprived-areas-england>

6. https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about_us/news/diabetes-uk-calls-on-government-to-act-on-calorie-labelling-plans

7. <https://www.foodnavigator.com/Article/2019/06/04/Obesity-campaigners-demand-ban-of-cartoon-characters-on-food-and-drink-packets>

- 7** **Depending on what happens after Brexit, we may have the powers to change food and agricultural subsidies to support the availability and accessibility of healthy foods on our high streets**
- The government is currently consulting on a [National Food Strategy](#) that will look at the whole food system, from farm to fork. Let's use these subsidies for good to support the production and consumption of healthy food.
- 8** **Use price promotions and product positioning in store to put healthier products in the spotlight**
- How can we put healthier products centre stage? *The Sun* conducted an investigation where it put a GoPro on seven-year-old Annie to see how supermarkets "stack the odds against parents" by putting appealing products at kids' eye level and have "tempted kids with sweets and junk food at checkouts for years".⁸ And it's not just about location: unhealthy promotions are in the spotlight. Where are all the price promotions on healthy food?
- 9** **Give local authorities the power to take more action against junk food marketing outdoors**
- Currently, kids and their parents are walking past junk food ads on telephone boxes next to parks, on A-boards near nurseries, and on the sides of buses. In fact, applications for telephone boxes, which companies use as advert space, have risen 900%! Local authorities need greater powers to approve or block outdoor advertising campaigns. They also need the power to impose fines and other penalties immediately in the event of a breach.
- 10** **Put child health at the heart of every trade deal**
- We need to make sure we put child health at the centre of any trade deal. There is evidence, for example, that countries who have made a trade deal with the US have seen a subsequent rise in obesity rates. A study published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* shows that the 1989 Canada–US Free Trade Agreement (CUSFTA) could have led people to consume an extra 170 calories per day in Canada¹⁰.
- 11** **Set up a watchdog on food and drink aimed at infants and young children, to oversee composition, safety and marketing**
- The foods that babies and young kids eat can influence what they accept later in life. That's why the products available should all be made and marketed responsibly, and meet the national recommendations. How can it be OK for these products, which are intended for young kids that are still developing, to be higher in free sugars than homemade foods?

8. <https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/jul/25/large-rise-takeaway-shops-highlights-dominance-fast-food-deprived-areas-england>

9. https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about_us/news/diabetes-uk-calls-on-government-to-act-on-calorie-labelling-plans

10. <https://www.foodnavigator.com/Article/2019/06/04/Obesity-campaigners-demand-ban-of-cartoon-characters-on-food-and-drink-packets>

HOMES

LET'S HELP FAMILIES CREATE HAPPY,
HEALTHY HOMES.

THIS IS HOW WE COULD DO IT:

1 **Bring in a 9pm watershed for all ads for products that are high in fat, sugar and salt, on TV and online**

Last year kids saw 2.6bn TV ads for products that are high in unhealthy fat, sugar and salt (HFSS). And right now, just 1.2% of advertising is for fruit and vegetables. How can we rebalance this and put healthier products centre stage? Cancer Research UK found that most brands that advertise a HFSS product on TV between 6pm and 9pm had a healthier alternative they could promote instead. We're waiting for the government's decision on this. See our [full consultation response](#) for more.

2 **Prevent companies from sponsoring sports or events with a HFSS product**

Britain is hosting several high-profile events in the next few years that people around the world will watch on TV. Wouldn't it be amazing if Britain uses the global spotlight to lead the way and make these events junk-free?

3 **Make Healthy Start vouchers more valuable**

Healthy Start vouchers help pregnant women and young families on benefits afford essential foods at a critical time. But the value of the voucher has been the same for at least 10 years, while the price of the weekly shop has increased. So let's raise the voucher value from £3.10 to £4.50 or £5. It also needs to be easier for parents to register for the vouchers.

4 **Reduce hidden sugars from baby food**

Did you know that sugar makes up almost half the content of fruit- and vegetable-based snacks for babies and infants? And some baby foods contain a lot of added sugars – even when they are labelled as savoury meals, [Public Health England recently found](#).

We need a specific government sugar-reduction programme for products aimed at babies and young children.



THANK YOU

