

Dear Prime Minister,

Like others in the health and environmental movements we are deeply concerned by the marketing of unhealthy foods, driving increased purchase and consumption of high fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) foods, which are damaging our health and that of our planet.

Evidence long shows that food consumption is largely automatic: habit-based behaviour, strongly driven by cues in our environment. In the [policy paper](#) attached, we highlight how current food marketing is damaging the nation's health and that of the planet. Critically we highlight why and how a blanket ban on unhealthy food and drink can be one of the biggest levers for changing the way we eat for the good and how we can achieve this now.

We warmly welcome your commitment, as Prime Minister, to deliver on the promises of your manifesto and look forward to seeing the government deliver on “the most ambitious environmental programme on Earth”. We also welcome your commitment, as Prime Minister, within the government food strategy “to support a food system that offers access to healthy and sustainable food for all”.

What we eat directly impacts our health and our planet, both of which are amongst the greatest crisis of our time. We ask you to urgently bring in a blanket ban on unhealthy food and drink marketing to bring a halt to the damaging junk food cycle that we are all in.

We are ready and willing to support your government in whatever way we can to help bring in the restrictions, which we firmly believe is one of the biggest available levers for changing the way we eat for human and planetary health. It is also one that can continue to support the economy by enabling the commercial sector to pivot successfully within a level playing field where everyone can benefit, whilst also catalysing a new food revolution across the globe. Some of us signing this, work within the food and drink industry and we believe that both timing and possibility are now aligned.

This should not be dismissed as inconceivable: we know from experience in London, the Netherlands, Brazil and the US that bans on unhealthy food advertising and promotions of fresh produce have significant benefits. The ‘Eat them to defeat them’ campaign led by campaign groups Food Foundation and Veg Power to encourage children to eat more vegetables was supported by £3m in donations and

led to an increase in fresh produce sales of £92 million. Marketing is the most sophisticated behaviour change tactic and we are calling on you to help make it a force for good. A blanket nationwide ban on unhealthy marketing could act as a catalyst for the much needed food revolution for both human and planetary health.

It is only by working together that we prevent ill health, save our planet and protect economies. We know that all political parties agree on the outcome that we are aiming for – ensuring that we all have access to healthy, sustainable food for human and planetary health. We also know that food manufacturers and retailers wish to deliver on health and sustainability, but lack a level playing field. Some are openly expressing this and many are making commitments to the sales of healthy food. We strongly feel that now is the right moment for you to step back and consider a total ban on unhealthy food marketing. The signatories to this letter urge the government to do so.

This would allow the government to demonstrate its commitment to tackling preventable ill health as well as environmental disaster. It would allow the government to provide strong national and international leadership on healthy and sustainable food and drink.

At a time when we are reminded that preventable non communicable diseases are strangling the NHS (*The annual cost to the NHS of obesity-related conditions alone is estimated to reach £9.7 billion by 2050*) and where the avoidance of climate disaster cannot be achieved without changing the way we eat, we know more than ever the critical importance of changing what we eat and we hope you will choose to utilise this critical lever to help achieve significant change.

We stand ready to provide our full support to helping you achieve this.

If you would like to support a blanket ban on unhealthy food marketing, we urge you to sign our open letter to the Prime Minister [here](#).