



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

27th May 2021

New Comment,

RE: OBESITY STRATEGY.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns regarding the Government's *Obesity Strategy*. I have read your comments on this with great interest.

I fully support the Government's *Obesity Strategy*, which seeks to tackle head on one of the greatest long-term health challenges this country faces. The proposals will empower people to make the healthier choices they want to make, as well as giving the full support of the NHS to people who are overweight and want to lose weight. This is in line with the broader aim to shift healthcare to focus more on public health and prevention, including ongoing work on the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme. Measures in the strategy include restrictions on promotional deals and advertising, a new 'Better Health' campaign led by Public Health England and displaying calories on menus to help people make healthier choices when eating out.

The *NHS Long Term Plan (LTP)* seeks to tackle the problem of obesity and contains new measures to improve wellbeing, underpinned by a focus on prevention rather than cure. Obesity and poor diet are linked with type two diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and increased risk of respiratory, musculoskeletal and liver diseases. As a result, the NHS has committed to double the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme over the next five years. In addition, nutrition training, and an understanding of what is involved in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight, will have a much greater place in training for medical professionals, empowering doctors to help patients manage their diet and weight.

The LTP will also help more than 2.5 million people to benefit from social prescribing, a personal health budget, and new support for managing their own health in partnership with patients' groups and the voluntary sector. This is part of a wider move to increase support for people to manage their own health, through what the King's Fund has called a "*shared responsibility for health*."

The Government has already taken steps to ban unhealthy food adverts on television and online before 9pm, to reduce the likelihood of children seeing them; something I will be following closely. Furthermore, it was announced in the Queen's Speech that the *Health & Care Bill* will introduce a ban on online adverts for unhealthy foods at all times of the day. Analysis by Cancer Research UK has shown that a significant proportion of food adverts are for products high in fat, sugar and salt, with 60 percent of all food adverts shown on ITV1, Channel 4, Channel 5 and Sky1 shown during the 6pm to 9pm slot - the time slot where children's viewing peaks.



I am pleased that legislation to introduce mandatory calorie labelling for restaurants, cafes, and takeaways with more than 250 employees across England will be brought forward as a way to ensure families know how much they and their children are eating when out. I am very much in support of new measures to improve understanding about the importance of a balanced, healthy diet, and will continue to follow this matter closely.

I know that studies have already shown that being obese can have a significant impact on the severity of Coronavirus symptoms, with people with a BMI of over thirty reported to have a 37 percent greater risk of dying than those who are not obese. I believe that the increased risk of COVID-19 to people living with obesity will serve as a wake up call for many to lose weight, get active, and to eat better and, with this in mind, I really welcome the Government's renewed focus on this issue at this time as we move towards a healthier future.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

With best wishes,
Tom

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**