

Draft letter from HWB and HIB to the Secretary of State for Health

Dear Mr Hancock

The Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board and its sub-partnership, the Health Improvement Board, would like to raise the issues of alcohol pricing and fast food advertising. We perceive that these issues are adversely affecting the health of our population and we would like to ask for your consideration of what can be done at national policy level to address this.

In Oxfordshire we have a systematic approach to reviewing population health through our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. This has highlighted a range of priority issues which we are addressing through our Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. These priorities include alcohol related ill-health and increasing numbers of overweight and obese adults in the population. These topics have also been a subject of discussion at our Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee recently. We realise these are familiar national issues and welcome your recent announcements on the importance of prevention for improved population health.

However, in addition to preparation for the Green Paper, we would specifically like to ask you to consider further national policy options for alcohol harm reduction, including minimum unit pricing. This is likely to have an impact on the most complex and harmful drinkers in our population and would be a welcome national intervention to complement our well-regarded local outreach and treatment services.

In addition, we would welcome a national approach to curtailing advertising and promotion of “unhealthy” foods (containing high levels of fat and/or sugar, including many fast foods). National measures to introduce an advertising ban through a range of media before 9pm would be a good development. The impact of advertising on children and families is well documented and a policy change would give a boost to our local efforts to establish a Whole System Approach to obesity.

I hope you will consider these suggestions for population health improvement.

Yours sincerely

Ian Hudspeth, Chairman, Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board and Leader of Oxfordshire County Council.

Kiren Collison, Vice Chairman, Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board and Clinical Chair, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Cllr Andrew McHugh, Chairman, Health Improvement Board and Cherwell District Council Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing.