



Howarth  
Food  
Safety

## **UK Obesity Plan – How will it impact your products?**

### **Current Status:**

Nearly a third of children aged between 2-15 yrs. old are overweight or obese, with younger generations becoming obese at an earlier age and staying obese for longer.

The government will be launching a **sugar reduction program aimed at those foods which children eat most**. Industry will be challenged to reduce sugar intakes across a broad range of categories 20% by 2020 with a 5% reduction in the first year.

### **Product Categories initially impacted:**

The program will initially focus on the top categories contributing to childrens sugar intake: - soft drinks, dairy sector, yogurts, puddings, ice-cream, breakfast cereals, biscuits, cakes, confectionary, morning goods (e.g. pastries), and sweet spreads

### **Which products will be affected by a levy?**

Soft drinks companies pay a charge for drinks with added sugar, and total sugar content of five grams or more per 100 millilitres. That is about 5% sugar content. There is a higher charge for the drinks that contain eight grams or more per 100 millilitres, or about 8% sugar content. This means that **pure fruit juices won't be taxed, because they don't contain added sugar. Neither will drinks that have high milk content**, because they contain calcium and other nutrients that are vital for a healthy diet.

### **Why sugary drinks?**

There are nine teaspoons of sugar in a 330ml can of cola, instantly taking children above their recommended maximum for the day. **A five year old should have no more than 19g of sugar in a day**, but a typical can of cola can have 35g.

### **How does the current colour coding on labels work for "Total sugars"?**

**RED: High: more than 22.5g of total sugars per 100g**

**YELLOW: Above 5g below 22.5g of total sugars per 100g**

**GREEN: Low: 5g of total sugars or less per 100g**

Total sugars include naturally occurring sugars as well as natural sugars. Free sugars do not include those sugars naturally present in milk.

### **New rules/regulations/guidelines for the future:**

- HM Treasury are consulting on the technical detail of the **soft drinks industry levy aimed at importers and produces**, and will legislate in the Finance Bill 2017 with implementation from April 2018.
- **Clearer food labelling** which might include clearer visual labelling, such as teaspoons of sugar, to show consumers about the sugar content in packaged food and drink.
- Pre-packaged milk drinks containing **more than 75% milk outside of the levy scope**
- Drinks with **less than 75% milk with more than 5g/100ml sugar will be subject to the levy**
- Sugar reduction may be achieved by reducing sugar in recipes, adjusting portion sizes and sugar alternatives.

### **Further reading:**

- Checkout the Sugar Smart app.
- Current industry pledges under the Public Health Responsibility Deal  
<https://responsibilitydeal.dh.gov.uk/pledges/>

- Full government report on childhood obesity  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/546588/Childhood\\_obesity\\_2016\\_2\\_acc.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/546588/Childhood_obesity_2016_2_acc.pdf)
- Government consultation on the soft drinks levy  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/546286/Soft\\_Drinks\\_Industry\\_Levy-consultation.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/546286/Soft_Drinks_Industry_Levy-consultation.pdf)