

Position statement Government "Healthy Weight: Healthy Lives" Strategy

MRC Human Nutrition Research welcome this new government strategy to support more people to achieve a 'Healthy Weight' as part of a 'Healthy Life'. We are pleased to see the adoption of the detailed scientific analysis prepared by the Foresight team on the causes of obesity and potential solutions as the background to this strategy document.

We are encouraged to see initiatives to improve nutrition across the lifecycle, and the recognition that change requires action by government, the food industry and other stakeholders as well as informed consumer choice. The additional resources to encourage breastfeeding are particularly welcome and the focus on healthy weaning practices, as part of the promotion of healthy choices during the early years is long overdue. We are pleased to see a continued investment in schools to consolidate the important work already started.

The Healthy Food Code is an important step in establishing a new partnership with industry around agreed public health goals. We look forward to working with industry to support and develop their efforts in this area. While each of the individual initiatives outlined in the strategy will not tackle obesity in isolation, as a collective their impact could be substantial.

Overall the strategy is ambitious and robust, but a strategy alone will not solve the problem of obesity. We are pleased to note the plan to publish annual progress reports. In addition it must be recognised that the evidence base is neither complete or perfect and ongoing research and evaluation is critical to future progress. It is essential that the policy interventions are implemented, evaluated and followed up in a cycle of continuous improvement with research closely linked to public health priorities.