

13 March 2017

Brian Whittle MSP
South Scotland Region
The Scottish Parliament

Dear Brian,

Scottish Conservative 'Healthy Lifestyle Strategy: Setting out a long term alternative strategy for Health, Wellbeing and Sport'

My thoughts are that this strategy is very worthy and the focus on early life is very sensible since we know that lifelong health outcomes are predominantly determined in the preschool years.

My suggestions are:

- **Intervention could be made in nurseries**
- **There could be some measureable targets set (e.g. 50% of mothers breastfeeding (exclusive breast fed) after 6-8 weeks by 2020, reducing the proportion of children who are overweight or obese to 23% by 2020).**

The Scottish Government should:

- **Raise awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding, particularly in areas where rates are low by increasing the visibility of national public health campaigns that promote good nutrition and exercise before and during pregnancy.**
- **Develop targets to improve rates of mothers exclusively breastfeeding after six to eight weeks. These should be regularly monitored to assess improvements.**
- **Ensure neonatal services recruit staff or train existing staff to deliver specialist breastfeeding advice and support.**
- **Introduce a statutory requirement for all schools to deliver comprehensive, evidence based, sex and relationships education across all primary and secondary schools.**
- **Ensure that compulsory evidence based health and wellbeing programmes are embedded in all primary and secondary schools which foster social and emotional health and wellbeing, through building resilience, and specifically tackling issues around social inclusion, bullying, drug and alcohol use and mental health. The Scottish Government should extend bans on smoking in public places to school grounds and all sports fields and playgrounds.**
- **Continue to implement actions set out in *Creating a tobacco-free generation: a tobacco control strategy for Scotland* focussing on tobacco control plans and implementing measures to reduce smoking uptake in children.**
- **Set challenging targets to reduce the proportion of children who are overweight or obese.**
- **Undertake an audit of local authority licensing and catering arrangements with the intention of developing formal recommendations on reducing the proximity of fast food outlets to schools, colleges, leisure centres and other places where children gather.**
- **Encourage physical activity for all children and young people and support parents and families to adopt healthy lifestyles by improving social and physical environments. Local authorities should ensure planning decisions include a public health impact assessment and should introduce 20 mph speed limits in built up areas to create safe places for children to walk, cycle and play.**

The Scottish Government and NHS Scotland through Workstream 1 of the *Early Year Collaborative* and through the *Scottish Patient Safety Programme*:

- **Should continue to work towards achieving the aims set out to reduce the avoidable harm associated with smoking during pregnancy.**

NHS Scotland should:

- **Expand its national programme to measure children after birth, before school and in adolescence.**

NHS Scotland and professional bodies:

- **Should ensure that all health care professionals can make every contact count by having that difficult conversation with their patients (whatever their age) who are overweight.**
- **There could be consultation with children, young people and parents to determine what they want and what is feasible.**

Many thanks and best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Steve Turner, RCPCH Officer for Scotland