

## SUPERMARKETS CAN DRIVE IMPROVEMENT IN NATION'S HEALTH

### News from The All-Party Parliamentary Group on A Fit and Healthy Childhood

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on A Fit and Healthy Childhood is championing a new role for the supermarket in the fight to tackle obesity.

Introducing their 15<sup>th</sup> Report, 'Healthy Families: The Present and Future Role of the Supermarket,' APPG Chair Steve McCabe said:

"Supermarkets are often seen as the pantomime villain in a national battle against obesity and associated serious health conditions like Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers..

*"The charge list against supermarkets includes nudging shoppers into unhealthy purchases to get cash tills ringing, perpetuating an obesogenic environment at odds with Government healthy eating guidelines and fuelling 'pester power' at the expense of cash-strapped families.*

*"We show that supermarkets can take a leading role in helping to solve the obesity epidemic. They have a unique place in the hearts of UK families and it's time for them to step up in the 21<sup>st</sup> century cause of safeguarding the health of the population and the planet."*

The Report was sponsored by 'Slimming World' and Jenny Caven, Director of External Affairs said:

*"We welcome this Report; in particular, the examples showing that some supermarkets are actively helping people to make healthy food and drink an accessible choice. We welcome all initiatives that promote and support healthier choices.*

*"However, the Report doesn't flinch from saying that supermarkets must raise their game.*

*"In 2019 research, the Health on the Shelf report published by the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) and Slimming World, exposed the marketing tactics used to drive sales of unhealthy products and revealed that supermarket layout, pricing strategies and shopping environment is helping to fuel the obesity epidemic.*

*"Our report also revealed that over one third (36%) of shoppers reported that they impulse purchase unhealthy products because they are on special offer, and one in five say supermarkets cause them to go off track when attempting to lose weight. This new APPG Report shows that this need not be the end of the story and that better and healthier trading could be both beneficial for our national health and profitable in the long term."*

Key recommendations of the APPG's Report include:

- Supermarkets to re-balance promotions away from products that are high in fat, sugar and/or salt (HFSS) to healthier foods so that families experiencing food poverty may enjoy greater access to them
- Price discounts and promotions to be offered on healthy foods such as fruit and vegetables while promotions on HFSS food should be restricted
- Use of supermarket logos/leaflets to promote healthy eating
- Supermarkets to control the criteria for child eye-level in the placing of products
- Offer promotions on healthier, culturally-appropriate products to engage people from ethnic minority groups
- Healthy, affordable snacks that appeal to low income consumers should be represented either by stocking 'own brand' products or offering support to smaller businesses who already provide healthier snacks and are looking to break into this market.

Lead Author, Helen Clark emphasised the role of government:

*"Supermarkets should certainly drive healthier consumption and so should Government. The Government must work with leading supermarkets to provide advice in-store on how to consume a diet that is consistent with the Eatwell Guide in a low-income environment. Policy makers should also provide more information via health and education campaigns about the psychology of shopping and the importance to the family of meal planning.*

*"However, a significant proportion of HFSS food and drink is bought on temporary price reduction and any mechanism to reduce the purchase of unhealthy food and drink on this type of offer has potential for significant gains in tackling obesity. The Government should consider the application of legislative controls (with built-in review process) on price and multi-buy promotions.*

*"It is the Government's duty to ensure that all households can thrive as well as survive and policies must ultimately be directed to making healthy food less expensive than unhealthy food for the benefit of all families – and supermarket shoppers - in the UK."*

ENDS

For further information contact:

Helen Clark, Lead Author: 07504460315

Sarah Clothier, Slimming World, Public Affairs: 07740202728

