

Open Letter to NHS Leaders and the UK Government, May 28th 2020

We, NHS doctors and staff, are writing to urge NHS leaders and the Government to pass bold post-COVID-19 legislation to allow for rapid, nationwide changes to the obesogenic and unsustainable food environment in which we currently live. This environment has added to the UK's COVID-19 pandemic death toll.

As healthcare professionals we are concerned that business will restart as usual after the pandemic. It is not acceptable that the NHS is collapsing under the burden of chronic diseases, the majority of which could be prevented and treated by addressing diet and lifestyle factors. We are willing to take on the task of shifting the NHS focus from a reactive healthcare system to one that promotes health and prevents chronic illness. However, this action needs to be fully embraced by NHS leaders and the Government, who should now place the nation's long term health at the centre of their policy.

The proposed changes include:

1. Further taxation and cessation of subsidies for junk food/fast foods/soft drinks producers as well as industrial animal farming.
2. Ban on junk food advertising and any market manipulations which aim to increase consumption of unhealthy, processed foods or drinks.
3. Subsidies to support the UK population in adopting a predominantly whole food plant based diet for both human and planetary health.
4. Promotion of a plant-based food system through the adoption of Conservation Agriculture (No-Till) systems to lower carbon emissions and reduce the risk of entering a 'post-antibiotic era'.
5. Protection of the oceans by discouraging over-fishing and reducing the reliance on fish consumption, finding alternate sources of long-chain omega-3 fats.
6. Showcase healthy, sustainable eating through public sector catering in schools, hospitals and prisons.

Background:

Three in four of the world's new or emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic and are mainly transmitted through wildlife trade and factory farming.

The provision for the increasing demand for cheap meat is hugely contributing to environmental degradation and the rise of antibiotic resistance.

90% of global wild fish stocks have been over-fished or fished at capacity. Farmed fish are contaminated with antibiotics and chemicals that pose a risk to human health.

A diet high in processed foods and animal products is driving the epidemic of chronic disease and increasing the risk of dying from COVID-19. This is of particular concern for communities of lower socio-economic means and is disproportionately affecting minority ethnic communities.

NHS leaders and the Government need to act in the interests of the people and the planet rather than the interests of the corporate sector, who have contributed to the current climate and healthcare crisis through aggressive lobbying and marketing techniques.

Signatories

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Dr	Anant Shah	Foundation doctor
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Dr	Mavis Mayers	Consultant Cellular Pathologist
Dr	Kush	Trust Grade Anaesthetics
Dr	Joseph Toms	Junior doctor
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Dr	Hena Arif	Neurologist
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Dr	Gemma Newman	General Practitioner
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Miss	Hina Mahmood	Pharmacist
Miss	Lyne	Staff nurse
Miss	Mariana ferreira da Silva e Sousa	Physiotherapist
Miss	Rachel Page	Registered Nurse
Miss	Lucy Kendrick	Advanced specialist dietitian
Miss	Jennifer Gray	Senior Paediatric Physiotherapist
Miss	Sophie Hovenden	Pharmacist
Miss	Rachael Andrews	Clinical Scientist
Miss	Katy Homyer	Assistant Pharmacist
Miss	Cecilia Vinchenzo	Medical Student
Miss	Alexandra Inyama	Midwife
Miss.	Danica Moller	Occupational therapist
Mr	Puffs Rivers	Peer support worker
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Ms	Ashley Rhinehart	Registered Nurse
Miss	Linda Heppolette	Midwifery Matron
Mrs	Gita Suchak	Dental Practice Owner

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Ms	Julie Stewart	Primary Care Commissioning Officer
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Ms	Ms Lam Ruth Yan	Pre-registration Pharmacist
Ms	Lucy Russell	Registered Nurse
Ms	Sandra Hood	Diabetes Specialist Dietitian
Mrs	Louisa Aubry	Registered Nurse
Miss	Hannah Manos	Registered Nurse
Mrs	Rachel Claire Bowley	Clinical Nurse Specialist
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Ms	Maria Soares	Midwife
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Mr	Barry Downey	Pharmacist
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Mrs	Cathy McGinn	Registered Nurse
Ms	Sharon Townsend	Registered Nurse
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Mr	Emil Czarnocki	Registered Nurse
Mrs	Anna Gnat	Registered Nurse
Miss	Antonia Dennes	Dental Nurse
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References

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS. A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system. Brussels, 20.5.2020
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