**SUGAR SMART FAQ’s**

**What is SUGAR SMART?**

SUGAR SMART is a campaign by food charity Sustain and Jamie Oliver working with councils, businesses, institutions and other sectors to help reduce overconsumption of sugar in their local areas. SUGAR SMART supports local campaigns to take on a cross-sector approach to transform their food environment and raise public awareness of the impacts of consuming too much sugar.

**Is SUGAR SMART UK the same campaign as Change4Life Sugar Smart campaign?**

Change4Life Sugar Smart is an NHS-funded campaign (www.nhs.uk/sugar-smart) which aims to educate individuals about the dangers of sugar. It includes resources for individuals, including an app which shows the amount of sugar in common snacks and drinks. <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/food-facts/sugar>

SUGAR SMART aims to tackle the over-consumption of sugar strategically, working with businesses and other organisations to alter the obesogenic environment we live in at the local level. Both campaigns have the same overall goal and complement each other, attacking the problem from different fronts.

**What’s the issue?**

In the UK, the NHS spends between £5 and 9 billion a year treating obesity and related complications such as Type 2 Diabetes. Each year there are 8,500 limb amputations because of Type 2 diabetes. 26,000 children are admitted to hospital for multiple tooth extraction under general anaesthetic caused by excessive sugar consumption. 1 in 5 children starts primary schools overweight or obese and by the time they reach secondary school it’s 1 in 3.

**Who is the target audience for SUGAR SMART?**

Everyone, from councils leading on local sugar reduction work, to businesses and institutions taking action, to individuals who want to take action in their communities. SUGAR SMART supports sugar reduction campaigns at a city, county or borough-wide level, which are typically coordinated by the council or a local food partnership organisation with good links across sectors. Local campaigns support schools, sports & leisure, businesses and hospitals among other sectors to make changes in their food provision and run public education activities.

**What kinds of actions/activities are involved?**

There is a menu of options for each sector taking part, allowing the institution or business to choose the action that is best suited to them. Activities include promoting free drinking water, improving vending machine options, adding a voluntary levy on sugary drinks, removing advertising for sugary foods, reformulating recipes, school assemblies on sugar, sugar reduction challenges at schools or in the workplace, and others. Activities not listed in the suggested actions can also be used if they lead to reduction of sugar consumption.

**Can individuals be involved?**

Yes. People are encouraged to sign up to the SUGAR SMART newsletter for news on sugar reduction initiatives, inspiration and calls to action. People can also get involved in their local campaigns as volunteers. Most importantly, everyone is encouraged to speak with their local businesses, leisure centres, and other venues within their communities to take action through the SUGAR SMART campaign. Sign up here: **https://www.sugarsmartuk.org/get\_involved/volunteer/**

**Why should local authorities take part in SUGAR SMART?**

SUGAR SMART can help councils deliver on their local obesity strategy and healthy eating campaigns. With a bank of resources including guidance documents, case studies and public engagement activities, as well as a robust web platform where participating sectors register their actions, local campaigns don’t have to start from scratch. SUGAR SMART is structured to support campaigns of different scope and size, and to fit with local priorities. The SUGAR SMART web platform helps capture actions and activities in your local area, making evaluation easier. SUGAR SMART activities can also be great ways to forge stronger relationships across key sectors in your city or local area, which can benefit your future campaigns and public engagement work.

**Can SUGAR SMART be run alongside other healthy eating/sugar reduction campaigns?**

Yes. While SUGAR SMART has developed education resources such as quizzes, assemblies and workplace challenges, local campaigns are encouraged to use other relevant public education campaigns, including ones developed locally. In fact, these engagement activities can be counted as part of local SUGAR SMART work alongside changes to food environments.

**What support is available from the SUGAR SMART UK team?**

SUGAR SMART is the feature campaign of Sustainable Food Cities until mid-2018. We can support you with relevant resources, advice, and in developing your SUGAR SMART local campaign plan, as well as helping to promote your achievements and news through our website, social media and other campaign communications. We also organise meetings and webinars to coordinate action.

**Obesity and diet related diseases need to be addressed by policy at the national level. Why take a local, cross-sector approach?**

Everyone agrees that encouraging lifelong good food habits is going to take many different interventions and policies at different levels. Public Health England conducted an analysis of the evidence for action on sugar reduction and suggests that a successful programme should include action at many levels including the environment around us that influences our food choices; our food supply; knowledge and training; and local action. Local action, when delivered well, can contribute to changing people’s knowledge and actions and lead to improved diets. SUGAR SMART takes this approach, supporting institutions, venues, businesses and organisations to improve local food environments alongside behaviour change engagement.

**What is happening at a national level?**

The Government has announced a soft drinks industry levy to be introduced from 2018. Public Health England has also announced a target of 20% sugar reduction in 9 food categories by 2020. While there is some momentum on the part of retailers and big brands, the aim of the SUGAR SMART campaign is to support changes at a local level and show that there is a strong public appetite for change across our food system.

**Is SUGAR SMART about banning sugar?**

Absolutely not. It is possible to manage your sugar intake through a healthy, balanced diet, and, like most things, sugar is OK in moderation. However, it is clear that most people in the UK are consuming too much free sugar, and can definitely afford to reduce that intake.

**What’s the big deal with a little treat?**

NHS guidelines state that the maximum consumption of sugar a day should be limited to:

* 5 teaspoons’ worth (19g) for children up to 6 years old
* 6 teaspoons’ worth (24g) for children up to 10 years old
* 7 teaspoons’ worth (30g) for everyone older

A 330ml can of cola or a typical chocolate bar contain over 33g of sugar, thus exceeding the daily limit for any age group. Many people consume sugary drinks and treats on a regular basis in addition to other sugary foods such as cereals, juices and puddings, thus turning a treat into a health burden.

**What about artificially sweetened beverages? Are they safe? Are they the answer?**

Many people, including public health officials, are concerned about the wider impacts of shifting consumption habits from sugary food and drinks to those that are artificially sweetened. There is currently conflicting research on the wider health implications of overconsumption of artificially sweetened products. While artificially sweetened beverages can be useful for those individuals with a high intake of sugary drinks, especially those above a healthy weight, this is only a temporary measure. In the long term, individuals should aim to break their reliance on sweet-tasting foods. For hydration is a much better choice for hydration than fizzy beverages, especially those with caffeine.