

Title:

Forename:

Surname:

Representing:

Organisation (if applicable):

British Heart Foundation

Email:

What additional details do you want to keep confidential?:

If you want part of your response kept confidential, which parts?:

Ofcom may publish a response summary:

Yes

I confirm that I have read the declaration:

Yes

Additional comments:

Question 1: What is your response to this consultation?:

The British Heart Foundation (BHF) is the nation's leading heart charity. We are working to achieve our vision of a world in which people do not die prematurely or suffer from cardiovascular disease. Today around one third of children in the UK are overweight or obese, which is putting their hearts at greater risk of developing cardiovascular disease in the future. We believe that a number of policy interventions need to take place to reduce the rates of childhood obesity. That is why the BHF is therefore calling for a ban, to prevent advertisements for products that are high in saturated fat, salt and sugar from being advertised before the 9pm watershed, to protect children who are viewing these adverts outside of children's programming.

The BHF is therefore disappointed that Ofcom did not include a revision of the current regulations that govern the marketing of food and drink high in saturated fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) to children, within its 2015/16 Annual Plan.

We acknowledge that Ofcom have included the key points from our consultation response in the final document.

It is clear from comments throughout the draft plan that 'protect[ing] consumers from harm' is a priority of Ofcom for the forthcoming year. As expressed within our previous consultation response, the BHF interpret harm as including the damage that regularly eating HFSS food and drinks can have on a child's health. We are therefore greatly disappointed that Ofcom did not include an action to strengthen restrictions on both broadcast and online regulation for HFSS products in the coming year. This will leave children, who are a vulnerable group that should be protected from advertising, open to marketing techniques that research has shown can influence their food preferences, purchase behaviour and consumption.

We welcome the attention given to the increase in children interacting with content online, but this is not associated with any commitment to strengthening online regulation around the marketing of HFSS products.

The Annual Plan also states that Ofcom will 'take account of the interests of citizens and consumers across the whole of the UK.' Earlier this week the British Heart Foundation published new survey data which shows that 39 per cent of parents believe that adverts for HFSS products make it more difficult to help their children eat healthily and 46 per cent of parents are in favour of banning HFSS TV adverts before the 9pm watershed. We therefore urge Ofcom to consider both the harm that the marketing of HFSS products can have on children and the will of parents to see this marketing stopped before 9pm on TV.

For full references please see our policy statement which is available at https://www.bhf.org.uk/~media/files/about-bhf/policies/final_unhealthy_food_marketing_children_sept14as.pdf