

Views sought on Scottish junk food crackdown BBC NEWS

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sugar they are eating

government wants people to reduce the amount of fat, salt and

Plans to crack down on junk food in a bid to cut Scotland's obesity crisis have been put out to consultation.

The proposals could see restrictions placed on "supersized" soft drinks, free refills, multi-buys and junk food displays at checkouts.

The move would cover confectionery, biscuits, crisps, savoury snacks, cakes, pastries, puddings, and soft drinks with added sugar.

Views are being sought on whether to include ice-cream and dairy desserts.

The proposals were first outlined by the Scottish government in July, with the public and the food and retail industries now being invited to give their views in a consultation that will run until 9 January.

Two thirds of adults in Scotland are overweight and 29% are said to be obese - with the figures remaining stubbornly high over the past decade.

The government says it wants to cut excessive consumption of calories, fat, sugar and salt, which it says would reduced the risks of developing type 2 diabetes, various types of cancer and other conditions such as cardiovascular disease.

▪ **Scots ministers plan junk food crackdown**

But the Food and Drink Federation, which represents food and drink manufacturers, has previously warned that the proposals would hit small businesses hardest and that there is no evidence they would make a difference to the country's health.

The proposed restrictions would include, among other things, junk food multi-buys, check out displays, purchase rewards such as vouchers and loyalty card points, unlimited refills and increased sizes.

The new rules would apply to wherever unhealthy foods are sold to the public, including supermarkets, convenience stores and fast food outlets. Possible restrictions to online sales will also be explored.

Public Health Minister Joe FitzPatrick said urgent action on food high in fat, sugar or salt was need to tackle Scotland's "damaging relationship with junk food".

He added: "No country has yet introduced such measures, so we cannot use the experience of others to demonstrate likely success.

"We should not let that dissuade us, nor should we shirk from this challenge."

proposals would place restrictions on where junk food can be displayed in shops and supermarkets

Cancer Research UK has said that 110 tonnes of sugar are purchased on price promotion every day in Scotland.

The charity's prevention expert, Prof Linda Bauld, said: "Junk food multi-buy offers encourage us to bulk buy and eat large quantities of unhealthy food, the consequences of which have become all too obvious in the nation's growing waistlines.

"The introduction of laws to curb bargain buys for food and drink high in fat and sugar would be an effective way of helping people make healthier choices."

'Unprecedented measure'

But the Scottish Retail Consortium said there needed to be a "level playing field" across the food and drink industry.

Its head of policy, Ewan MacDonald-Russell, said: "For the government to decide which food products can be placed in which part of a store is an unprecedented measure, and one which will be incredibly complex.

"For this intervention to be reasonable and proportionate, it's vital the Scottish government are forensic in identifying and justifying the products which they put into the scope of these restrictions.

"Furthermore, significant thought will be required to ensure the measures are practical for different store formats and food to go retailers without inadvertently distorting the overall food market."