

**The Scottish Cancer Prevention Network (SCPN)** is focused on moving evidence on cancer risk reduction into everyday life, practice and policy (<https://www.cancerpreventionscotland.org.uk/>). As an advocacy group we raise the profile of cancer prevention and screening research and action through a range of communication channels (newsletter, conference, workshops, social media and web-based activities) and support ongoing work in reducing the prevalence of cancer risk factors. The SCPN is funded by the Scottish Cancer Foundation charity (SCO28300).

Dietary factors are causative in cancers of the mouth, pharynx and larynx, lung, stomach and bowel. Obesity is associated with 13 cancers including breast and bowel. The total cancer incidence in Scotland is predicted to increase significantly over the next two decades <http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Cancer/Cancer-Statistics/Cancer-Incidence-Projections-Scotland-to-2020.pdf>. A healthy, equitable food policy is essential for cancer risk reduction, improved well-being in people diagnosed with cancer and to optimise health care costs.

Many of the comments discussed here have also been highlighted in our response <https://www.cancerpreventionscotland.org.uk/a-healthier-future-action-and-ambitions-on-diet-activity-and-healthy-weight/> to the Scottish government consultation, **A Healthier Future – Action and Ambitions on Diet, Activity and Healthy Weight**.

What are your top 5 concerns? As a group, come up with the five things you are most bothered about with how the food system works.

1. The availability, distribution, marketing and use of fresh produce – notably fruits and vegetables. Coupled with perceived (and actual) costs, motivation, time, skills and values that surround the use of fresh produce as a fundamental part of the Scottish diet.
2. The unhelpfulness of the food industry in terms of nutrient composition and portion sizes for everyday basic foods.
3. The inequity of food support for low income families and the challenges of how to address food poverty in a dignified and equitable manner.
4. The challenge of nurturing our children to appreciate healthy basic foods, learn basic food skills and avoid the marketing challenges that the food industry pose.
5. Avoiding food waste – particularly for fresh produce.

What are your top 5 actions for Government?

1. Greater action to regulate the food industry re composition and portion size. Simply focusing on sugary drinks will not bring about equitable, relevant and population wide changes. In Scotland, sweetened drink consumption has been decreasing for years [http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/downloads/Monitoring\\_Scottish\\_Dietary\\_Goals\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/downloads/Monitoring_Scottish_Dietary_Goals_Final_Report.pdf) so current government action is yet another example of action on “low hanging fruit”. Action on salt has been successful but this has been taken across a broad range of food groups - the same is needed for added sugars, saturated fats and a re-balancing of the fibre (wholegrain) content of foodstuffs. In addition to salt targets there is a precedence for setting compositional targets from the target nutrient specification set for school foods.

2. Fast food restaurants (FFR) continue to grow per head of population. It is timely for planners to consider whether all of these are necessary. In some locations these restaurants may provide the only “safe” venue for teenagers ....surely we can do better than this?
3. Identifying, testing and evaluation approaches to eliminating food poverty. The Healthy Start scheme <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/> has demonstrated that food vouchers assist dietary change in one vulnerable group in society – is this an area for further exploration (certainly not a solo solution)? Whilst there is considerable support around food banks in many communities, how might this support be better managed in a sustainable dignified fashion that allows equity of access to healthy **fresh** produce in adequate quantity and quality?
4. Fostering a healthful food culture for our children. Supporting breast feeding initiation and maintenance, healthful weaning and the provision of school food of a high nutritional standard. Nutrient standards are important but only if these are regularly re-evaluated (e.g. taking new dietary fibre and sugar recommendations into account), monitored for implementation, audited and action taken where provision is sub-standard. In addition, there is need to think of “out of term time” support for healthy food support.
5. A curriculum for life long food skills which give high importance to developing planning , shopping, budgeting cooking, minimising food waste and hands on lessons for appropriate foods e.g. defining core skills (making soups, use of local produce, preparation of seasonal vegetables and basic ingredients as opposed to cakes, confectionery, pastries should be developed and commended). See <https://scpnblog.wordpress.com/2017/05/26/scottish-curriculum-for-plant-based-living-brazilian-aspirations/> for further examples.