

Spring Conference 2025

POLICY MOTION

Ultra-processed Foods

PROPOSED BY CARDIFF AND THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

This conference notes that:

- A. As defined by the Nova food classification system, ultra-processed foods can be characterised as industrial formulations produced using chemically-modified substances extracted from foods along with additives to enhance taste, texture, appearance and durability.
- B. Data on food sales and consumption shows a shift globally towards an increasingly ultra-processed diet. Many of the foods and drinks we consume regularly have increasingly come under this category – including (but by no means exclusively) staple foods such as bread; cakes; biscuits; breakfast cereals; confectionary; flavoured-yoghurts; ready-made sauces; ready meals and other pre-packaged produce; ice cream; and soft drinks.
- C. There is growing concern about the harms that may be caused from increased consumption of food that is categorised as ultra-processed.
- D. According to a systematic umbrella review published in the British Medical Journal in February 2024, evidence suggests a direct association between exposure to ultra-processed foods and higher risk of all cause mortality; cardiovascular disease related mortality; common mental disorder outcomes; overweight and obesity; and type 2 diabetes.

This conference therefore calls on the Welsh Government to:

- 1. Review its current strategy for obesity, Healthy Weight; Health Wales, which relies on a review of ultra-processed foods undertaken by Public Health Wales in 2018 when less evidence was available, to determine whether this strategy should account for the need to reduce consumption of ultra-processed foods (which it currently fails to address) as well as focusing on reducing consumption of foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar.
- 2. Consider what might be done to improve food labelling so that more people can be aware of what foods they may be buying are classed as ultra-processed and which are not, enabling consumers to have a more informed choice of what food they are eating.
- 3. Work with other governments in the UK, including the UK Government, to consider whether greater regulation of the food industry may be warranted to reduce the growing prevalence of ultra-processed foods in our shops and supermarkets, recognising that the food industry is largely driven by the need to increase profit and market share which leads it to promote foods which can drive over-

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consumption.

4. Consider what could be done to promote further research into understanding the harms to health that are being caused by ultra-processed foods and the mechanisms by which this occurs.