

Tackling inequalities in childhood obesity: Influencing national policy

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About Obesity Health Alliance

- 45 organisations
- Speak with **one voice** on obesity policy



1
Reducing obesity should be a
Government priority



2
Protect children from junk
food marketing everywhere



3
Expand the soft drinks
industry levy



4
An ambitious reformulation
programme



5
Create healthier retail
environments



6
Mandatory clear labelling on
food and drinks



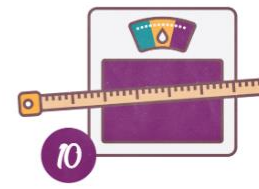
7
All schools and early years
settings to be healthy
environments



8
Sustainable funding for
public health



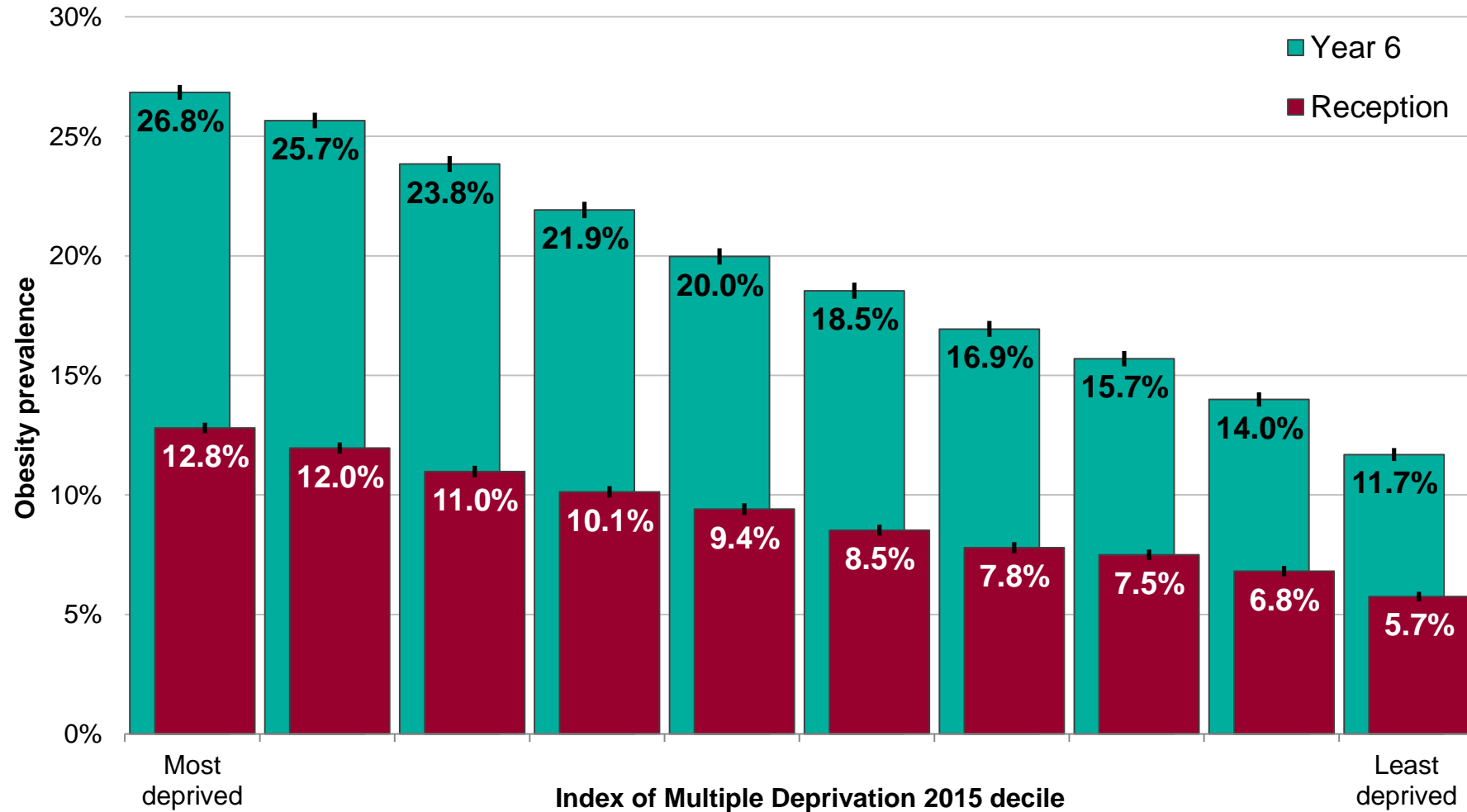
9
Healthy hospital food



10
Evidence-based training for
health and social care
professionals

Obesity prevalence by deprivation decile

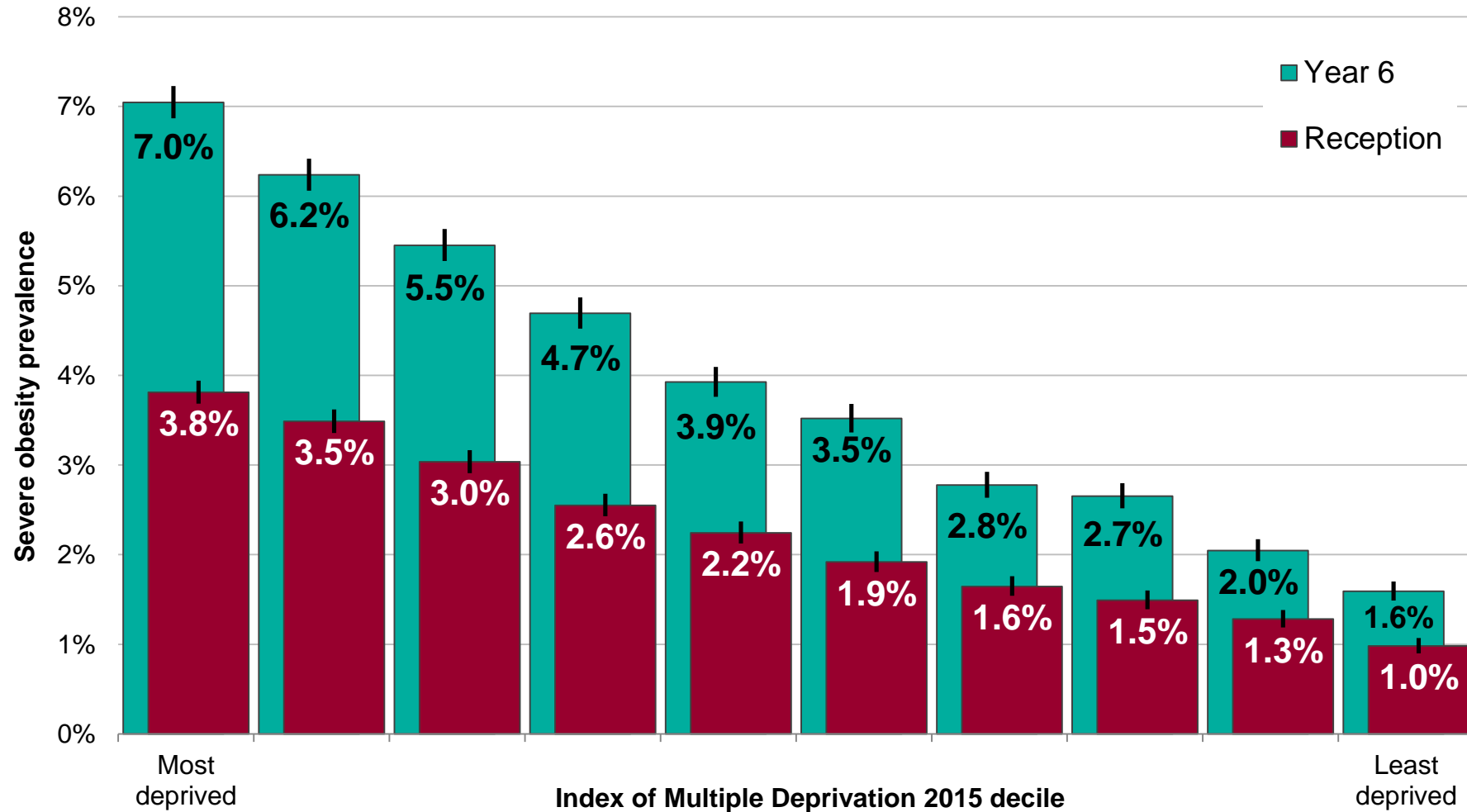
National Child Measurement Programme 2017/18



Child obesity: BMI \geq 95th centile of the UK90 growth reference

Severe obesity prevalence by deprivation decile

National Child Measurement Programme 2017/18



Child severe obesity: BMI ≥ 99.6th centile of the UK90 growth reference

Role of national policy

- Population level interventions – likely to have most positive effect on health inequalities
- Universal interventions to restrict or modify choice – most effective behaviour change



Policy priorities

PROBLEM

POLICY

POLITICS

Needed

Workable

Wanted

Policy priorities



PROBLEM

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Children's excess sugar
and calorie intake

Significant variation
across categories

Some manufacturers
leading the way on sugar
reduction

83% of public support
voluntary reformulation
(73% regulation)

Structural: Lower income groups have highest level of sugar in their diets -
potential to disproportionately impact inequalities

Policy priorities



PROBLEM

POLICY

POLITICS

Needed

Workable

Wanted

Price promotions such as 'buy one get one free' and multi-buy offers more common on unhealthy food products.

Voluntary action by some supermarkets show change is possible.

66% of public support supermarkets being made to promote healthier foods

Structural: Promotions generally cause people with less money to spend more, due to triggering impulse purchasing

Policy priorities



PROBLEM

Needed

The more junk food ads on TV young people see, the more they eat – 500 extra snacks per year

POLICY

Workable

Limited restrictions already apply
Evidence based tools in place

POLITICS

Wanted

72% of public support 9pm watershed / 70% support restrictions online
65% of MPs

Structural: Teens from more deprived backgrounds 40% more likely to recall seeing ads – potential to disproportionately impact inequalities

Looking ahead... a new narrative?

"If we want kids to lose weight we should encourage kids to walk and cycle to school and generally do more exercise. It's calories in, and calories out."

"Taxes on treats hits those on lowest incomes. We should be #freetochoose."

Child obesity is a problem heavily skewed to particular groups, demanding community-level solutions targeted at where the problem is to maximise effectiveness.

Thank you

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