

[Press release: Parliamentary Under Secretaries of State Appointments](#)

The Queen has been pleased to approve that David Rutley MP and Nigel Adams MP be appointed Parliamentary Under Secretaries of State at the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government respectively.

Both roles are unpaid and are in addition to their current roles as Government Whips.

Nigel Adams MP has been appointed temporarily to provide support so Heather Wheeler MP can spend more time with her husband who has health issues.

David Rutley MP has been appointed temporarily whilst Thérèse Coffey MP recovers from a period of illness.

[News story: Government announces new standards for fire and rescue services](#)

Addressing the Local Government Association's Fire Commission yesterday, the Minister for Policing and the Fire Service, Nick Hurd, announced a new approach to improve professional standards for fire and rescue services across England.

While some professional standards currently exist for fire and rescue services, they are inconsistently applied and the government believes they can be expanded. A Fire Standards Board will be created to ensure standards are nationally coordinated to a high level across the sector.

The proposal was developed in conjunction with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), Local Government Association and other partners. This new board will be independent from government and supported by the NFCC's central programme office which will produce the standards, drawing on external expertise as required.

It will be for the board to determine its workplan but initial issues the Board could consider include:

- workforce issues like leadership and development
- the identification and mitigation of risks
- fire prevention and the approach to protecting the public from other emergencies

The board will also be responsible for agreeing priorities in response to the recently published Hackitt review, the Grenfell Tower inquiry, and other emerging issues facing fire and rescue services.

The Minister for Policing and the Fire Service Nick Hurd said:

We all recognise the bravery and dedication of our firefighters who work tirelessly every day to protect the communities they serve.

Creating a new Independent Board to oversee professional standards across England will support the continuous improvement of fire and rescue services and support them to become more professional than ever before.

This move is a key element of the government's ambitious fire reform programme which aims to improve the professionalism, effectiveness and accountability of fire and rescue services by:

- establishing an independent inspection regime – Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – for fire and rescue
- encouraging employers to drive workforce reform, including increasing the diversity of the workforce
- bringing greater accountability to the work of local fire and rescue services by enabling Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to take on responsibility for fire and rescue services where a strong local case is made
- supporting services to transform commercially with more efficient procurement and collaboration
- increasing the transparency of services with the publication of further information to allow the public to hold their service to account and the creation of a new national website in the summer

[Press release: First measure of industry progress to cut sugar unveiled](#)

Public Health England (PHE) has today (Tuesday 22 May 2018) published the first assessment of progress on the government's sugar reduction programme, measuring how far the food industry has gone towards reducing the sugar children consume through everyday foods.

As part of the government's plan to reduce childhood obesity, the food industry, including retailers, manufacturers, restaurants, cafés and pub chains, has been challenged to cut 20% of sugar from a range of products by 2020, with a 5% reduction in the first year.

Progress towards meeting the 5% ambition is the focus of this report and is assessed against a 2015 baseline.

The assessment shows an encouraging initial start from retailers and manufacturers, achieving a 2% reduction in both average sugar content and calories in products likely to be consumed in one go.

Whilst this doesn't meet the 5% ambition, PHE recognises there are more sugar reduction plans from the food industry in the pipeline – and some changes to products that are not yet captured in the data as they took effect after the first year cut-off point.

For the 8 food categories where progress has been measured, the assessment also shows:

- there have been reductions in sugar levels across 5 categories
- yoghurts and fromage frais, breakfast cereals, and sweet spreads and sauces have all met or exceeded the initial 5% sugar reduction ambition
- sugar levels are generally the same across all sectors, however for the eating out of home sector, portion sizes in products likely to be consumed in one go are substantially larger – on average more than double – those of retailers and manufacturers

Retailers and manufacturers have also reduced calories in products likely to be consumed in one go in 4 categories, for example by reducing the size of the product. Of these, ice cream, lollies and sorbets, and yoghurts and fromage frais have reduced average calories by more than 5%.

Due to limitations with the data, PHE is not yet able to report on the progress made in the cakes and morning goods categories for retailer and manufacturer's products. It is also not possible to report on progress for the eating out of home sector alone as part of this assessment. Progress in these areas will be reported on next year.

As part of the programme, businesses are encouraged to focus efforts on their top selling products within 10 categories that contribute the most sugar to the diets of children up to 18 years of age. They have 3 options to help them do this – reduce sugar levels (reformulation), provide smaller portions, or encourage consumers to purchase lower or no sugar products.

Progress is also reported on the drinks covered by the government's Soft Drinks Industry Levy (SDIL). Sugar has been reduced by 11% and average calories per portion by 6% by retailers and manufacturers in response to the SDIL. Data also shows people are buying more drinks that have sugar levels below the SDIL cut-off of 5g per 100g.

With a third of children leaving primary school overweight or obese, PHE continues to call for increased action from all sectors of the food industry

to achieve the 20% reduction ambition by 2020.

Steve Brine, Public Health Minister, said:

We lead the world in having the most stringent sugar reformulation targets and it is encouraging to see that some progress has been made in the first year.

However, we do not underestimate the scale of the challenge we face. We are monitoring progress closely and have not ruled out taking further action.

Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive at PHE, said:

We have seen some of the food industry make good progress, and they should be commended for this. We also know that further progress is in the pipeline.

However, tackling the obesity crisis needs the whole food industry to step up, in particular, those businesses that have as yet taken little or no action.

Dr Alison Tedstone, Chief Nutritionist at PHE, said:

This is about tackling the nation's obesity crisis. Too many children and adults suffer the effects of obesity, as does society, with our NHS under needless pressure. Obesity widens economic inequalities, affecting the poor the hardest.

PHE has also today published new guidelines for the drinks industry to reduce the amount of sugar children consume through juice and milk based drinks.

The drinks categories join the other 10 categories in PHE's sugar reduction programme. Juice and milk based drinks are currently excluded from the government's SDIL, but the exemption of milk based drinks will be reviewed by Treasury in 2020.

By mid-2021, the drinks industry is encouraged to:

- reduce sugar in juice based drinks (excluding single juice) by 5%
- cap all juice based drinks (including blended juices, smoothies and single juices) likely to be consumed in one go to 150 calories
- reduce sugar in milk (and milk substitutes) based drinks by 20% and cap products likely to be consumed in one go to 300 calories

Fruit juice alone accounts for around 10% of the sugar consumed each day by 4 to 18 year olds. Current advice is that only one 150ml portion counts as 1 of our 5 a day.

The next progress report on the sugar reduction programme is due in spring 2019.

Background

1. The first year of the sugar reduction programme is August 2016 to August 2017.
2. Single juice (also known as mono juice) products include juice from a single fruit with nothing added to it, for example, 100% orange juice.
3. Blended juice products include juice from multiple juice sources.
4. [Public Health England](#) exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities. We do this through world-leading science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and providing specialist public health services. We are an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care, and a distinct organisation with operational autonomy. We provide government, local government, the NHS, Parliament, industry and the public with evidence-based professional, scientific expertise and support. Follow us on Twitter: [@PHE_uk](#) and Facebook: www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland.

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[News story: £30 million of funding to tackle antimicrobial resistance](#)

The funding will be delivered through 4 new projects as part of the Global AMR Innovation Fund (GAMRIF):

- £20 million to the [Combating Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria Biopharmaceutical Accelerator](#) – a non-profit international partnership supporting research on the most dangerous drug-resistant bacteria. This commitment will support scientific research around the world to develop new vaccines and alternatives-to-antibiotics against drug-resistant bacterial infections in humans

- £5 million for a new bilateral partnership with Argentina supporting research to tackle AMR in agriculture and the impact on the environment – delivered via the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council and the Natural Environment Research Council. The bilateral partnership will be delivered and matched-funded, on a resource basis, by the National Scientific and Technical Research Council in Argentina
- £5 million invested in the [Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics](#) (FIND) – a global non-profit organisation aimed at the development, evaluation and delivery of high-quality affordable diagnostic tests for poverty-related diseases. This funding will support FIND’s work to enhance the impact of diagnostic tools, in particular the connectivity of point-of-care diagnostics for AMR surveillance
- £1 million invested in the [Global Antibiotic Research and Development Partnership](#) (GARDP) – a non-profit research and development initiative addressing global public health needs by developing, delivering and assuring sustainable access of new or improved antibiotic treatments. This funding will support GARDP’s programme on sexually transmitted infections, focusing on the development of a new antibiotic for drug-resistant gonorrhoea

These projects are funded by UK aid and will primarily benefit people in low- and middle-income countries, where the burden of infection is greatest.

AMR occurs when microbes, including bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites, no longer respond to the drugs that would normally kill them, such as antibiotics. This leaves us powerless to treat what are normally routine infections. It is estimated that 5,000 deaths are caused every year in the UK because antibiotics no longer work for some infections.

Professor Dame Sally Davies, England’s Chief Medical Officer, said:

Today’s announcement is further evidence of the UK collaborating with international partners to lead global efforts to tackle AMR. The GAMRIF investments aim to protect the world’s most vulnerable and tackle AMR where the burden of infection is greatest.

I am pleased that the UK will be working in partnership with a range of leading organisations to deliver vital research activities across the OneHealth spectrum – together this represents a formidable force against the threat of superbugs.

Health and Social Care Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

Antimicrobial resistance is no longer a threat of the future – it is a problem here and now, and one that is killing hundreds of

thousands of people across the world each year. This new investment cements our commitment to world-leading new research to tackle AMR on a global scale, and these innovative projects have the potential to develop real solutions and save lives.

GAMRIF's other projects include a [UK-China AMR collaboration](#) and [InnoVet-AMR](#), with the Canadian International Development Research Centre.

[News story: New tool calculates NHS and social care costs of air pollution](#)

The health and social care costs of air pollution in England could reach £5.3 billion by 2035 unless action is taken, according to a new report and cost tool published today by Public Health England (PHE). Last year, the costs were £42.88 million. Local authorities will be able to use it to inform their policies to improve air quality.

The report and tool are part of the wider government strategy to reduce air pollution which was announced today, Tuesday 22 May 2018, by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Working with the UK Health Forum and Imperial College London, PHE's report and tool highlight the potential costs to the NHS and social care system of exposure to Particulate Matter (PM2.5) and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2), 2 of the pollutants to be dealt with under the government strategy.

The costs are for diseases where there is a strong association with air pollution: coronary heart disease; stroke; lung cancer; and child asthma.

When diseases with weaker evidence of association are also added, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; diabetes; low birth weight; lung cancer (for NO2 only); and dementia, the costs were £157 million in 2017 and could reach £18.6 billion by 2035.

There could be around 2.5 million new cases of all of the above diseases by 2035 if current air pollution levels persist.

A relatively small reduction in the population's exposure to PM2.5 and NO2 could lead to a significant reduction in costs. Modelling was carried out at the national level and for 2 local authorities, Lambeth and South Lakeland, which represent areas with high and low levels of PM2.5 and NO2 respectively.

If there was a 1µg/m³ reduction in PM2.5 and NO2 over a year, relative to the 2015 baseline, the cumulative number of new cases of all diseases and NHS and social care costs avoided could be:

Years	Region	1µg/m3 reduction in PM2.5	1µg/m3 reduction in PM2.5	1µg/m3 reduction in NO2	1µg/m3 reduction in NO2
		New cases avoided (per 100,000)	Costs avoided (£m/100,000)	New cases avoided (per 100,000)	Costs avoided (£m/100,000)
2015 to 2025	England	146	0.72	32	0.19
	Lambeth	153	0.72	28	0.15
	South Lakeland	119	0.6	33	0.3
2015 to 2035	England	314	2.42	59	0.6
	Lambeth	310	2.35	57	0.54
	South Lakeland	204	2.05	70	0.75

All local authorities can use the tool to estimate the impact on health and the savings to the NHS and social care under different air pollution scenarios.

Professor Paul Cosford, Medical Director and Director of Health Protection at PHE, said:

Air pollution is a growing threat to the public's health, evidence shows it has a strong causal association with coronary heart disease, stroke, lung cancer and childhood asthma.

PHE has created a new air pollution tool so, for the first time, local authorities can calculate the cost of air pollution, providing impetus to act to improve air quality.

Local authorities are ideally placed to introduce policies to minimise air pollution, especially given the legal air quality powers they have to tackle it locally. The areas where they can act – health, housing, transport, education, local economies, green space and quality of life – are all relevant to local government policy.

Until now, there has been no simple way for local authorities to estimate the potential savings to the public purse from taking local action on PM2.5 and NO2. This tool may help local authorities make a more fully developed economic and financial case for reducing emissions.

The government's Clean Air Strategy provides further support to local authorities.