

UK RC75 Written Intervention: Implementation of the Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases

The UK would like to thank WHO EURO for the report. This final progress report underscores the collective efforts of Member States and WHO/Europe in addressing the burden of NCDs, which remain the leading cause of mortality and morbidity across the region.

On nutrition and physical activity, the UK is continuing to work to reduce the barriers people face to being active in their everyday lives. However, levels of inactivity remain too high and there are stark inequalities. We are strongly committed to tackling obesity and poor diet and are implementing several ambitious policies to improve the food environment.

On alcohol, it is disappointing to hear that the Region is not on track to meet the 10% reduction in alcohol consumption by 2025. In the UK, while we are seeing an increasing number of people drinking at lower levels or abstaining, we have also seen more people drinking at higher-risk levels, which has resulted in significant increases in alcohol-related harms, and alcohol-related deaths are now at an all-time high.

Work is underway across the UK to try to turn the tide on this increase in harms. To tackle low awareness of the harms associated with alcohol, plans are underway to legally require standardised health information and health warnings on alcohol all products.

We are also committed to ensuring people have access to timely alcohol treatment and support. The number of people in alcohol treatment in the year from April 2024 to April 2025 were the highest since records began. We will also soon be publishing the first ever UK wide guidelines on alcohol treatment.

The UK government will continue to consider what other measures might be needed to reduce the negative impact of excessive alcohol consumption.

On tobacco, we are pleased to see that rates of smoking across the region are decreasing. Considering the devastating impacts of tobacco consumption on health, we hope to see a more accelerated reduction.

We know that measures such as restrictions on packaging and display, smoke-free places and increasing taxation on tobacco products has a positive impact on smoking rates. But we encourage other states to go even further and to consider measures which phase out tobacco for good, for example by implementing progressive age of sale policies. This will ensure that our future generations will be protected from the harms of tobacco, and the cycle of addiction and disadvantages.

Tobacco remains the greatest public health harm, and whilst we share the concerns in the report around other emerging nicotine products, particularly on use by children, it is vitally important that we prioritise getting the basics of tobacco control right in the

first instance. We urge the WHO to ensure tobacco control remains the focus of the FCTC.

We remain committed to the FCTC, and reducing the devastating impacts tobacco has on individuals, communities and nations. We are looking forward to discussing these issues in more detail in November at the FCTC COP.

While persistent challenges remain, the achievements of the Action Plan provide strong foundations for future action under the EPW2. The UK looks forward to working closely with WHO EURO and Member States to drive further progress.