

# Sugar

In Northern Ireland, we define the policy for consumers and the food industry on sugar. We work with businesses to see how products can be improved to contain less sugar.

We also provide guidance to help consumers in Northern Ireland know about sugar intake and how that impacts their diets. Adults in Northern Ireland are eating double the maximum recommended amount of sugar and children are eating around three times more sugar than they should.

Eating too many calories, from fat or sugar, can lead to weight gain and obesity which is why it's important to focus efforts on reducing sugar levels in the food that consumers eat. Sugary foods and drinks can also cause tooth decay.

## Reducing sugar levels in diet

Industry Sugar Reduction Guidance published by Public Health England (PHE) in March 2017 sets out approaches the food industry should take to reduce the total amount of sugar children consume through everyday food.

As a result, around 200,000 tonnes of sugar could be removed from UK diets, per year, by 2020.

The guidance sets out the recommended sugar limits for nine food groups, as well as guidance on how the reductions could be achieved by the food industry.

The food groups included in the first phase of sugar reduction are:

- breakfast cereals
- yoghurts
- biscuits
- cakes and morning goods
- puddings
- chocolate confectionery
- sweet confectionery
- ice cream
- sweet spreads

In Northern Ireland, we work with small to medium sized businesses to raise awareness of the new guidance. By supporting local food businesses with food product improvement, we can work to align with PHE on the sugar reduction targets – to remove 20% of sugar from foods in certain categories by 2020.