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# Heavy Burden of Obesity: the Economics of Prevention



Launch event



London, 10 October 2019





# THE HEAVY BURDEN OF OBESITY THE ECONOMIC OF PREVENTION

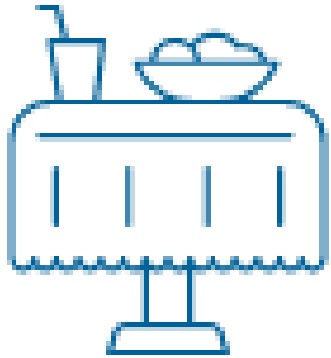
Michele Cecchini  
OECD – Health Division

Almost two in three  
persons living in the  
United Kingdom  
have overweight.  
Nearly one in three  
has obesity





# Unhealthy Diets and Lack of Physical Activity Underpin the Rise in Overweight in the UK



**70%**

of people have an unhealthy diet (measured against national guidelines)



**3 in 4**

Individuals do not consume a sufficient amount of fruit and vegetables



**1 in 3**

individuals does not do a sufficient amount of physical activity



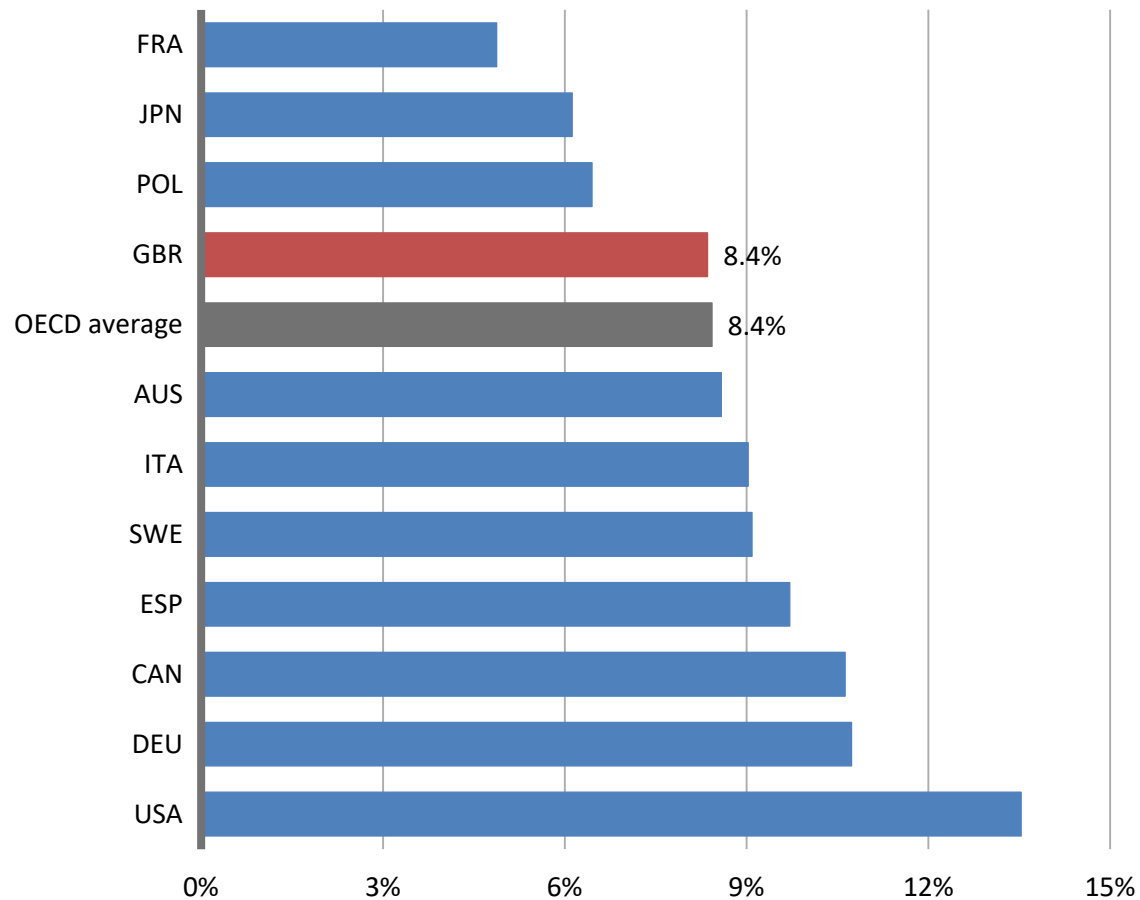
**28%**

of people spend more than 7 hrs/day in sedentary activities (e.g. sitting)

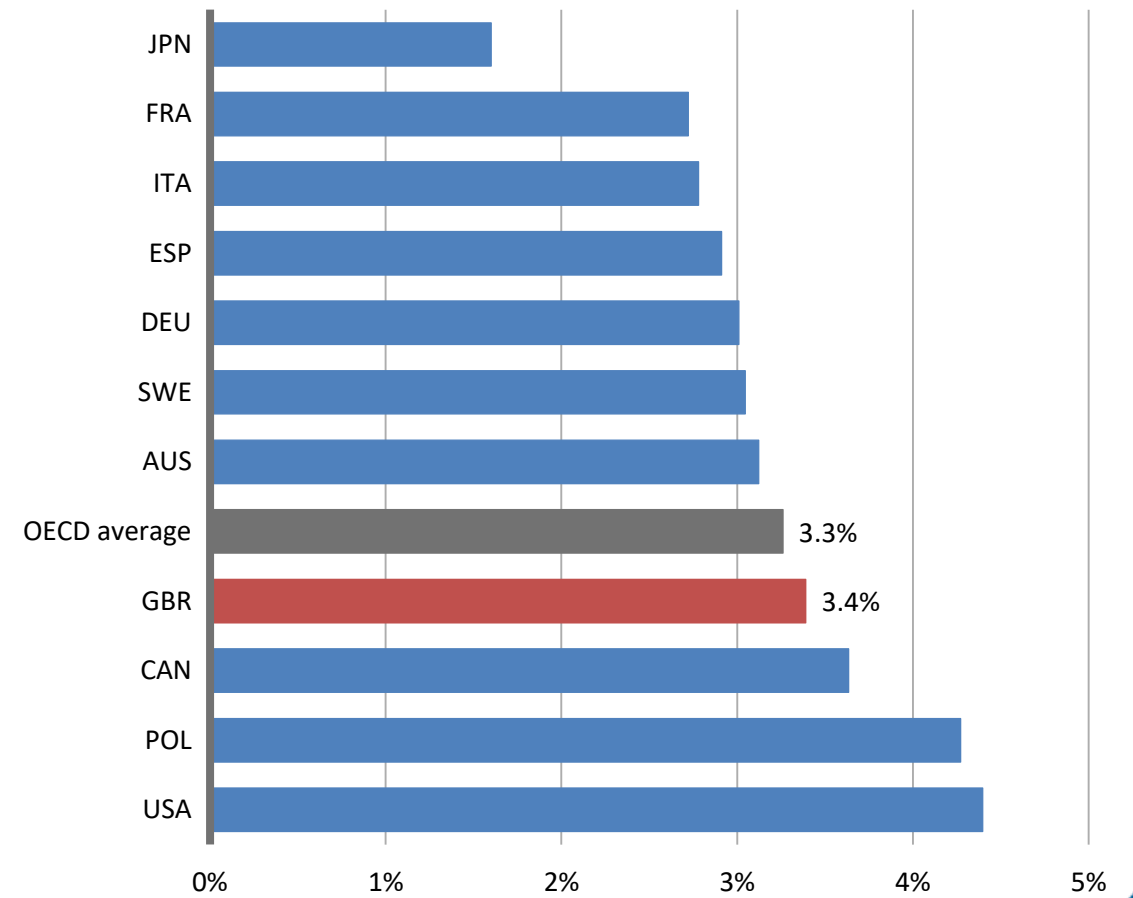


# Obesity Carries a Significant Economic Burden For The UK And Other OECD, EU28 and G20 Countries

Percentage of **healthcare expenditure** spent on overweight and related conditions



Reduction in **GDP** due to overweight and related conditions



Note: All figures are annual average over 2020-2050; source: OECD SPHeP NCD model



# Overweight And Its Associated NCDs Carry Significant Personal Costs

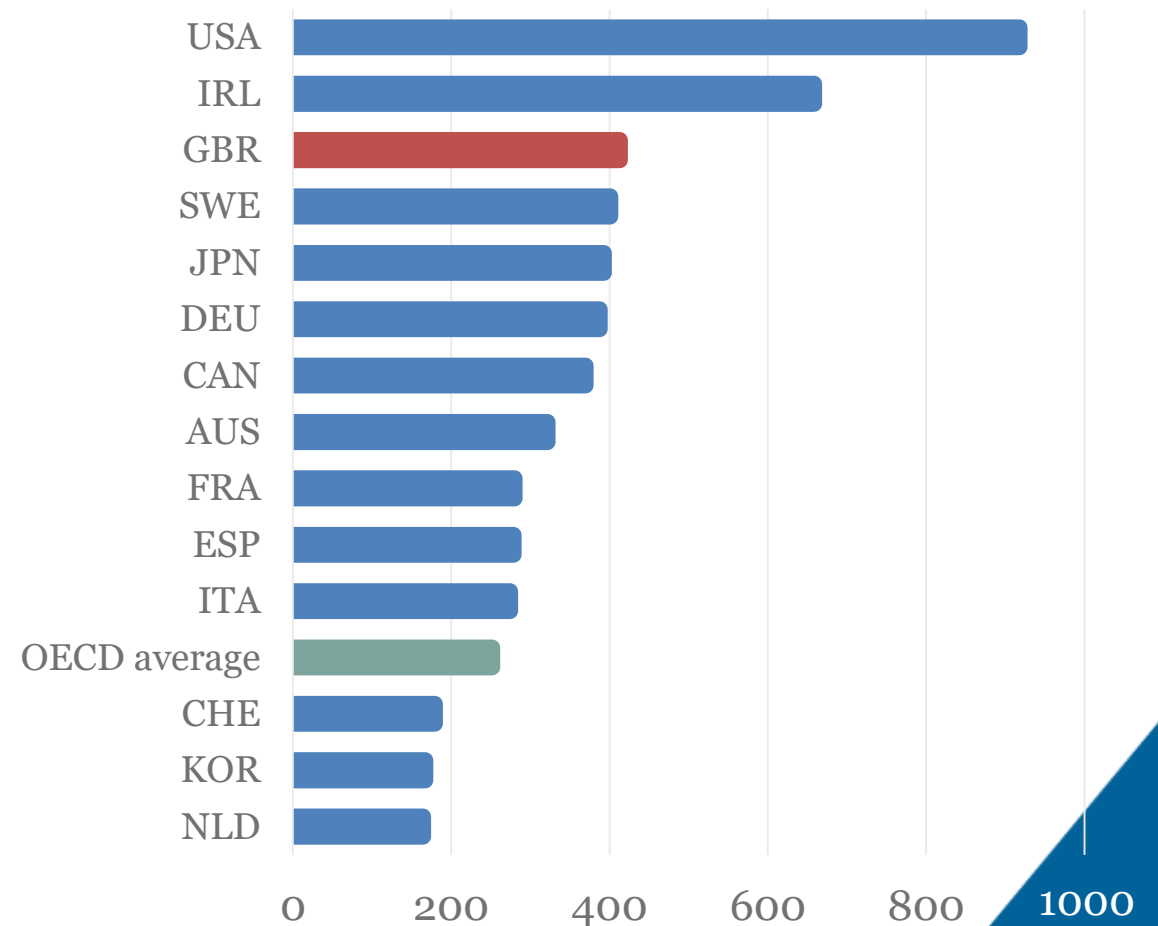
Boys with obesity are less likely to have completed higher education at age 29 by

**58%**

**650 GBP/capita**

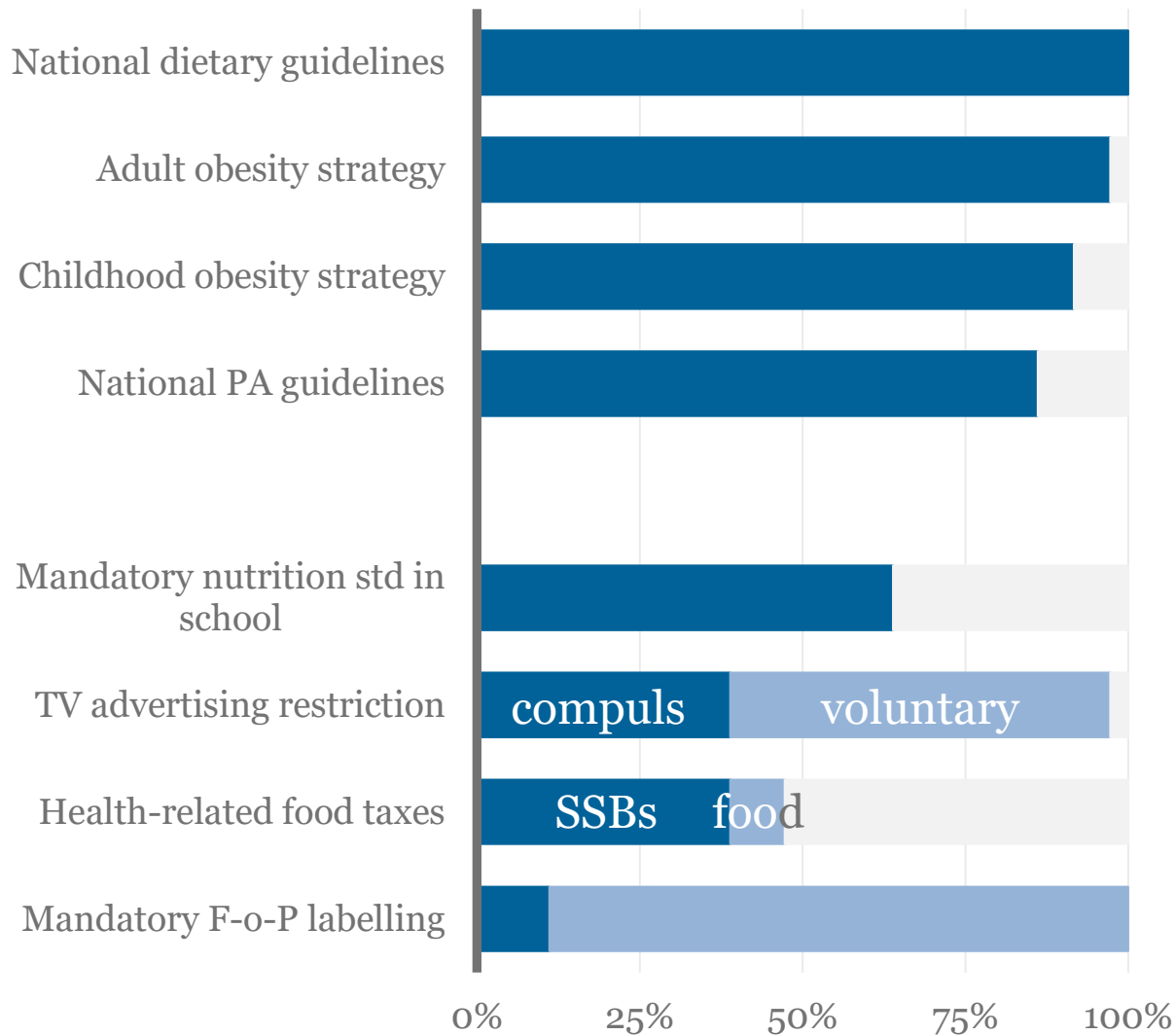
Reduced labour force productivity due to unemployment, sick leaves, early retirement and reduced productivity because of overweight

Equivalent tax increase per capita due to overweight (GBP)





# OECD Countries Have a Comprehensive Set of Policies to Tackle Obesity, But Gaps Remain








- Policies are too often implemented in forms that are not the most effective
- Limited resources or practical problems limit the number of individuals that would potentially benefit from the policy
- The environment is still too much obesogenic and conducive to unhealthy lifestyles



# Public Health Actions to Promote a Healthy Lifestyle


## Health education and health promotion

-  Food labelling schemes
-  Menu labelling schemes
-  Mass media campaigns
-  Prescription of physical activity by primary care doctors
-  Mobile apps to promote healthier lifestyles

## Environmental changes

-  Promotion of physical activity in schools
-  Workplace wellness programmes
-  Workplace sedentary behaviour programmes
-  Increase in access to active public transport
-  Food reformulation

## Regulation


-  Regulation of advertising of unhealthy food to children








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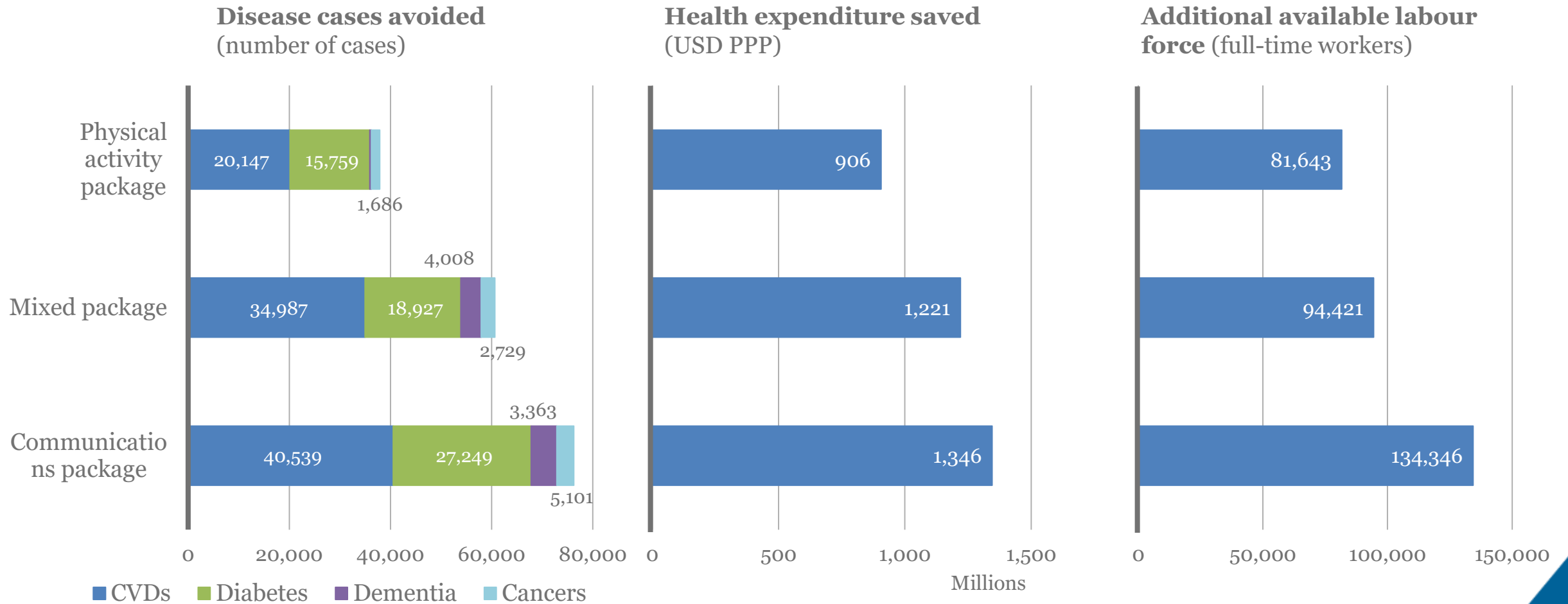
   Communication package

   Mixed package

    Physical activity package



# Tackling Obesity Keeps Healthy, Decreases Healthcare Expenditure and Increases Labour Force Productivity



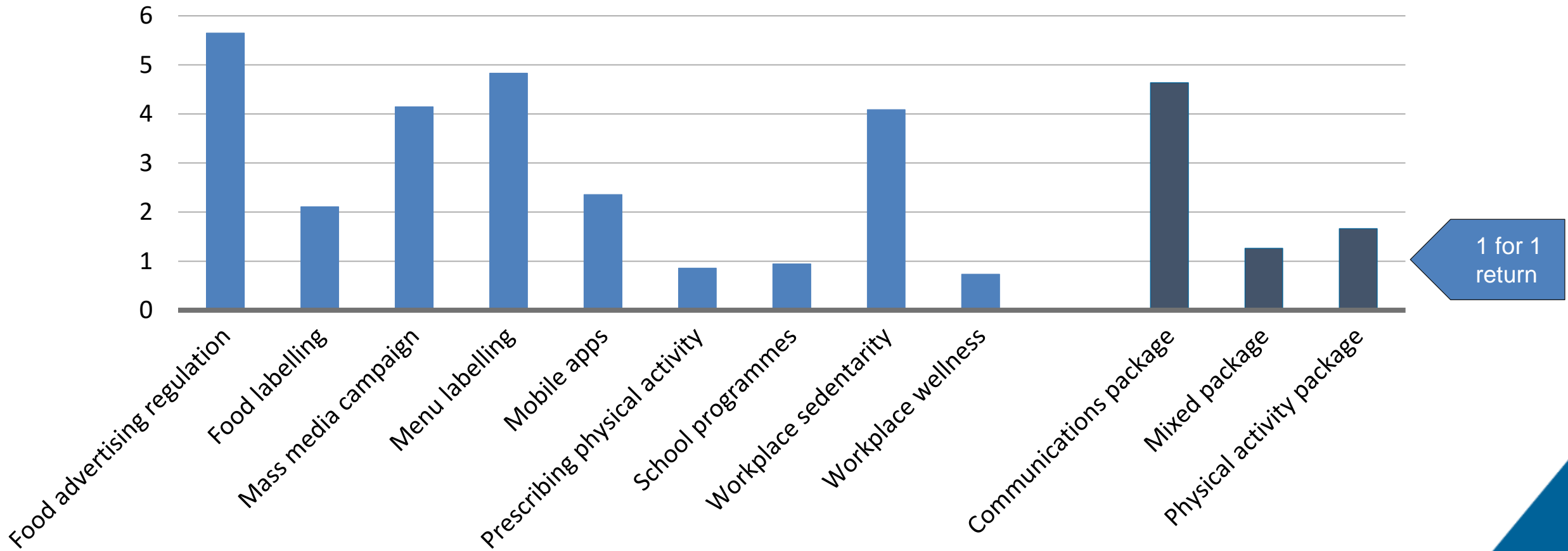
Note: all figures are annual average over 2020-2050, total for 36 countries.  
Source: OECD SPHeP NCD model



# Preventing Overweight Is a Good Investment for OECD Countries

## Return on investment

USD returned in GDP for every 1 USD invested in the intervention



Note: Annual weighted average over 2020-2050, total for 31 countries.  
Source: OECD SPHeP NCD model & OECD ECO long term forecast model



# In the UK, A 20% Reduction in Calorie Content In High Calorie Food Has a Significant Effect



**19,500**

Cases of NCDs avoided per year, including 12,500 CVDs



**211 Mil**

GBP saved every year due to reduced healthcare expenditure



**25,000**

additional full-time workers per year due to increased productivity



**0.15%**

Increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP)



## Policy Implications

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- Overweight keeps increasing due to unhealthy diet, lack of physical activity and sedentary behaviours
- Overweight has enormous (and rising) negative health, economic and social effects on the society and on single individuals
- Much has been done but even more needs to be done: we need to strengthen policies currently in place and close policy gaps in certain areas
- Policy packages to promote a healthier diet and an active lifestyle, particularly those modifying the environment, are an excellent investment; reformulation may play a significant role



# The Heavy Burden of Obesity – The Economics of Prevention is Out!

Contact us:

[Michele.Cecchini@oecd.org](mailto:Michele.Cecchini@oecd.org)

[Francesca.Colombo@oecd.org](mailto:Francesca.Colombo@oecd.org)

Data, country notes and much more at:

[oe.cd/obesity2019](http://oe.cd/obesity2019)



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