Health: Topical Questions

Sarah Wollaston Chair, Health Committee

Following the very welcome announcement of a graduated levy on sugar, sweet and drinks manufacturers, will the Minister please tell the House what discussions she is having with manufacturers to speed up the reformulation process and also to introduce a differential in price at the point of sale? Given the importance of childhood obesity, will the Department welcome the opportunity to take over the lead on this strategy so that we can make progress on this vital issue?

Jane Ellison The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health

There are a number of invitations there, some of which I will resist. My hon. Friend is absolutely right to highlight the importance of this announcement. Obviously, it is the first step towards the Government's comprehensive childhood obesity strategy, which we will be launching in the summer. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was absolutely right to go ahead with this and to move forward. The burden of childhood obesity, as she knows all too well, falls very, very heavily on poorer communities, and my right hon. Friend was absolutely right to champion that measure, because it will make the most difference in the poorest areas.

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