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Research in Public Health

**@NE\_ObesityForum**  
**#sugartaxNOW**

# We need a sugar tax, NOW!

**Dr Shelina Visram @ShelinaVisram**

**Centre for Public Policy & Health @CPPHDurham**

**Durham University @durham\_uni**

**[shelina.visram@durham.ac.uk](mailto:shelina.visram@durham.ac.uk)**

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# The **HYPER!** (**H**earing **Y**oung **P**eople's views on **E**nergy drinks: **R**esearch) study

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/public.health/projects/current/hyper/>

# Supplement Facts

Serving Size 8.0 fl.oz. (240 mL)

Serving Per Container: 2

Amount Per Serving	% Daily Value	
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<b>Calories</b>	100	
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<b>Total Carb</b>	27g	9%*
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Sugars	27g	†
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Riboflavin	1.7mg	100%
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Niacin	20mg	100%
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Vitamin B6	2mg	100%
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Vitamin B12	6mcg	100%
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Sodium	180mg	8%
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Taurine	1000mg	†
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Panax Ginseng	200mg	†
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Energy Blend	2500mg	†
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L-Carnitine, Glucose,  
Caffeine, Guarana, Inositol,  
Glucuronolactone, Maltodextrin

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2000 calorie diet. † Daily Value not established.





## Young people (11-18 years) in the UK:

- Are more likely to consume energy drinks than their counterparts in many other EU countries
- Consume more energy drinks on average per month (3.1l vs 2l)
- Are more likely to be 'high chronic consumers', i.e. 4-5 times a week

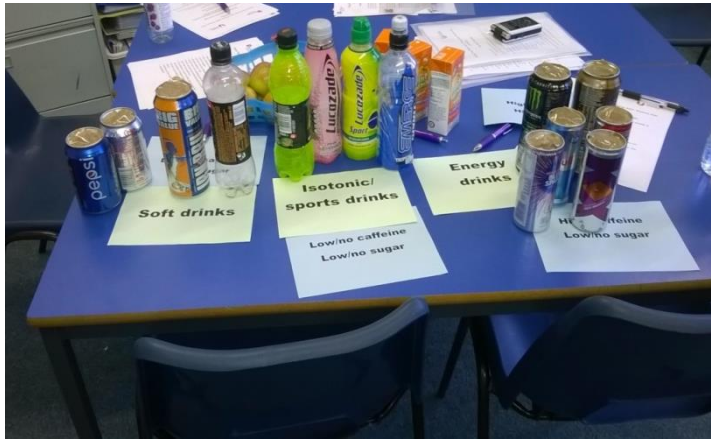




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# The **HYPER!** study



Focus groups with Year 6 and Year 9 pupils, plus interviews with school staff, parents and carers

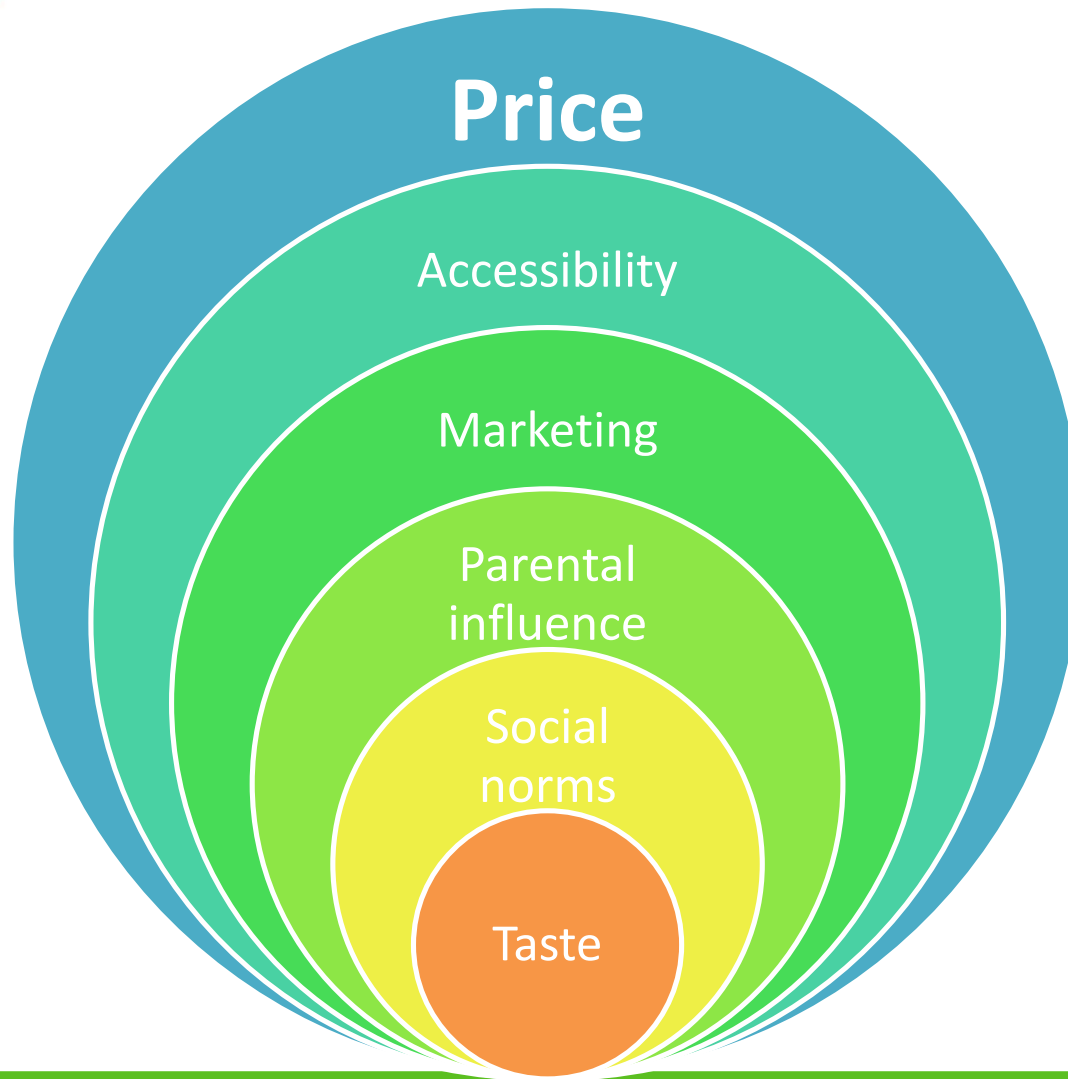
Mapping exercise involving a pupils to identify energy drink vendors around each school





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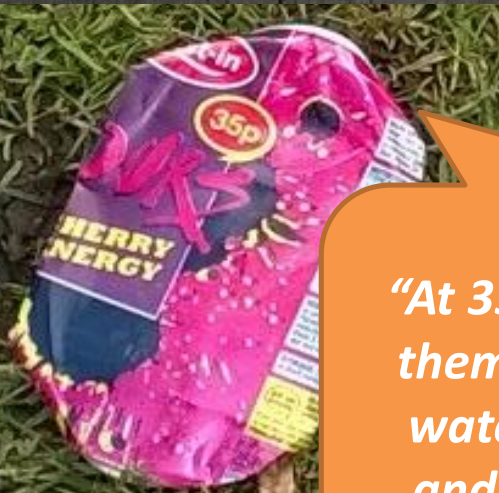


Our study highlighted a complex picture of energy drink consumption by children and young people





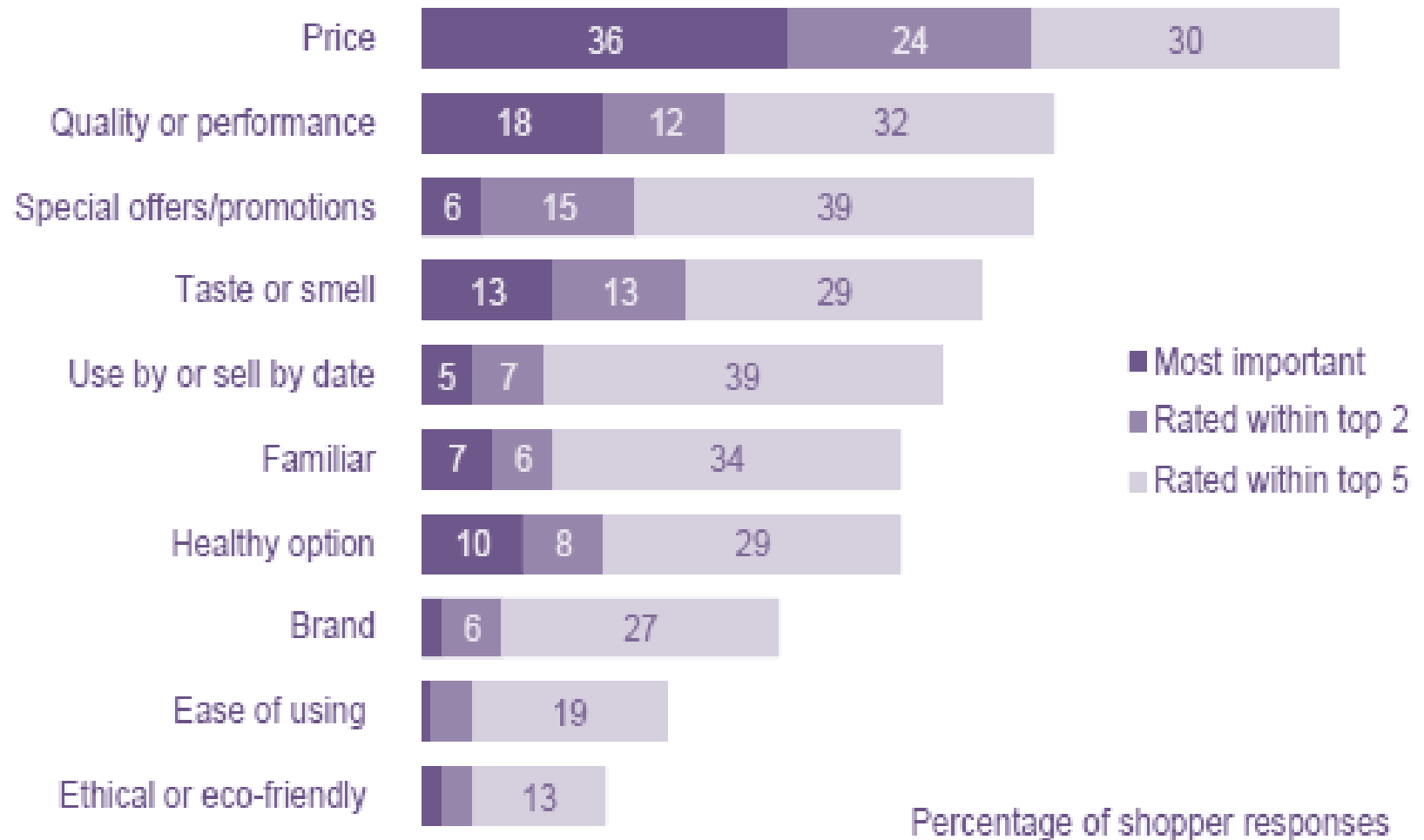
*"You can get four for like a pound. You know them little cans like the Emerge? You can get like four for a pound." (Year 9 girl)*



*"At 35p it's cheaper to buy one of them than it is to buy a bottle of water or to buy a normal drink, and that's the issue." (Teacher)*



# Factors influencing consumer product choice<sup>8</sup> (DEFRA, 2016)







*“It’s getting to the point where the energy drinks has overtaken the soft drinks. You go in [to shops] now and it’s very difficult to avoid them, especially if you know you don’t want your kids to have them.” (Parent)*



Consumption of sports drinks fell by 5.6% to 170 million litres

Consumption of energy drinks grew by 5.3% to 600 million litres in 2014

5.3%<sup>▲</sup>  
600  
million litres



5.6%<sup>▼</sup>  
170  
million litres





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# Intervention options

Improved labelling?

Sales and marketing restrictions?

Use of advertising and social media?

Education for children, young people  
and parents?

Peer-led interventions?







# Intervention options

Improved labelling?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Labelling of energy drinks already regulated at EU and UK level</li></ul>
Sales and marketing restrictions?	
Use of advertising and social media?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• BSDA voluntary code of practice in place since April 2015</li><li>• Limits of individual behaviour change and health education approaches</li><li>• Unlikely to be able to counter messages produced by global drinks companies</li></ul>
Education for children, young people and parents?	
Peer-led interventions?	

# PUBLIC BACKS ACTION TO TACKLE OBESITY

**Q** Would you support or oppose introducing a tax on drinks with added sugar?



Source: YouGov survey, sample size of 1,774 UK adults

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**CANCER  
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UK**



Wide range of supporters



and many more...





“We are extremely disappointed by the Government’s decision to hit the only category in the food and drink sector which has consistently reduced sugar intake in recent years – down **13.6%** since 2012. We are the only category with an ambitious plan for the years ahead – in 2015 we agreed a calorie reduction goal of **20%** by 2020.”

Gavin Partington, British Soft Drinks Association





## Economic rationale

*Government intervention in a market is warranted when there are 'market failures' that result in less-than-optimal production and consumption.*

(Brownell et al, 2009)





## Market failures in respect to SSBs

1. Consumers make decisions with imperfect information
2. They have time-inconsistent preferences (*instant gratification*)
3. They do not bear the full costs of their consumption decisions



TABLE 1: SUGARY DRINKS TAXES IMPLEMENTED AROUND THE WORLD

COUNTRY	MECHANISM	RATIONALE	REVENUE COLLECTION	IMPACT ON SALES OR CONSUMPTION
FINLAND	Excise tax on non-alcoholic beverages (£0.08 per litre) and beverages containing >0.5% sugar (£0.15)	Primarily to raise revenues	£144 million in 2013	No formal evaluation. Unofficial reports suggest tax has led to decreased sales and consumption.
HUNGARY	Sales tax on syrups or concentrates for SSBs (~£0.5 per litre) and other SSBs (~£0.02 per litre)	To promote public health and raise revenues for health care	£42.9* million in 2013	Formal evaluation in 2013 indicated a reduction in consumption of taxed products, some reformulation and decrease in consumption of nutrients of public health concern
FRANCE	Tax levied on French manufacturers, importers and food outlets at ~£0.06 per litre for drinks containing added sugar or added sweeteners	Primarily to raise revenues, but aligned with national strategy to reduce overweight and obesity among children and adolescents	Approximately £268 million since 2012	An immediate drop in sales was recorded on introduction of the tax, after years of increasing sales
MEXICO	Excise tax on SSBs at £0.04 per litre	To promote anti-obesity measures and provide free drinking water in schools	£745 million in 2014	Formal evaluation shows reduction in sales of 12%

Source: Adapted from Cornelsen and Carreido, Food Research Collaboration 2015, and Colchero et al. 2016.

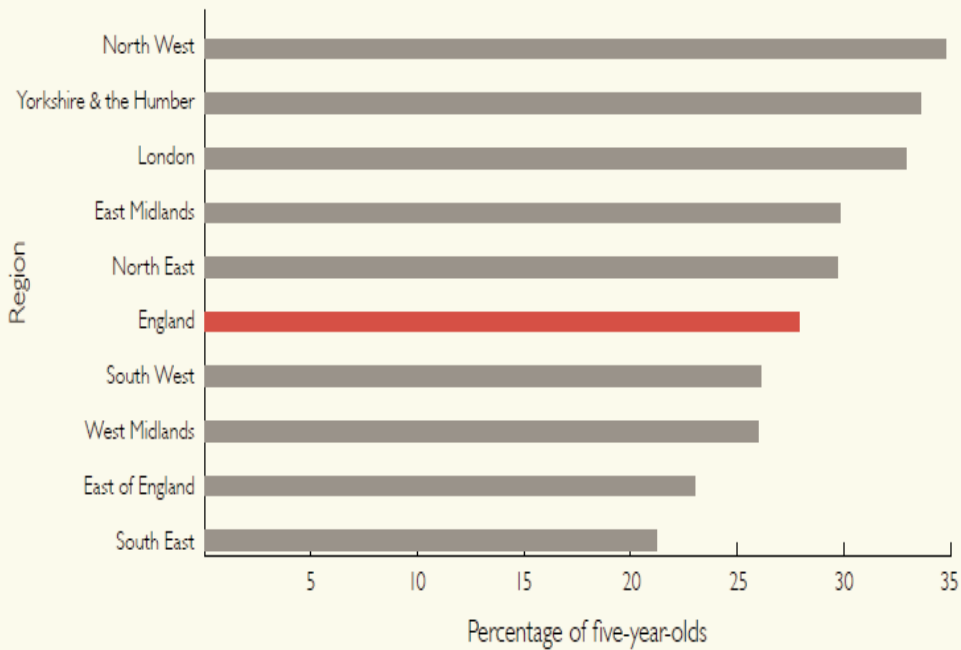
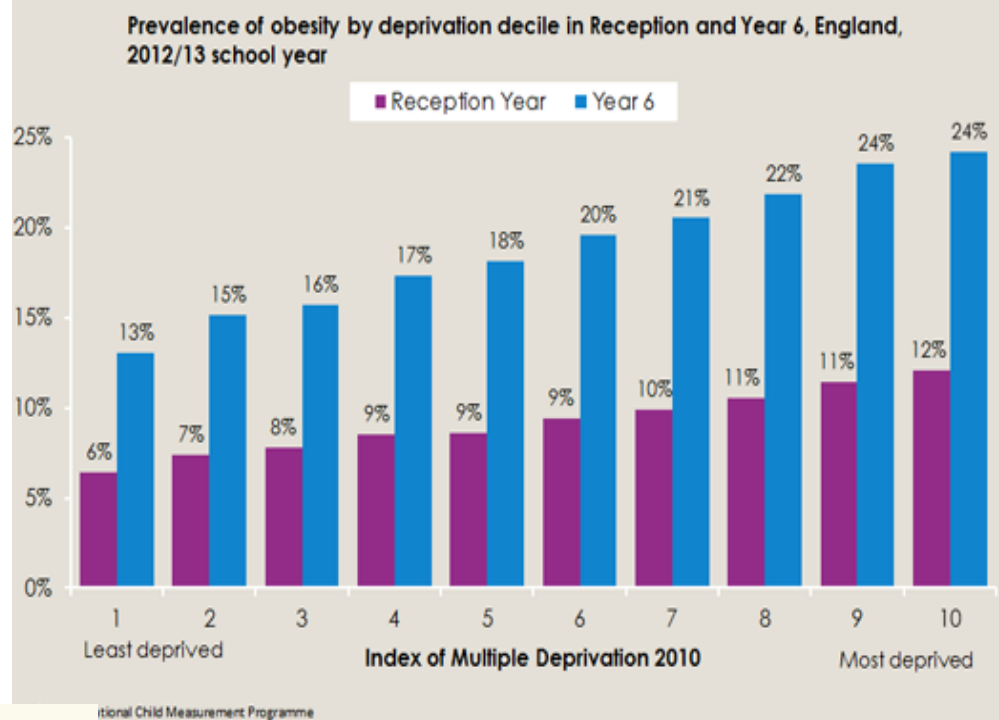
\* Including other discrete product categories such as energy drinks and confectionery.



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# Poorest children and families are already paying the price



## ‘Do nothing’ is not an option

Figure 1: Percentage of five-year-old children with decay experience by region, 2012



Let's help to stop this from being the norm!