

2020

## SLEEP MANIFESTO

# THE WAKE UP CALL

FROM  
THE SLEEP COUNCIL &  
THE SLEEP CHARITY

A COLLABORATION OF



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**“Our vision is to raise the profile of sleep as a major factor for health and wellbeing and to ensure that sleep becomes a key issue on the Public Health Agenda.”**

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# FOREWORD

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**Sleep is essential for our health and wellbeing yet it is estimated that 40% of the population suffer with sleep issues and many do not get the support that they need.**

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**“One million people used z-drugs for insomnia between 2017-2018.”<sup>3</sup>**

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Research clearly demonstrates that if we do not get adequate sleep our physical and mental health can be adversely affected.<sup>1</sup> Despite the overwhelming amount of evidence to underline the importance of sleep, there is very little support available to improve sleep patterns.

This manifesto sets out to provide the nation with a ‘Wake Up Call’ and to urge the government to recognise and act upon the importance of sleep as part of a healthy balanced lifestyle.

We are campaigning out of respect, care and support for those suffering with sleep issues and the families and professionals trying to support them. The resources currently being made available to them are inadequate or non-existent. Intervention should be offered at the first opportunity to prevent sleep issues escalating – it takes around six months for a sleep issue to become a sleep disorder.

We are calling for improvements to the support available and to ensure that sleep is taken seriously across all age groups. Poor sleep impacts significantly on day to day life and is costly for society.<sup>1</sup>

Joining forces, The Sleep Council and The Sleep Charity are bringing the importance of SLEEP to the attention of the government.

Our manifesto outlines three key measures informed by the views of those we support and the professionals we work with. If we take steps to improve the nation’s sleep, we will make a transformational difference to the lives and wellbeing of the nation.

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**“Sleep is as vital to survival as food and water.”<sup>2</sup>**

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## WHO WE ARE



The Sleep Charity is a national award-winning charity, set up to support children, young people and their families with sleep issues. It provides accredited training for professionals and families, is actively involved in research projects and aims to raise the profile of the importance of sleep for young people.



The Sleep Council is an independent authority on sleep health and has been sharing tips and tools for restorative sleep, supporting research, moving sleep up the public health agenda and growing partnerships to amplify its impact for 25 years.

**Both organisations are committed to raising awareness of the importance of sleep for better physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing.**

**By working together we will better achieve our mutual goal of providing care and sleep support to those in need.**





# WHY DOES SLEEP MATTER?

**Good quality sleep is critically important to support wellbeing from cradle to grave. It is a basic and fundamental human requirement and is essential for good physical, mental and emotional health.**

**Poor sleep and fatigue are common problems affecting millions of people world-wide. It is thought that around a third of all adults in the UK get less than six hours of sleep per night.<sup>4</sup>**

Research shows that those who frequently get fewer than six hours a night are at significantly increased risk of stroke and heart disease.<sup>5</sup> Evidence also suggests that not sleeping enough may ramp up the 'fight or flight' response to stress, releasing hormones that speed up heart rate and raise blood pressure.<sup>6</sup>

In children and young people, poor sleep patterns adversely affect learning and cognitive ability<sup>7</sup> which means they often fail to meet their full potential in school. Sleep deprivation is also linked to obesity.<sup>8</sup> Children's sleep problems are associated with high levels of parental stress<sup>9</sup> and increase the risk of day time behavioural problems.<sup>10</sup>

**Our manifesto outlines three key areas where improvement is needed:**

1

There must be greater understanding and recognition of the impact that sleep issues have on individuals, families and society

2

Those with sleep issues have a right to support at the earliest possible stage

3

High quality support should be available for those with sleep issues and underpinned by government policy

## 1

## There must be greater understanding and recognition about the impact that sleep issues have on individuals, families and on society.

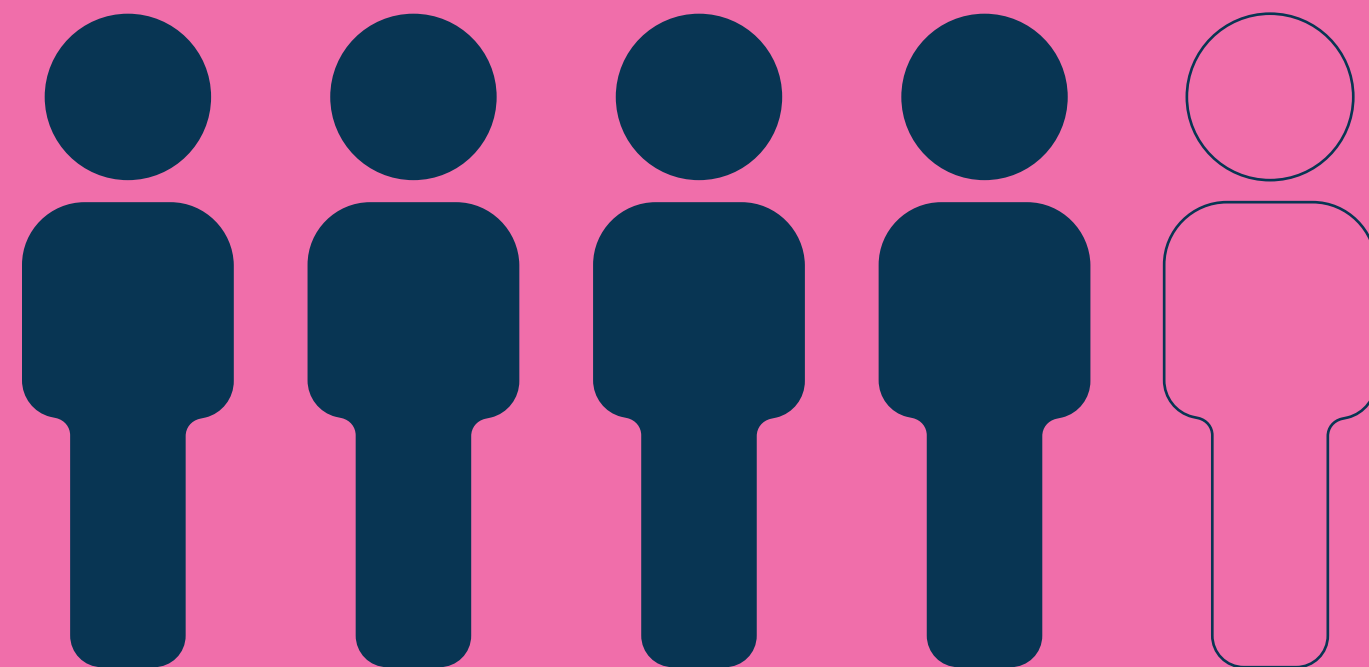
- Improve the public's understanding of sleep to prevent and address sleep issues
- Improve employers' understanding of sleep and to tackle the negative culture around sleep
- Must invest in basic training for professionals to support their understanding of the importance of good sleep

Clear plans and investment are needed to address the nation's sleep issues. A greater understanding of sleep will ensure a healthier society, supporting better mental, physical and emotional wellbeing. It will also save costs.

Sleep needs to be recognised as a vital component of mental health. Links between sleep and depression are strong. Approximately three quarters of depressed patients have insomnia symptoms.<sup>11</sup> Sleep disturbance is common in patients reporting suicidal thoughts.<sup>12</sup> Post natal depression is also associated with sleep deprivation.<sup>13</sup>

The negative culture around sleep needs to be addressed. When people suffer from sleep deprivation it feeds into so many areas of their life – including loneliness. People feel lonely when they're up all night by themselves, because there is no widely available support for them and because they may feel embarrassed or judged if they were to talk about it.

Every opportunity must be taken to build sleep education programmes within schools. Employers need to consider sleep issues as part of their staff's wellbeing, shift workers need to be supported appropriately and professionals who support those with sleep issues must receive appropriate training.



**The government must produce a long-term strategy that will increase awareness on a wide scale about the importance of sleep. The strategy should include spending commitments to ensure a campaign is sustained and given time to have an impact embedding it in schools and ensuring professionals are appropriately trained.**

ALMOST

4 in 5

**LONG TERM POOR SLEEPERS SUFFER FROM LOW MOOD AND ARE SEVEN TIMES MORE LIKELY TO FEEL HELPLESS AND FIVE TIMES MORE LIKELY TO FEEL ALONE.<sup>14</sup>**

[HTTPS://WWW.SLEEPID.COM/2012REPORT/](https://www.sleepio.com/2012report/)



## 2

## Those with sleep issues have a right to support at the earliest possible stage

- Sleep issues must be taken seriously when reported to professionals
- A tiered system must be in place to ensure timely assessment and appropriate support is offered
- Accessible, evidence based information must be available
- Sleep support to be offered using a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Insomnia (CBTi) model (where appropriate) prior to prescriptive medication by dedicated professionals specialising in sleep

Good quality and adequate sleep plays a vital role in the wellbeing of individuals.<sup>15</sup> When sleep issues arise, access to timely, first-class, evidence-based sleep support is important.

There are currently limited support services across the country meaning sleep intervention is somewhat of a postcode lottery. If sleep is properly evaluated and treated at the earliest opportunity with behavioural strategies or CBTi it can reduce the need for prescription drugs for both adults and children.<sup>16</sup> Staff need to be identified and dedicated to providing specialist sleep support.



The government must recognise that investing in sleep support is vitally important for the nation's wellbeing. The government must work with specialists in the field who will provide evidence of models of working that are highly effective and cost saving.

- Healthcare professionals must have access to evidence-based training and information to be able to offer appropriate support.
- Education professionals must have access to training in order to understand the importance of sleep for attainment and to be able to support youngsters appropriately with sleep education.
- Parents/carers must be provided with sleep information and education.



## 3

## High quality support should be available for everyone with sleep issues and underpinned by government policy

- Sleep support must feature in government policies and practice
- Sleep education must be provided to parents, employers and health professionals
- Designated professionals must be appropriately trained to offer support

Despite overwhelming evidence demonstrating the importance of sleep, it is still frequently overlooked. The government must acknowledge that sleep is vitally important and that sleep issues often cause some of the bigger issues being dealt with in society. For example sleep deprived drivers have higher odds of being involved in and causing road traffic accidents.<sup>17</sup>

Due to shifts in their circadian rhythms, adolescents often experience sleep issues, impacting on their daytime functioning, mood and potential attainment in school. They also often experience heightened stress levels due to exams. Stress can result in shorter sleep, more fragmented sleep and less deep sleep<sup>2</sup>. With sleep support this can be effectively managed. If parents and professionals were educated about sleep, they would be able to support youngsters in adjusting sleep patterns to meet their full potential and to improve overall health.



We call on the government to:

- Ensure that sleep is a critical part of the Change4Life agenda, a trusted and recognised campaign. By utilising this successful campaign to include sleep, the government could easily boost awareness of the benefits of better sleep, while linking to the benefits of good diet and an active lifestyle.
- Ensure employers have a duty of care and responsibility for health and safety in the workplace. This should include reviewing guidelines around sleep to decrease the risk of workplace and driving accidents.
- Provide sleep support and information through education to youngsters and their parents as well as staff training.



# WHY WE CAN'T AFFORD TO IGNORE SLEEP ISSUES ANY LONGER

## OBESITY

SAVING OF  
**£300m**

Studies suggest that if levels of obesity could be reduced by 1% every year from the predicted trend between 2015 and 2035, **£300 million could be saved in direct health and social care costs in the year 2035 alone.**<sup>21</sup>

Sleep is the 'most sedentary activity' yet may be the only one that protects from weight gain.<sup>18</sup>

2014 - 2015  
**£6.1bn**

The NHS spent **£6.1 billion in 2014-15 on the direct medical costs of conditions related to being overweight or obese.** This accounts for 5% of the entire budget of the NHS.<sup>19</sup>

2050  
**£9.7bn**

It is predicted that the costs will reach **£9.7 billion by 2050**, with wider costs to society estimated to reach **£49.9 billion per year.**<sup>20,21</sup>

2035  
**£2.5bn**

By 2035 the increasing rate of diseases associated with obesity such as heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, stroke and cancer has been estimated to cost an extra **£2.5 billion per year.**<sup>22</sup>



## ROAD TRAFFIC SAFETY/ DRIVER FATIGUE

**1 in 6**

One in six crashes resulting in death and injury on motorways and A roads were fatigue related.<sup>23</sup>

Driving when tired can be **as dangerous as drink-driving** and is a significant factor in many rear end crashes.<sup>24</sup>

SAVING OF  
**£128m**

With research suggesting one in five accidents on major roads are sleep related, and these accidents are more likely to result in fatality or serious injury<sup>26</sup>, the potential savings could be as high as **£128 million**.

**£19bn**

Total value of prevention of unreported injury accidents is at around £19bn a year.

**£5bn**

Value of damage-only accidents at around £5bn a year.

**£12bn**

Total value of prevention of reported injury accidents at around £12bn a year.

**£35bn**

This gives a total estimate for all reported and unreported accidents of around £35bn per year.<sup>25</sup>

## SLEEP RELATED MEDICATION

SAVING OF  
**£5m**

If the annual cost of sleep medication is £50 million and could be reduced by just 10% this would **represent a £5 million saving**.

**£50m**

The NHS in England is spending almost **£50 million each year to ensure the nation gets a good night's sleep** and insomnia is a significant problem which now **affects more than one in three adults**.<sup>27</sup>

**21%**

Tiredness and fatigue are the primary cause of **one in five (21%) GP consultations in the UK**.<sup>28</sup>



## SLEEP DEPRIVATION AND THE ECONOMY

**£47bn**

**by 2030**

Sleep deprivation in the UK workforce costs the economy **£40.2 billion in loss of productivity** and it is estimated this will steadily **rise to £47 billion by 2030.**<sup>29</sup>

**ADDITIONAL  
\$29.9bn**

Small changes to sleep duration could have a big impact on the economy. For example, **if individuals that slept under six hours started sleeping six to seven hours then this could add \$29.9 billion to the UK economy.**<sup>29</sup>

**1.5%**

Those sleeping on average between six to seven hours still report about a 1.5 percentage point higher productivity loss compared to those sleeping seven to nine hours.

**2.4%**

Workers who sleep less than six hours per day report on average about a 2.4 percentage point higher productivity loss due to absenteeism or presenteeism than workers sleeping between seven to nine hours per day.

**3.7 Days**

Assuming there were 250 working days in a given year, a person sleeping six to seven hours loses on average about 3.7 working days due to absenteeism or presenteeism per year more than a worker sleeping seven to nine hours.<sup>29</sup>

**6 Days**

Assuming there were 250 working days in a given year, a worker sleeping less than six hours loses around 6 working days due to absenteeism or presenteeism per year more than a worker sleeping seven to nine hours.<sup>29</sup>

**200k**

There are 200,000 working days lost in the UK every year to insufficient sleep.<sup>29</sup>







# CONCLUSION

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**It is essential that sleep is taken seriously to support the nation's wellbeing. We call upon the Government to Wake Up to the importance of sleep and to champion better sleep health for everyone.**

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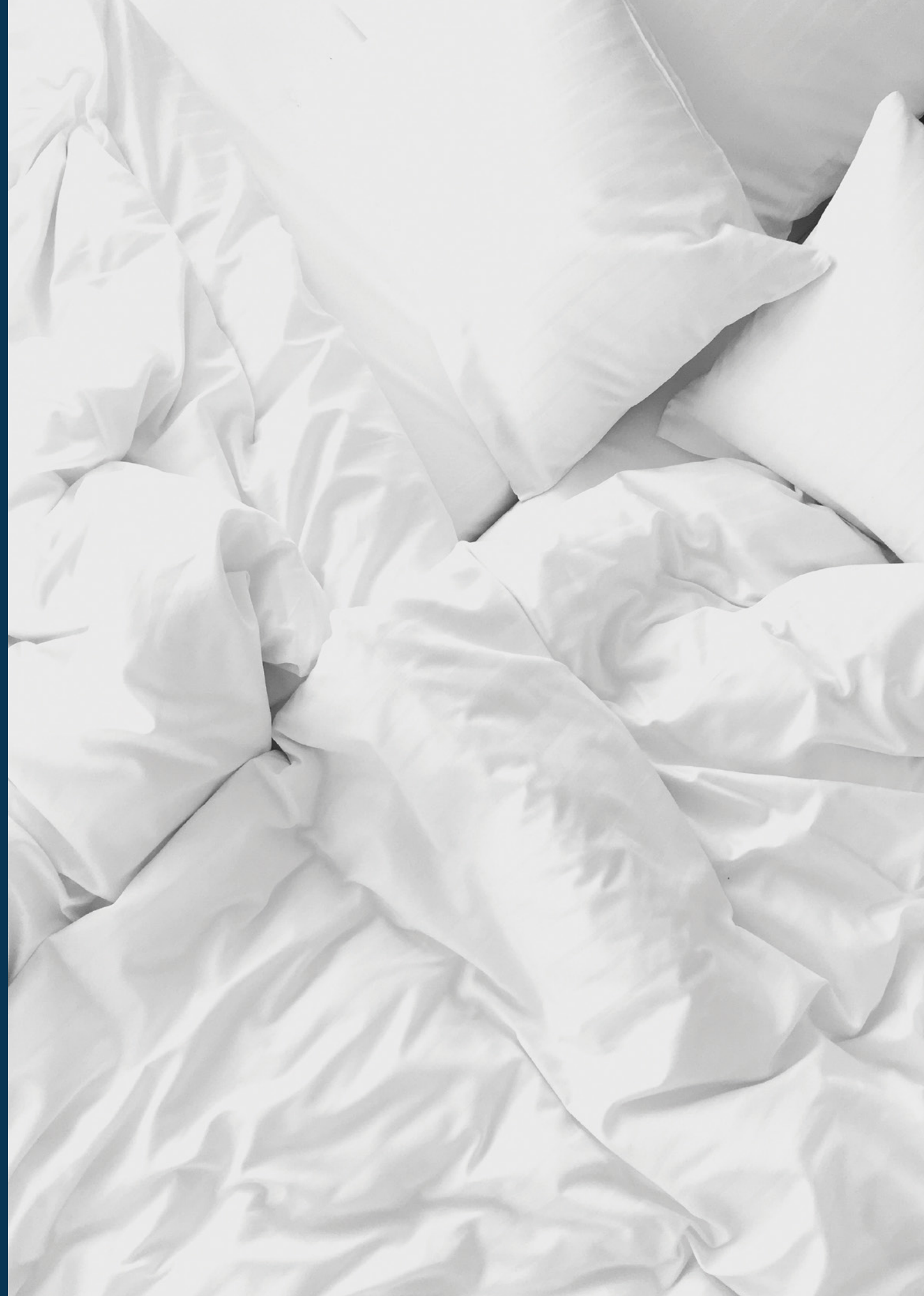
While diet and exercise have their parts to play in a healthier Britain, SLEEP is the catalyst that makes diet and exercise more effective – whilst also delivering significant additional health benefits. Clinicians are already 'prescribing' exercise, it is now time to 'prescribe sleep' to the nation.

A good night's rest is essential to a healthy lifestyle – protecting you physically and mentally as well as boosting your quality of living.



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