Prevention of childhood obesity has proved much more challenging than might have been expected, and the aetiology of childhood obesity is more complex than it might seem. In addition, in the UK there has been a marked gulf between the research evidence on aetiology and prevention and the policy action on prevention. The presentation will start by considering the knowledge of UK policymakers on targets for childhood obesity prevention, and the tendency of UK policy to be generally unresponsive to research evidence, yet sometimes overly sensitive to findings of individual studies. It will consider briefly the most well established behavioural targets for obesity prevention interventions, recent systematic reviews, and the most promising school and community based interventions aimed at childhood obesity prevention. Finally, the presentation will consider some emerging evidence, and the challenges this evidence might present for childhood obesity prevention in future: the size of the energy imbalance experienced by contemporary children and adolescents and the consequences this has for the magnitude of lifestyle changes required to prevent obesity; heterogeneity in the aetiology of obesity; heterogeneity in the prevention of obesity; the ‘natural history’ of excess weight gain as well as obesity in contemporary children and adolescents, using an example from the ALSPAC cohort study in England; the importance of evidence on incidence and persistence of obesity, in addition to the more commonly studied prevalence.

**Presenter:**
Professor John Reilly  
University of Glasgow

John Reilly holds a personal chair in Paediatric Energy Metabolism at the University of Glasgow, Scotland. He leads the child energy balance research group at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Glasgow. His research includes work on the diagnosis, consequences, aetiology, prevention, and treatment of childhood obesity, in both developed and developing countries. The work uses a wide variety of approaches including systematic reviews, randomised controlled trials of interventions, mechanistic studies, methodological studies, and longitudinal observational studies of birth cohorts. He is Associate Editor of the International Journal of Pediatric Obesity.

**When**
Thursday 28th October  
12.30 to 1.30pm

**Where**
Mackinnon building  
67.302