

How to lower obesity, health inequalities, diabetes and heart disease and make healthcare savings – at negligible cost

Fran Bernhardt
fran@sustainweb.org





Children's health & climate

- Unhealthy food advertising → higher risk of food related ill health
- More deprived neighbourhoods more exposed to unhealthy food advertising
- Worsens health inequalities
- Common ingredients associated with climate damage

Olsen J.R. et al. [Exposure to unhealthy commodity advertising: Spatial proximity analysis to schools and socio-economic inequalities measured using Scottish Children's individual-level GPS data](#). Health & Place. 2021. 68: article 102507

NEWS

Tube 'junk food' advert ban announced by London mayor

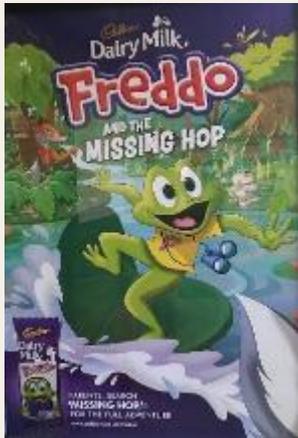
© 23 November 2018 | Comments



What is the Healthier Food Advertising Policy?

- Robustly restricts unhealthy food & drink adverts
- First implemented by Mayor of London in 2019
- Uses the UK Government Nutrient Profiling Model
- Interest from governments all over the world & the UK

2018



present



20% DECREASE IN SUGARY PURCHASES



Yau, A. et al (2022) [Changes in household food and drink purchases following restrictions on the advertisement of high fat, salt, and sugar products across the Transport for London network: A controlled interrupted time series analysis](#). PLOS Medicine.



Expected to prevent:

- 100,000 cases of obesity
- 3000 cases of type 2 diabetes
- 2000 cases of heart disease

Save the NHS £218million
(approx. 252million euros)

Thomas, C. et al (2022). [The health, cost and equity impacts of restrictions on the advertisement of high fat, salt and sugar products across the transport for London network: a health economic modelling study](#). International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity.



Advertising revenues maintained

- Transport for London's revenues increased since the policy
- No local government lost money from this policy



Transport for London. [Transport for London advertising report 2018/19 and 2019/20.](#)

Companies switched the spotlight to healthier products

BEFORE

Healthier Food Advertising Policy
(summer 2018)



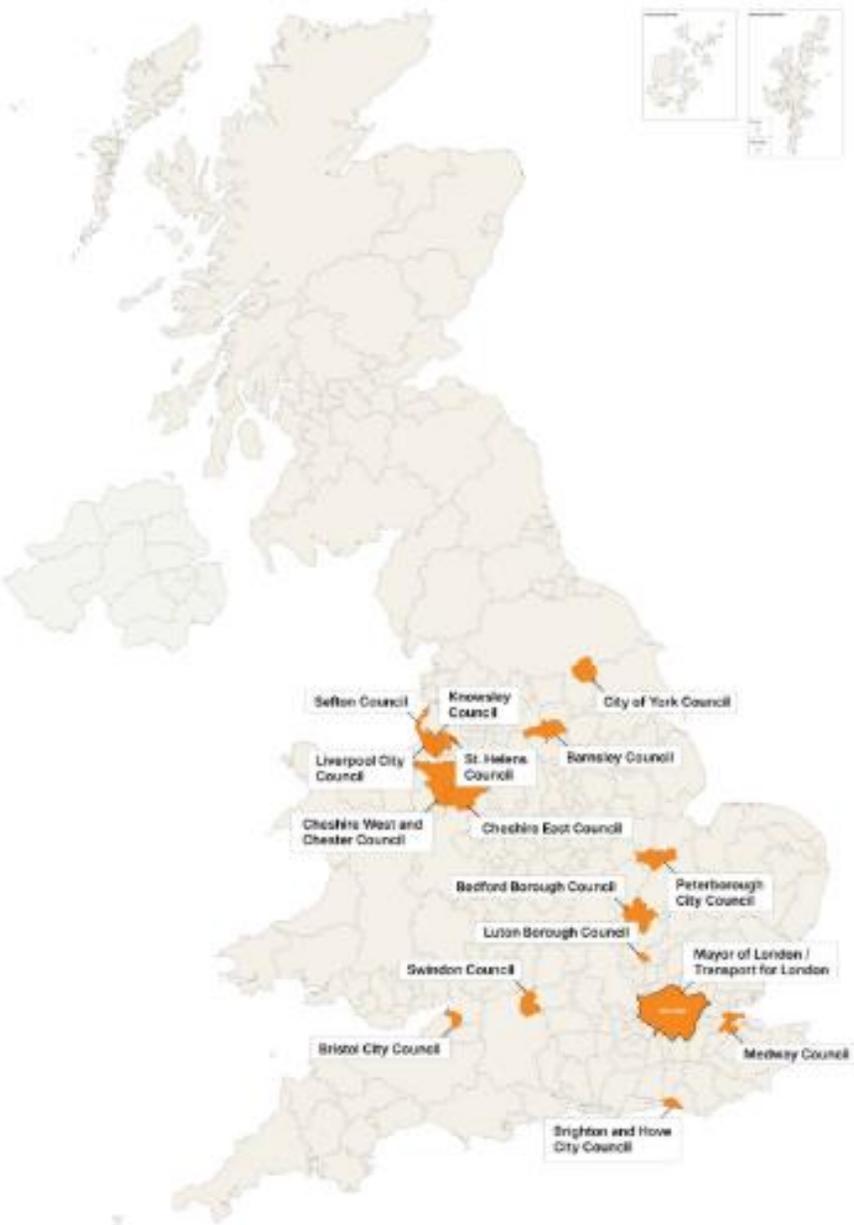
AFTER

Healthier Food Advertising Policy
(summer 2019)



Implemented policies so far

- Transport for London policy implemented in 2019
- Plus 25 local governments since then
 - 10 London boroughs
 - 15 English local governments outside London
- Over 150 UK local governments consulting Sustain for support to bring in their own policy





Extended to comprehensive commercial baby food advertising restriction

First ever policy to restrict advertising for:

- Unhealthy foods & drinks (NPM)
- inappropriately marketed breastmilk substitutes & follow-on milks (WHO code)
- inappropriately marketed commercial baby foods & other drinks (WHO NPPM)

Hounslow Council (Oct 2024), Knowsley Council (July 2025), Kingston (Sept 2025)



Medicine and working class students p 68

Call for medical academia revolution p 90

Updated guidance on CADE of polyps p 98

How to evaluate chest pain in A&E p 104

1-2 April features in the education pages

— THE —
BATTLE
TO BAN
JUNK
FOOD ADS



Industry lobbying against local governments

- Advertising industry using tobacco tactics against local governments
- Transport for London policy heavily lobbied by industry
- Press stories strongly critical to undermine the policy

Borland, S. (2025). [Bans on junk food advertising in outdoor spaces derailed by industry lobbying](#). The BMJ.

Lauber, K., et al. (2021). [Corporate political activity in the context of unhealthy food advertising restrictions across Transport for London: A qualitative case study](#). PLOS Medicine.

Thompson, C., et al. (2021). [Media representations of opposition to the 'junk food advertising ban' on the Transport for London \(TfL\) network: A thematic content analysis of UK news and trade press](#). SSM – Population Health.



Strategy

- Governments must carefully navigate around industry interference
- Tough balance:
 - Gathering support
 - Maintaining discretion
- Follow good practice otherwise minimal changes to advertising at best

Clear Channel



Resources

Can provide support and advise on individual policies

Plus:

- Website: case studies, news, what good looks like, map, evidence
- Toolkit: how to guide





Summary

- Powerful tool: Healthier food advertising policies improve health
- Precedent: 7 years of implemented policies
- Evidence: reductions in food related ill health & advertising revenues maintained
- No brand is banned: switch the spotlight from unhealthy products to healthier products
- Need robustness: Strong definitions, policy guidance & implementation
- Opposition: Intense lobbying & pushback from vested interests so need to work up strategically



Any Questions?

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