



# Encouraging Healthier Takeaways in Low-income Communities:

Tools to support those working to encourage healthier catering amongst fast food takeaways



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# Introduction



This toolkit is designed to support public health staff working to encourage healthier catering amongst fast food outlets. The specific focus is on independent businesses operating in low income communities. The aim is to shape an aspect of the food environment which impacts on inequalities in health.

The increasing consumption of food eaten outside the home and in particular fast food is thought to be one of a number of contributory factors leading to rising levels of obesity.<sup>1</sup> Fast food tends to be more energy dense and has a higher fat content than meals prepared at home.<sup>2</sup> Levels of fast food consumption have been increasing in recent years. The economic downturn and reduced purchasing power has pushed consumers to cut back and trade down, replacing restaurant meals with fast foods.<sup>3</sup> According to the Food Standards Agency, in the UK, one in 6 meals is now consumed outside the home.<sup>4</sup>

Public Health England, has indicated that it expects obesity to be one of its six priorities for attention in its Framework paper promised for August 2014. In devolving responsibility for public health to local authorities, it has charged local bodies with reporting on outcomes regarding excess weight in children and adults and a wide range of health inequalities indicators.<sup>5</sup> They are expected to act not only on immediate lifestyle factors but also upstream social determinants that shape lifestyle behaviour. In light of these developments strategies for encouraging improvements to the takeaway offering are attracting widespread attention.

Furthermore central government is committed to reducing inequalities in health status amongst population groups. Research suggests that obesity tends to be more prevalent in areas with a high concentration of fast-food takeaways,<sup>6</sup> and that outlets are often concentrated in areas of deprivation.<sup>7</sup> Data analysed by the Greater London Authority (GLA), for example, suggests that the London boroughs with the highest concentration of fast food takeaways tend to also rank amongst the most deprived boroughs in the capital<sup>8</sup>. Takeaways operating in these areas often find it particularly challenging to adopt

healthier menus and catering practices whilst still keeping their prices affordable. Many healthier catering initiatives have had little impact in these areas as a result.

This toolkit is designed to help address this problem. It is the result of research funded by the Economic and Social Science Research Council and undertaken by the Cities Institute at London Metropolitan University, in partnership with the Greater London Authority (GLA), the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), the Association of London Environmental Health Managers (ALEHM) and a network of public health officers involved in the London-based *Healthier Catering Commitment*. The key aim of the research was to:

- identify business models that enable independent fast food outlets to adopt healthier menus and catering practices without compromising the profitability of their business
- enable public health staff to have a better understanding of the operational barriers which may make it difficult for businesses to make healthier changes
- work with businesses and public health officials to identify further behaviour change strategies that can successfully be used by fast food businesses to encourage healthier consumption patterns amongst their customers
- work with suppliers of independent fast food outlets to identify ways in which products can be reformulated or promoted to encourage businesses to purchase healthier varieties

The research has involved a survey of over 30 healthier catering initiatives across the UK, and a detailed analysis of 30 independent fast food businesses operating in deprived areas across London which have successfully managed to introduce healthier catering practices. The objective has been to identify what healthier changes can realistically be adopted by different types of fast food takeaways operating in these environments and what type of intervention strategy works in each case. Where the barriers to change at the retail level are insurmountable action higher up the supply chain may be required if real differences are to be achieved, and the research also set out to explore this issue.



# Introduction



## Why a new toolkit?

There are now a number of toolkits, and guidance sheets designed to offer different types of fast food takeaways advice on healthier changes they can make to their menu and catering practices. This toolkit is not designed to replicate the wide range of valuable advice offered by these resources. Instead it aims to complement existing advice by focusing particularly on the business perspective, acknowledging the challenges of trading in more deprived areas, and identifying strategies for change which will not compromise business profitability. It also addresses the need for case studies of fast food takeaways operating in such areas that have successfully managed to adopt healthier business practices and which can provide learning points for others to consider.

The toolkit is a web based resource and is available on the IFSIP website [www.ifsip.org](http://www.ifsip.org) where videos illustrating some of the case studies and initiatives can be found.

<sup>1</sup> GOS, 2007 Tackling Obesities: Future Choices Government Office of Science, Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, London.

<sup>2</sup> Prentice A and Jebb S (2003), "Fast foods, energy density and obesity: a possible mechanistic link". *Obesity Review*, 4 (4) 187-94

<sup>3</sup> Euromonitor (2013) Fast Food in the United Kingdom Available from <http://www.euromonitor.com/fast-food-in-the-united-kingdom/report> Downloaded 4th July 2014

<sup>4</sup> NHS Choices (2014) "Restaurant dining 'as calorific as fast food'" <http://www.nhs.uk/news/2014/08August/Pages/restaurant-dining-as-calorific-as-fast-food.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> Public Health England <http://www.phoutcomes.info/public-health-outcomes-framework#gid/1000042/pat/6/ati/102/page/0/par/E12000004/are/E06000015>, accessed 3rd Sept 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Currie J, Della Vigna S, Moretti E, Pathania V, (2009), *The effect of fast food restaurants on obesity*. The National Bureau of Economic Research, 1050 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA Fraser L et al., (2010), The geography of fast food outlets: a review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 7 (5), 2290-2308.

De Vogli R., Kouvonen A, and Gimeno, D. (2011). "'Globoziation': ecological evidence on the relationship between fast food outlets and obesity among 26 advanced economies". *Critical Public Health*, 21 (4), 395-402.

<sup>7</sup> Macdonald L, Cummins S, and Macintyre S. (2007). "Neighbourhood fast food environment and area deprivation-substitution or concentration?" *Appetite*, 49(1) 251-254. Pearce J et al., (2007). "Neighbourhood Deprivation and Access to Fast-Food Retailing A National Study". *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 32(5): 375-382.

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Fraser L et al (2010). "The geography of fast food outlets: a review". *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 7 (5), 2290-2308.

<sup>8</sup> GLA (2012) Fast Food City – Mayor urges action on healthier eating. 18th November. Available from <http://www.london.gov.uk/media/mayor-press-releases/2012/11/fast-food-city-mayor-urges-action-on-healthier-eating>





# How to use the toolkit

The toolkit is arranged into seven sections each of which will help with the different stages of planning and delivering healthier catering initiatives with fast food takeaways operating in low income communities.

## Section 1

### Understanding the business barriers to adopting healthier catering practices

This section focuses on the challenges fast food outlets operating in low income communities face. Understanding these barriers is an important pre-cursor to the development of successful interventions.

## Section 2

### Designing an intervention

This section draws on research on healthier catering initiatives from across the UK which has identified what works with particular types of businesses in more deprived areas. It outlines the advantages and disadvantages of different types of schemes and the contexts in which they seem to work best.

## Section 3

### Strategies for engaging fast food takeaways in an intervention

This section looks at techniques for engaging businesses in healthier catering initiatives. It is designed to help those establishing and managing a healthier catering initiative identify the best approach to adopt with businesses in their local area.

## Section 4

### Viable healthier business models

This section looks at changes that businesses can make without compromising their profitability. It emphasises the importance of understanding the local market, suggests a number of different business models that work, and introduces the idea of a healthier marketing mix.

## Section 5

### Case studies

This section provides best practice case studies of initiatives and businesses offering different food types.

## Section 6

### Towards healthier catering

This section emphasises the wider context and the need for a whole systems approach to be adopted, including action across the supply chain.

## Section 7

### Links and resources

This section gives links to other resource materials that can support work in this area.



# Section 1

## Understanding the business barriers to adopting healthier catering practices

### Summary

Small independent takeaways trading in low income communities face a number of particular barriers which may make it harder for them to adopt healthier catering practices than businesses based in more affluent areas. These barriers include:

- The highly competitive nature of the market place
- The limited menus they tend to provide which offer less scope for making changes
- Poor premises or a lack of equipment and skills needed to adopt many healthier catering practices
- Difficulty in accessing healthier products through the supply chain as suppliers are not promoting these

### The highly competitive nature of the market place

Small businesses trading in deprived areas tend to be constrained by under-performing economies, often occupying precarious market niches and pursuing desperate survival strategies.<sup>9</sup> The economic potential of such businesses is likely to remain relatively fixed, with or without support.<sup>10</sup>

The nature of fast food outlets in these areas tends to involve a very simple business formula selling a limited range of cheap deep fat fried food. Deep fat frying is a fairly simple, low skill operation which can easily be learnt. The relatively low start-up costs and the cash based nature of the business which allow for staff to be hired on an informal basis also make it an attractive business option. However the low entry threshold means that it is a business model that can easily be copied, and as a result these types of businesses have proliferated rapidly in low income communities. On West Green Road in the London Borough of Haringey, for example, a recent survey found 34 takeaways in a little over a mile including 10 fried chicken shops, seven basic cafes and an array of Chinese and Caribbean takeaways – all undercutting school canteen prices and with five schools in the immediate vicinity providing a ready market.<sup>11</sup>



Not surprisingly encouraging healthier catering in such a context is particularly challenging. An evaluation of one particular initiative in London – the *Healthier Catering Commitment* (HCC), suggested that healthier catering initiatives are less likely to be adopted by fast food takeaways in deprived areas as businesses face particular barriers to making the healthier changes.<sup>12</sup> Businesses trading in deprived areas have also been found to have lower Food Standards Authority (FSA) food hygiene scores,<sup>13</sup> thus excluding many from participating in many healthier catering initiatives where a minimum level 3\* score is required.

The competitive nature of the market means that businesses are likely to be very reluctant to make any changes that they feel might deter customers and have a negative impact on their profits. Most of the businesses we interviewed had not felt able to raise their prices for over

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2 years, despite rising costs. Those implementing healthier catering schemes reported that they had to overcome resistance to change from businesses regarding a number of issues, in particular:

### i) Healthier options cost more

Healthier options such as fruit and vegetables, or cooking oils with a lower saturated fat content, are often more expensive to buy. Rapeseed oil typically costs 25% more than the less healthy vegetable oil for example. Wedges cost more than chips and take longer to cook thus consuming more energy. Grilling food also tends to be more expensive than frying. Businesses, particularly those operating in deprived areas do not want to pass on the additional costs to their customers. Identifying changes that can be made which can save businesses money, or that are at least cost neutral, is crucial to the successful implementation of a healthy catering initiative in these areas.

### ii) A fear that customers won't want healthier options

Some businesses are reluctant to reduce the portion sizes of chips or use smaller cartons as they believe they will lose customers. Slough's *Catering for Health* scheme found that smaller independent businesses were wary of the award as they felt it would require them to stock food (such as fresh fruit and salad) that would not sell and would be wasted – costing the business money.

### iii) A fear that customers won't like changes to recipes or cooking practices

Those involved in providing many ethnic cuisines are often concerned about making changes to traditional recipes in case customers do not like them. Similarly some fish and chip shops believe that if they changed the type of oil they used this would affect the taste of the chips.

### iv) Limited menus offering less scope for making changes

Some types of fast food businesses offer a wider menu than others and thus have a greater scope for adapting it to include some healthier choices. Indian and Chinese takeaways, for example, have more scope for making changes as they can offer more vegetables and often cook using tandoors.



## Resource Constraints

### i) Lack of space and the right equipment, or resources

Businesses may not have the space for the equipment required to grill or roast food or the necessary finance to purchase it if they do have the space. This limits the changes they are able to make. Some even find it difficult to achieve a 3\* Food Hygiene rating as their premises are in a poor state of repair and are difficult to keep clean. A business identified during one study only had an old deep fat fryer which was just not capable of reaching the required optimum temperature of 170 degrees required by the local healthy catering scheme<sup>14</sup>.

If businesses do start offering healthier products they may not have the resources to change their menus and menu boards. New menu boards can cost around £2,000.

### ii) The time and energy required to make the changes

Some businesses do not feel that the time and energy that has to be invested in making healthier changes will be worth the effort. Many businesses only have one or two staff and time is a key factor. Some ethnic cuisines are very complex and include a lot of ingredients. Making changes to traditional menus in these contexts requires a lot of intensive nutritional support.

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## Understanding the business barriers to adopting healthier catering practices

### iii) Some of the recommended changes are difficult to implement in busy outlets

Those involved in the deep fat frying of chips have frequently been advised to adopt a technique known as shake, bang, hang which involves shaking the chips and banging the wire scoop several times. This can reduce fat absorption by 20%. However in busy outlets this reportedly takes too long and customers are kept waiting and get annoyed as a result. Similarly grilling food takes longer than frying and customers may not be willing to wait.

The introduction of a 5-hole salt shaker which dispenses less salt than the traditional 17 hole variety has resulted in long queues, particularly, in fish and chip shops, as customers take longer to dispense the amount of salt they have become used to.

### Difficulties with the supply chain

Businesses are often constrained in what they can do by the nature of their supply chain. The supply chain is highly concentrated. For instance, our research suggests that three large suppliers (A-Z, Star, and JJs) provide the key ingredients for most small independents in low income areas. Healthier varieties are available but are often difficult for businesses to identify in what is often a bewildering array of different products on offer. The healthier products also tend to cost more which acts as a major disincentive to purchase as these additional costs cannot be passed on to the customer. Rapeseed oil costs 25% more than the less healthy vegetable oil for example. Many takeaways are tied into deals with Coca Cola or Pepsi Ltd whereby in return for a free fridge they are obliged to keep it stocked with at least 75-85% of these branded drinks rather than the water or fruit juices advocated by the healthier catering initiatives. The drinks portrayed on menu boards are typically pepsi or coca cola since these tend to be the only pictures available from businesses supplying

standard images for this purpose. These brands feature in the low cost meal-deals. For many businesses sweetened drinks were a major item in their turnover.

Some businesses are not large enough to warrant the purchase of large quantities of ingredients yet some suppliers do not stock the healthier varieties in smaller sizes. Businesses in Slough for example were able to buy a massive tub of tuna in spring water but smaller cans of tuna were only available in brine.

**A lot of time needs to be spent on intensive outreach work to overcome some of these barriers particularly in more deprived areas where the managers of some fast food outlets do not have English as their first language.**



**CHP131: AAA Grade Julienne Chips – 5x2.5kg**

**Collection £6.99  
Delivery £7.49**



**McCain Alternatives 5% Fat Wedges – 4x2.5kg**

**Collection £15.59  
Delivery £15.99**

<sup>9</sup> Jones T and Ram M (2011) "Ethnic entrepreneurs and urban regeneration" in A Southern (eds) *Enterprise, deprivation and social exclusion: the role of small business in addressing social and economic inequalities* London: Routledge,

<sup>10</sup> Williams N and Huggins R (2013) "Supporting entrepreneurship in deprived communities: a vision too far?" *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development* 20 (1) 165-180

<sup>11</sup> Sunday Mirror (2014) *Fast Food Mile*, Sunday Mirror, 27th April 2014

<sup>12</sup> Bagwell S and Doff S (2009) *Fast food outlets in Tower Hamlets and the provision of healthier food choices*. Cities Institute, London Metropolitan University

<sup>13</sup> Collins B. (2013) Food hygiene, deprivation, types of premises and rates of gastrointestinal illnesses in the UK, *Public Health Nutrition*. FirstView Article pp 1-7

<sup>14</sup> Bagwell S and Doff S (2012) *Evaluation of the Healthier Catering Commitment: West London Tri-Borough Pilot*, Cities Institute, London Metropolitan University





# Section 2

## Designing an intervention

### Summary

Prior to developing a new healthier catering scheme detailed research should be undertaken in the area targeted and with local takeaway businesses to determine what type of approach is likely to work best. Healthier catering interventions can be:

- Generic or specialist
- Offer awards (single or tiered) or not
- Be targeted on particular areas or cover the whole borough or county
- Be delivered by a range of public health safety enforcement officers, agencies or consultants, with or without the input of nutritionists or dieticians

Specialist initiatives focusing on a limited number of small changes that fast food takeaways are able to make are generally more likely to encourage healthier changes amongst businesses in deprived areas.

Adopting a whole systems approach by working in partnership with a wider range of different council departments and local community groups can help influence both the supply and demand for healthier food. Consumers can be encouraged to ask for healthier food which in turn helps persuade businesses to supply it.

Successful initiatives in deprived areas require a lot of outreach work and need to be well resourced



When designing a new healthier catering intervention there are a number of strategic choices which need to be made. The advantages and disadvantages of these different approaches are summarised here. The final decision on which approach is likely to work best in a given area needs to be based on the nature of the businesses and the local area being targeted.

### Generic or specialist scheme?

Healthier catering interventions with fast food takeaways may form part of a generic healthier catering initiatives or be specifically designed for takeaways.

**Generic schemes** generally encourage participation from a wide range of catering outlets including those selling fast food. Businesses targeted often include workplace canteens, nurseries, old people's homes, as well as restaurants, pubs, sandwich bars and takeaways. Examples of generic schemes include the *Eat Out Eat Well* scheme developed by Surrey county council and adopted in many parts of south and south-west England, and the *Healthier Catering Commitment* in London. Links to some other schemes are given in [section 7](#). Most schemes are designed to follow NHS guidance on healthier catering and nutrition practices which focus on the use of fats and oils, salt, sugar, milk and spreads, fruit and vegetables, portion sizes and promotion of healthier options. They also require the business to be broadly compliant with food hygiene standards – measured by scoring at least a 3\* on the Food Hygiene Rating Scale (FHRS). Generic schemes are often linked to an award (see below).

The advantage of a generic scheme is that a wide range of businesses can participate, thus increasing the general awareness of the scheme amongst both businesses and



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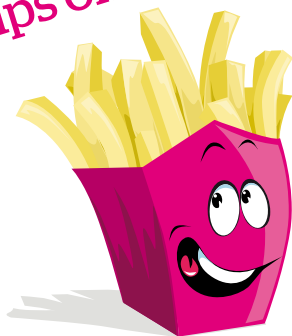
the public, which in turn may lead to greater take-up. However research suggests that most generic schemes generally find it harder to encourage the participation of fast food takeaways as the more limited menus provided by these types of businesses provide less scope for making the range of changes required<sup>15</sup>. The *Healthier Catering Commitment* scheme (HCC) operating in London has less stringent criteria, and no doubt as a result of this, has managed to encourage the participation of a significant number of takeaways. A recent pan-London evaluation of the HCC identified 20 of the 77 participating businesses to be takeaways.<sup>16</sup>

### Generic schemes with differing criteria for different food types

A few generic schemes have different criteria for different food types. The *Healthier Catering Commitment* scheme requires businesses involved in deep fat frying to meet an additional three criteria related to the use of oil in addition to the minimum eight required by all business types. In order to impact on the hard to reach groups such as takeaways in deprived areas *Wigan Healthy Business Award* targeted businesses based on their food type and created customised interventions such as the Fish and Chip shop intervention which focused on better frying practices and minimising oil absorption.

**Specialist initiatives** target particular food or business types – frequently those selling the least healthy types of fast food which find it difficult to comply with the changes required by other more generic healthier catering schemes. The *Eat Out Eat In Healthy* initiative run by the East Midlands Beacon Partnership, for example, worked with Indian restaurants, successfully encouraging them to reduce the oil and salt content of their curries. A number of local authorities have also worked with pizza outlets to encourage them to reduce the salt in pizzas, or have run frying workshops for businesses involved in deep fat frying. Specialist campaigns such as this which focus on a single issue such as salt reduction enable the business to concentrate on making a single important change at a time and are likely to be easier for takeaways to engage with.

**tips on chips**



Schemes such as the *Truckers Tucker* initiative (Stoke and Worcestershire), *Lighter Bites*, (Magherafelt in northern Ireland), the *Salt and Fat Reduction Project* in Stoke, and Slough and Shropshire's *TakeAways Projects*, all focused on a more limited number of simple but key changes that takeaways can make, particularly to reduce the saturated fat and salt content of food. These types of initiatives have tended to be time limited and involve an intensive amount of outreach work with businesses.

### Award or not?

Many schemes offer an award which businesses get when they have shown that they comply with a set number of healthier catering criteria. Whilst there are numerous local variations in these criteria most schemes follow general NHS guidance on healthy catering and nutrition practices which focus on the use of fats and oils, salt, sugar, milk and spreads, fruit and vegetables, portion size and promotion of healthier options. Virtually all the schemes also require the business premises to be broadly compliant with food hygiene standards – measured by scoring at least a 3\* on the food hygiene rating scale (FHRS). This unfortunately excludes a lot of businesses in some of the most deprived areas where fast food businesses in particular are less likely to be FHRS compliant.

Some schemes require businesses to demonstrate that they meet all the criteria to gain the award, others require a minimum number to be met or a certain percentage of menu items to be evaluated as healthy. The *Healthier Catering Commitment*, for example, is designed to enable all types of businesses to participate and only requires 8 of the 22 criteria to be met. The *Healthier Options* scheme in Norfolk, in contrast, requires businesses to comply with all 10 of its healthier criteria.

Schemes which require businesses to make a relatively limited number of changes are likely to be more accessible to fast food takeaways. The HCC argues that this encourages the engagement of some of the least healthy businesses who can then often be persuaded to make further changes. It also enables the scheme to gain a number of “quick wins” which can be promoted, thus encouraging others to participate. However if very few changes are required to gain an award it may be difficult to justify the investment involved in promoting and administering the scheme. It is clearly a question of finding the right balance for the particular local context.



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Specialist initiatives discussed above tend not to offer an award. In fact in some areas businesses are reluctant to publicise the fact that they have made healthier changes as they fear that these might not be welcomed by their customers. In such cases a health by stealth approach, in which small but significant changes are made which are likely to go unnoticed by customers, is preferable.

### Tiered or single awards?

Award schemes either have a single tier i.e. the business either passes or fails, or offer a tiered award – generally bronze, silver, and gold. The advantage of a tiered scheme is that businesses offering the healthiest menus and cooking practices can be recognised accordingly and others can progress from one level to the next. The key attraction for businesses is the increased publicity that they expect to follow from the award. However some businesses do not feel that a bronze award will reflect well on the business and will not participate at all in a healthier catering initiative unless they can get at least a silver award. The *Essex Healthy Eating Award* scheme only offers a silver and gold award as a result. Tower Hamlets *Food4Health* scheme now calls the former bronze level just a Food4Health award for the same reason.



Listen to Michele Sandelson from Tower Hamlets talking about the borough's Food4Health award scheme"

### Geographical targeting or whole area approach?

Schemes can either be targeted at businesses in the whole local authority area or targeted at particular areas. Many schemes targeting takeaways have made the deliberate decision to target businesses in particular areas – often close to secondary schools, or in deprived areas where there is a particular concern about the health impacts of fast food consumption.

A number of specialist initiatives targeting the least healthy types of fast food have targeted businesses serving school children or more disadvantaged communities. *The Lighter Bites* initiative in Magherafelt, in Northern Ireland, for example, worked with outlets known to be used extensively by secondary school children allowed out at lunchtime. The project helped businesses develop alternative menus with less saturated fat and salt content, testing the food and surveying businesses and consumers, to identify which were healthier and acceptable. *Truckers Tucker* targets mobile catering vans serving lorry drivers in laybys by the side of the road. In the London Borough of Islington the council worked with mobile vendors close to the Arsenal football stadium, and pizza outlets close to schools, involving the youth health forum in promoting businesses that had made healthier changes.

Where resources are scarce public health officials and other policy makers need to decide whether targeting a specific local area may be a more effective use of resources than a whole borough approach. Concentrating on a particular area might be a better way of encouraging all businesses in the area to sign up to a scheme. Once they see that all their competitors are on board they may not want to be left out. However the *Eat Out Eat In Healthy* initiative run by the East Midlands Beacon Partnership project adopted the deliberate strategy of working with Indian restaurants on different streets. Their experience suggested that if one restaurant adopted healthier changes that were successful others nearby would follow of their own accord. As a result they found that targeting restaurants in different areas led to a greater level of take-up and was thus a more efficient use of the team's resources.

### Who should manage and implement the initiative?

Healthier catering initiatives in the UK have been developed and delivered by a range of different local authority and external agencies. Environmental health departments



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tend to play a leading role as their remit of monitoring food safety and hygiene standards in food businesses brings them into regular contact with the businesses. This allows for a trusted relationship to be built up which provides an excellent foundation for introducing the idea of healthier catering practices. Trading standards have taken the lead in other areas (for example *Surrey Eat Out Eat Well* scheme, *Rhondda Cynon Taf Healthy Options Award*).

In some areas environment health officers delivering a scheme have been given basic nutritional training linked to the healthier catering criteria. In other areas funding has been available to draw on the expertise of a dietician or nutritionist who has been able to undertake more intensive work with businesses on the reformulation of recipes.

### Whole systems approaches

A whole systems approach to encouraging healthier catering focuses not just on fast food takeaways but the whole community in which they operate. Healthier catering initiatives with businesses form part of a suite of interventions. This may include work with schools, parents and local community groups on nutritional education, developing cooking skills and encouraging consumers to demand healthier options from their local takeaways. Wakefield council worked with the Community and Health team to educate communities about healthy eating habits and to encourage them to start requesting healthier options. Their view and that of the businesses they worked with was,

**“If customers do not demand healthier options there is no incentive to provide them”**

Business Interventions Team, Wakefield



Listen to staff from Greenwich CDA talk about how they operate a whole systems approach

Greenwich Co-operative Development Agency who have been contracted to deliver the *Healthier Catering Commitment* in the borough work closely with schools, parents clubs, housing associations, and other local community groups to spread the message about healthier eating .

There is scope for further partnership working, particularly with business support agencies involved in supporting takeaway start-ups. An earlier study found that such agencies often advise new takeaways to look for a location close to secondary schools<sup>17</sup>. This suggests that there is a need for closer co-ordination of health and economic agendas. These agencies should also be encouraged to advise new starts to look at ways in which they can establish healthier practices from the start as this is much easier than trying to introduce changes once the business is established.

**A key lesson to note here is that the structure of the scheme developed and the implementation approach needs to take account of the type of businesses being targeted and the local market place. It is important to research these thoroughly before a scheme is introduced.**

<sup>15</sup> Bagwell (2014) Report on a UK-wide Survey of Healthier Catering Schemes and Initiatives, Cities Institute, London Metropolitan University

<sup>16</sup> Bagwell and Doff (2012) Pan London Evaluation of the *Healthier Catering Commitment*, GLA and CIEH Bagwell, S and Doff, S

<sup>17</sup> Bagwell, S and Doff, S (2009) *Fast food outlets in Tower Hamlets and the provision of healthier food choices*. Cities Institute, London Metropolitan University





# Section 3

## Strategies for engaging fast food takeaways in an intervention

### Summary

Engaging fast food takeaways in low income communities in the healthier catering agenda requires a significant amount of outreach work – building a trust based relationship is key.

Strategies that can then be used to encourage businesses to participate include:

- Emphasising that healthier catering can save the business money and may bring in new customers
- Undertaking research which demonstrates that customers want healthier food
- Using benchmarking and peer group pressure to show businesses how unhealthy their food is compared with that of their competitors
- Using the threat of legislation (e.g. w.r.t. GM foods) to encourage businesses to switch to healthier varieties
- Encouraging small gradual changes
- Ensuring that all the business's staff are involved in implementing the healthier practices
- Offering incentives such as grants, healthier cooking tools, free training, and publicity

Encouraging fast food takeaways to participate in healthier catering initiatives can be very challenging particularly in low income communities. This section offers advice on tried and tested ways of encouraging business participation.

### The importance of outreach work

Engaging businesses in low income communities is a labour intensive process which requires a lot of outreach work. In many urban areas fast food takeaways are run by members of ethnic minority communities where English is not their mother tongue. Businesses are often struggling to survive and may see the intervention as a further barrier requiring time and resources they do not have. Establishing the trust of the owner manager and staff involved in the business is crucial, as is explaining the benefits of engaging with the healthier catering agenda. This all takes time and is likely to require several visits. Promoting an initiative through a mail shot is not likely to work. See the box below and/or watch the video clip to learn how staff in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets encourage business engagement.

#### Engaging businesses in the Food4Health Awards Scheme in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets

“Initial awareness raising visits by the Food safety officers are key. The Food Safety Officers hands out a leaflet on healthier catering as part of a standard visit. Then there needs to be someone to work with the businesses going through the different criteria. It's not good enough to just leave the information pack with the business. The key is someone sitting down and going through it with them. S/he then goes back again another day to discuss it. It has to be done on a one to one basis.”

Michele Sandelson, Public Health Lead Dietician, London Borough of Tower Hamlets.



Listen to Michele Sandelson, Public Health Lead Dietician, London Borough of Tower Hamlets.



## Section 3 Strategies for engaging fast food takeaways in an intervention

### Using economic arguments

Emphasising the economic benefits of engaging in a scheme is crucial to business participation. Businesses do not want to see a decline in their profits. Thus healthier changes either need to result in more sales, or no extra cost or loss of sales. They must be financially viable and be at least cost-neutral. Those operating the *Healthier Business Award* in Wigan, for example, explained that,

“We go in with a view that at worst it is cost neutral, but hopefully we are actually going to save you money... Once you show them how it can be done they are willing to give it a go.”

Wigan Healthy Business Team

#### Key arguments that can be used are:

- **Healthier changes can save money**

For example using less oil, spreads, sugar and salt will save money. A sandwich bar in north east Somerset switched from roasting vegetables in lots of oil to dry roasting them using herbs. Customers preferred the taste and the business saved money on oil. Similarly thicker cut chips absorb less oil. Reduced cost nutritional training such as this is an important part of the *Eat Out Eat Well* award scheme.

- **Healthier changes can attract new customers**

Offering a healthier alternative may also attract new customers. A fish and chip shop participating in the *Eat Out Eat Well* scheme run by Bath and North East Somerset started offering baked potatoes, poached fish and salads. This attracted some families, where perhaps one member of the family was on a diet and wanted to go out with the family but not eat fried food. The jacket potatoes could be cooked in a microwave and then a pie oven – there was no need for a full oven. In Antrim fish and chip shops participating in the *Healthier TakeAways* project were encouraged to sell salads and baked potatoes and were able to attract customers on a diet as a result. One business even teamed up with Weightwatchers to highlight menu items with weight watchers' points.

### Consumer research and engagement

Demonstrating to businesses that customers are keen on healthier food can be used to persuade businesses to make changes. In the East Midlands the Indian restaurants targeted were initially sceptical that their customers would accept the

changes suggested by the *Eat out Eat in Healthy* project. But when consumer tasting sessions showed that most customers preferred the taste of curries made with dry spice mixes and less oil the businesses were converted.

In Bradford staff promoted the *Good Food Award* amongst community groups and asked the public to nominate takeaways they use where they would like to see healthier options. These takeaways were then informed and were generally more willing to participate in the award scheme as a result.

### Food testing, benchmarking and peer group pressure

Providing businesses with information about the dangerously high levels of salt and fat content of the food they serve can be used as a means of encouraging participation in a healthier catering initiative. Antrim analysed the fat and salt content of the 12 fish and chip shops targeted by their *Healthier Takeaways* project and then produced a table with the test results of all 12 outlets. Businesses were shown where they were on this table and those with higher results than others were shocked into making changes.

The London Borough of Haringey found that when promoting the *Healthier Catering Commitment* targeting businesses in the same street resulted in a greater level of participation. When a significant number of businesses in the street had signed up to the scheme the others did not want to be left out.

### Using the threat of legislation

A lot of vegetable oils are made from genetically modified (GM) oils and it is a legal requirement that if food contains GM products menu items must be labelled accordingly. Those implementing the *Eat Out Eat Well* scheme in Surrey draw businesses' attention to this and suggest that by switching to rapeseed oil they won't have to worry about it.

### Encouraging small gradual changes

Small gradual changes are less likely to be noticed by customers. Wigan's Healthier Business team found that persuading businesses to gradually remove salt from cooking was easier than expecting them to make a big reduction immediately.



## Section 3 Strategies for engaging fast food takeaways in an intervention

### Involving all the staff

It is important that all the staff working in the business understand the healthier catering initiative and are committed to it – not just the owner. There may be a need to go back several times to explain a scheme to ensure that the whole staff team, including those working night shifts, are fully involved and committed. Enthusiastic staff can also help persuade owners to engage with a healthier catering scheme. Staff that have relatives with health problems are often the most enthusiastic. The key is building up a good relationship with the owner and staff and going in with a supportive rather than an enforcement stance.

**“We found that even if the food business owner wasn’t keen, if his staff were he got a lot more interested – particularly when he knew that if he didn’t participate he wouldn’t get any publicity”**

Environmental Health Officer, Antrim

### Offering grants and healthier ‘goodie’ bags

Some healthier catering initiatives have offered financial incentives or gifts of healthier catering equipment or ingredients, to encourage business participation. Mobile catering vans participating in Worcestershire’s *Trucker’s Tucker* project, for example, were given a box of goodies containing different types of food, and cooking implements (kitchen towels for absorbing excess oil, oil dispensers etc.) designed to make it easier for them to adopt the recommended healthier catering practices.

The *Good Food Award* scheme in Bradford received funding to purchase 1,000 reduced hole salt shakers to distribute to takeaways as a first step in encouraging business engagement.

In Antrim businesses participating in the *Healthier Takeaways* project were able to apply for a small grant of up to £200 to purchase healthier ingredients. In the East Midlands the cost of re-printing healthier menus was paid for by the *Eat Out Eat In Healthy* project. Whilst the *Lighter Bites* initiative in Magherafelt provided free aprons, hats and promotional material to each business participating in the scheme.

### Offering free training for staff

Free nutrition or food hygiene training can be used as an effective incentive to encourage some businesses to join a healthier catering initiative. For example Wigan’s *Healthier Business Award* included free food hygiene level 2 training for the business owner and staff. Bradford’s *Good Food Award* offers free nutritional training for up to two members of staff, and Slough’s new *Takeaways* project is offering one free place on the CIEH level 2 special diets course. In Tower Hamlets nutrition training is provided by a community dietician and businesses are often keen to attend as they can obtain personal nutritional advice for themselves or family members at the end of the training session.

### Promising publicity

The possibility of increased publicity for a business can be a major incentive. Most healthier catering schemes provide at least some publicity for participating businesses. This typically includes listing award winners on the council

website, holding award ceremonies, encouraging local press coverage, and issuing businesses with stickers, posters and certificates. Some schemes also have stands at local food festivals and other events. Wigan produced a monthly *Healthier Business Award* newsletter with 5,000 copies being widely distributed including to every doctor’s surgery in the area. The front cover featured a business which had successfully obtained the *Healthy Business Award* as a ‘Business of the Month’. This encouraged other businesses to make the necessary healthier changes so that they too might get some of this free publicity. In Slough an annual event was held which gave one local business the chance to be *Catering for Health* premises of the year. This attracted lots of press coverage which inspired other businesses to sign up to the scheme.

However whilst businesses in most areas are keen to receive publicity for providing healthier food, in some contexts businesses prefer not to advertise the changes they make for fear that this might deter their customers. Those implementing healthier catering initiatives need to have a good understanding of each business’s local market and customer base to determine whether publicity or a health by stealth approach is likely to be most effective in encouraging healthier consumption behaviour.





# Section 4 Viable healthier business models

## Summary

New healthier business models will only work if they are developed with a sound understanding of the local market place.

A healthier catering marketing mix including healthier products, and pricing, promotional and place strategies, which encourage healthier choices should be developed tailored to the particular business and local context. This can include nudging tactics and health by stealth approaches.



Prior research suggests that markets in low income communities are particularly price sensitive. The price for a takeaway meal is typically £2.50 to £3, and this buys a large portion of chicken, or burger and chips, for example. Children's deals are typically £1 to £1.50 for chicken wings and chips, or a small pizza or burger. In highly competitive markets businesses are not willing to raise their prices for fear of losing customers. Thus healthier alternatives need to remain within these price brackets. This section identifies business models in which this is possible.

### Understanding the market

Fast food takeaways are only willing to make changes if they are confident that the outcome will be one or more of the following:

- a) Existing customers will be happy with any healthier changes they make and/or
- b) The changes will bring in new customers
- c) The changes will not impact negatively on the profitability of the business

Those advising businesses need to understand what the local market will accept when suggesting the best strategy to adopt. At the end of the day the business will need to be convinced that it can maintain or increase its profit margins.

In this toolkit we are mainly concerned with healthier changes that takeaways can make which will be acceptable to low income communities. However some businesses may be





# Section 4 Viable healthier business models

operating in a mixed market where there may be potential for charging higher prices to more affluent customers. Examples include:

## i) Where a deprived area is moving upmarket

A number of businesses trading in deprived areas have been able to move upmarket if the area is undergoing regeneration and attracting more affluent residents. Rocketing house prices in London, for example, are now encouraging young upwardly mobile professionals to settle in more deprived areas where property prices are more affordable, and this is creating a demand for new types of fast food provision. A cafe owner in north London, for example, brought his business 10 years ago when it was just a local cheap cafe. He has gradually changed his menus as the area has become more gentrified and a new gym has opened nearby. Now he offers a wider range of healthier but more expensive food. Some of the former customers stopped coming as a result but the changes have attracted new ones willing to pay the higher prices for healthier food and this has increased the profitability of the business. However developments which accommodate the new clientele are unlikely to reduce inequalities in health unless deliberate efforts are made to retain the less affluent customers.

## ii) Where a deprived area has become more mixed

Some fast food takeaways in deprived areas are now serving mixed markets with a mix of more affluent and less affluent customers. This has enabled some businesses to operate a mixed pricing model charging lower prices to those willing to collect their takeaway meals, and higher rates for online or telephone orders, and for external catering. *TastyBuds* in Haringey, for example generates 25% of its income via external catering for events such as the Notting Hill Carnival. *Oregano Pizza* in Leytonstone generates 50% of its income through the online ordering websites *Just Eat* and *Hungry House*. The additional income generated in this way enables these businesses to keep their standard prices relatively low.

## A healthier marketing mix

The main focus of this toolkit, however, is on changes that can be made that will not result in increased costs. Healthier changes that businesses in deprived areas have been able to adopt successfully are presented by considering the different elements of the classic marketing mix – the 4 Ps i.e. Product, Price, Place and Promotion.<sup>18</sup> Each element possesses a number of variables whose emphasis can be varied to a chosen strategy. The table below illustrates ways in which fast food takeaways can make changes to these four areas to produce a healthier marketing mix that is acceptable to most customers and does not reduce the business's profit margins.

### The Healthier Catering Marketing Mix

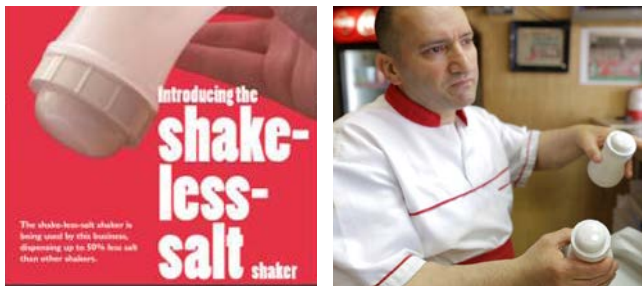
Product
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New healthier products</li> <li>• Healthier swaps</li> <li>• Healthier cooking practices</li> <li>• Better quality smaller portions</li> </ul>
Benefits: Saves money, or is cost neutral, brings in new customers
Price
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Price healthier options cheaper than unhealthy alternatives</li> <li>• Charge extra for unhealthy alternatives</li> <li>• Use meal deals and loyalty card schemes</li> </ul>
Benefits: Increases turnover – at least on healthier options
Promotion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free healthier sides</li> <li>• Healthier menus and advertising panels</li> <li>• Attractive packaging of healthier products</li> <li>• Personal selling of healthier alternatives</li> </ul>
Benefits: Sales of healthier varieties likely to increase
Place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place healthier options in more visible locations</li> <li>• Hide or reduce access to unhealthy options</li> <li>• Reduce the size of containers or serving implements</li> </ul>
Benefits: Sales of healthier varieties likely to increase

## Nudges and health by stealth approaches

Business models which encourage customers to adopt healthier consumption practices whilst not compromising the profitability of the business can include both **overt changes** to products or practices which customers are aware of. Or they may be **covert** i.e. subtle changes can be made which can go unnoticed by the customer. This latter health by stealth approach may be preferable in areas where healthy eating may be considered “uncool” and businesses are afraid that promoting the changes might deter customers. For example businesses may switch to a healthier rapeseed oil or reduce the salt in their cooking and decide not to tell customers.



# Section 4 Viable healthier business models



The concept of 'nudging' has recently gained popularity, particularly with the current government, as a means of encouraging people to make changes without the need for legislation. 'Nudges' seek to influence behaviour by altering the context or environment in which people make choices.<sup>19</sup> Nudges have been widely adopted by healthier catering initiatives as a means of encouraging customers to choose healthier options or as a way of providing a healthier alternative without the customer being aware of it. Nudges might include changing the default option to a healthier alternative, or providing disincentives that encourage people to avoid less healthy choices, for example by making them more expensive. These are ways of changing the choice architecture which do not restrict choice as such but will increase the likelihood that people will choose the preferred (in this case healthier) option.

Successful nudges which can encourage healthier fast food consumption include those which relate to changes to the food being sold, in particular the salt, fat and sugar content and the size of portions. They are relatively small changes but ones that could nevertheless have a significant impact on health when widely adopted. Pricing, promotional and placing strategies can also be used to nudge consumers in the direction of healthier choices.

All of the following suggestions have been successfully implemented by takeaways operating in low income communities. More details of the businesses mentioned can be found in the case studies in [section 5](#) and by listening to the video clips linked to them.

## Healthier Products

Healthier products can be offered as a healthier swap for traditional unhealthy menu items and/or can be introduced as a new product offering. Changing a recipe to make it healthier may save money.

### • Healthier swaps

Several fried chicken and chip takeaways and kebab houses have been persuaded to offer customers rice or salad instead of chips.

**Shalamar Kebabs**, in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets found that offering customers salad instead of chips generated a 15% increase in business.

### • New Healthier products can bring in new customers

**Oregano Pizza** in Leytonstone, east London, started selling pasta as well as pizza and this is now equally as popular as pizza.

**Sam's Chicken** has introduced a chicken hot dog sold in a baguette and retailing at just 99p – a much healthier children's after school snack than chicken and chips and one that is proving very popular.

Fish and Chip shops in Stoke which started offering grilled fish attracted new customers on a diet. **Charlton Kebab House** in the London Borough of Greenwich has found that offering more vegetarian food has brought in more customers.

### • Healthier cooking practices can save you money

Using less salt, sugar and fat in food can save money. Oregano Pizza reduced salt in pizza dough by 50% and this saves the business £5 per month.

The East Midland's *Eat Out Eat In Well* scheme encouraged the Indian takeaways it was working with to use water rather than oil to keep food moist, and developed a new stock-point recipe using a dried spice mix rather than readymade mixes which were more expensive and had high oil content.

### • Quality not quantity

Businesses can offer better quality food but smaller portions thereby not leading to an increase in costs, offering tastier food that customers will appreciate, and smaller healthier portion sizes. **Cater trailer**, a mobile burger van outside the Arsenal football club in the London Borough of Islington, offers relatively small portions of fatter chips.

## Healthier Pricing Strategies

Businesses can be persuaded to use pricing strategies to encourage customers to choose healthier options. Successful strategies have included the following:

### • Sell healthier options cheaper

Some businesses encourage the purchasing of healthier options by pricing them cheaper than the unhealthy



## Section 4 Viable healthier business models

varieties. **Sunrise cafe**, operating in Romford Market in the London Borough of Havering, for example, sells water for 60p and fizzy drinks for 85p.

- **Charge more for unhealthy extras**

Charging more for unhealthy extras can dissuade customers from purchasing them. Charlton Kebabs used to automatically include chips with kebabs, but now offers salad instead, and if customers want chips they have to pay extra for them.

- **Meal deals and loyalty schemes**

Some businesses have successfully offered meal deals. The East Midland's *Eat Out Eat In Well* scheme developed a 2 for 1 deal on healthier meals which was promoted with vouchers in local magazines. TastyBuds has a *Cuppa Club* loyalty scheme for those buying its porridge on a regular basis which now has over 100 members. After their fifth purchase card holders get the next one free.

### Healthier Promotions



The way in which food is presented and promoted can encourage customers to view a healthy alternative as an attractive option and this can lead to increased sales.

- **Free healthier side dishes**

Offering healthier side dishes as a free extra can give a business a competitive advantage. Since **Shalamar Kebabs** started offering free salad with its main dishes it has seen an extra 15% increase in turnover. **Sam's Chicken** provides free rice with its peri-peri grilled chicken thereby encouraging customers to choose this rather than the fried chicken and chips alternative. Sales of peri-peri chicken now account for 50% of the business's chicken sales.

- **Healthier menus and advertising panels**

Some businesses have produced special healthier menus. **Sam's Chicken** promotes healthier options on one side of the menu board above the counter and the less healthy options on the other side making it easier for customers to see which is which.

- **Attractive packaging**

Attractive packaging can make healthier food look more appetising. **Sam's Chicken** has put a lot of effort into

making the packaging on its healthier items, such as school approved children's drinks, look more attractive. The business also found that their grilled chicken with rice in a box looked too healthy and was not selling well. As a result they changed the packaging and developed different savoury varieties that look more appetising.

- **Personal selling**

Training staff to encourage customers to choose healthier options works for a number of businesses. All the staff at **TastyBuds** have been trained to offer customers rice or rice and peas but not chips (which are only available if requested). They also ask them *which* free side salad they would like rather than *if* they would like one.

- The *Essex Healthy Eating Award*, trained the Environmental Health Officers from the 14 local authorities involved in the scheme, in social marketing techniques that they could use to encourage businesses to sell healthier options. For example it was suggested that they should ask customers to think about their lifestyle and how a healthier option might help them achieve personal goals.

### Place



Using placing strategies to make it easier for customers to access healthier varieties and not unhealthy options is a nudging tactic that has worked for many businesses

- **Place healthier options in more visible locations**

Placing attractive looking healthier dishes on the counter or at the front of the display has been found to increase the likelihood that customers will choose these options rather than the less healthy varieties.<sup>20</sup> Placing water, diet drinks and no-added sugar drinks at eye level in the drinks cabinet is also thought to increase sales of these drinks instead of the less healthy fizzy drinks.

One Indian restaurant placed plain rice at the top of the list on its menu of rice options with the result that customers were more likely to choose this than the fried rice alternatives.



## Section 4 Viable healthier business models

### • Hide or reduce access to the unhealthy options

Hiding the salt shaker works for some types of businesses, particularly those that do not include chips, but seems to be harder for fish and chip shops in busy locations. Other nudges include introducing salt shakers with fewer holes. In businesses where customers are complaining that it takes too long to get the salt out of these shakers the staff should put the salt on for them. Waving the 5-hole shaker over the food will give the illusion of plenty of salt being sprinkled on the food.

Other businesses only provide unhealthy options on request. For example customers at **TastyBuds** are asked if they would like rice or rice and peas with their main dish. Chips are not promoted and are only provided if customers insist on them.

### • Reduce the size of containers or serving implements

Reducing the size of the trays and cartons in which the food is sold can also give the illusion of larger portions when in fact they are smaller. **Cater-trailer** serves fat chips in small trays – filling the tray up so that customers feel they are getting a good deal.

## Getting the right mix

The right mix will depend on the nature of the business, its trading environment and the motivation of the owner manager. A different combination of the above factors will work with different businesses in particular contexts. See opposite the unique marketing mix that allows TastyBuds to offer healthier food and still make a profit.

## What works: The successful healthier business model

TastyBuds in West Green Road in the London Borough of Haringey provides an exemplary model of a business that manages to sell healthy food at an affordable price. Its key marketing mix incorporates:

**Product:** healthy stews and casseroles with rice and free side salad, porridge

**Price:** circa £3 for a main meal, discount for students. Just £1.50p for porridge

**Promotion:** attractive food displays and menu boards, loyalty cards, staff trained to promote healthier default options

**Place:** food is visible, easily accessible from the outlet or can be ordered via telephone and delivered.

A more detailed business case study is provided in **section 5** and/or watch the video clip



Listen to Sandra and Joan talk about the business

<sup>18</sup> Borden, N. (1965). "The Concept of the Marketing Mix". In Schwartz, George. *Science in marketing*. Wiley marketing series. Wiley

<sup>19</sup> The concept of 'nudges' have been popularised by the currently highly influential book Nudge (Thaler, R. and Sunstein, C., (2008) *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness*. New Haven, Yale University Press.).

<sup>20</sup> Thaler, R. and Sunstein, C., (2008) *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness*. New Haven, Yale University Press.





## Section 5 Healthier catering initiative case studies



### Greenwich Co-operative Development Agency Implementing the *Healthier Catering Commitment* (HCC)

An example of a single tiered award scheme targeted at a particularly deprived area and delivered as part of a whole systems approach to tackling obesity

#### Q What action have you taken?

**A** The Greenwich Cooperative Development Agency (GCDA) is a social enterprise specialising in food businesses and health. It is funded by the Greenwich Public Health Department to deliver the London-based *Healthier Catering Commitment* (HCC). The *Healthier Catering Commitment* scheme is designed to be relatively easy for all types of catering establishments, including fast-food outlets, to sign up to, thereby encouraging take-up and providing a means of engaging businesses in the healthier catering agenda. To gain the award, businesses need to meet a minimum of eight criteria (from a list of 22) that includes conditions in relation to the use of fats and oils, salt, sugar, milk and spreads, fruit and vegetables, portion size and promotion of healthier options. Four of the criteria concerning the type of oil used, use of salt, availability of diet drinks, and smaller portions, are essential criteria that all businesses must comply with. A further three concern the maintenance of cooking oil and are mandatory criteria for those involved in deep fat frying.

In Greenwich the HCC is being delivered as part of a bigger initiative – the Greenwich Healthy Families Pilot. This aims to increase the prevalence of ‘healthy weight’ status and halt the rise in the prevalence of obese and overweight 10/11 year olds within one geographic area, through coordinated, cross agency implementation of healthy weight interventions.

#### Q Why did you take it? What was the incentive?

**A** After reviewing the trend data on childhood obesity the GCDA realised that something needed to be done. Obesity was identified as one of the most significant public health issues in Greenwich. Whilst there were already a number of initiatives to tackle overweight and obesity it was felt that they needed a significant cultural change and a range of new interventions that would impact not just on the individual but the whole food environment.

#### Q What was the strategy you adopted?

**A** Two wards with the highest levels of obesity and deprivation were selected – Charlton and Woolwich. These two wards are amongst the 20% most deprived areas in the UK. A range of interventions were targeted at these areas. The GCDA worked in partnership with a range of agencies in the two wards including working with schools, supporting them with healthy eating campaigns, and running clubs for parents.

Promotion of the HCC focused on takeaways in residential family areas close to schools. Businesses had to have at least a 3\* Food Health and Hygiene rating



## Section 5 Healthier catering initiative case studies

to participate. The GCDA staff went out initially with Environmental Health Officers that already had an established relationship with the businesses. This helped them to gain access to the businesses. After the initial introduction Meera – the GCDA’s Community Health and Development Co-ordinator, continued working with the businesses on her own. Several visits were usually required before the business was willing to make changes – particularly where the owner-manager’s first language was not English. They were fortunate in having the resources for this outreach work.

The HCC has a strong steering group which includes senior level staff from Public Health, and the Early Years’ Service. This ensures that there is high level support for the initiative.

### Q What did the businesses that you engaged with do? What was the incentive for them? How difficult has it been to encourage the businesses to adopt these changes?

A The businesses were given advice on adopting healthier changes to their menus. This included offering salad instead of chips, and more vegetables. They were encouraged to adopt nudging techniques such as hiding the salt shaker and placing bottles of water and fruit juice at eye-level in the fridges. Those involved in deep fat frying were also encouraged to adopt healthier cooking techniques including changing to rapeseed oil, and using the shake bang hang technique to drain the oil from chips.

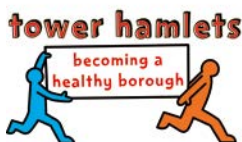
The extra cost of rapeseed oil has not been a barrier for most businesses, but some businesses that have traditionally cooked with palm oil were reluctant to make changes as they were afraid the customers would notice the difference in taste. The GCDA are hoping to run tasting sessions to prove that this is not the case. Larger busy businesses found it harder to hide the salt as they didn’t have the time to keep getting it out when customers asked for it. Generally businesses with wider menus such as kebab shops find it easier to make changes than chicken and chip shops. Kebab shops can sell salads etc. whereas chip shops have a more limited menu. Some have found that offering a wider variety of healthier foods has brought in new customers.

As an incentive the businesses were offered a free one-day business course which focuses on the triple bottom line i.e. – a sustainable menu, health and profitability. It also covers menu planning, marketing and using social media.



# Section 5

## Healthier catering initiative case studies



### Tower Hamlets *Food4Health* Scheme

An example of a tiered award scheme delivered as part of a whole systems approach to tackling obesity

#### Q What action have you taken?

**A** In 2008 Tower Hamlets received funding from the Department of Health's *Healthy Towns* initiative to develop a Healthy Borough Programme. This set out to develop a whole systems approach to tackling the environmental causes of obesity. The *Food4Health* award scheme was one of a number of Healthy Borough projects designed to make it easier for people in the borough to become more active and eat more healthily.

The scheme includes a number of healthier catering criteria which businesses are encouraged to adopt. These relate to the use of salt, fats and sugar, fruit and vegetables, cooking practices and portion sizes. There are three levels, bronze, silver and gold. The bronze level was developed specifically for takeaways since they would find it difficult to meet the criteria for a silver or gold. However since a lot of businesses did not like the idea of a bronze award it is now called a standard level instead.

#### Q Why did you take it? What was the incentive/rationale?

**A** The initiative was developed because research in the borough suggested that there was a high prevalence of obesity among children. One in five children in the borough is obese and a third are overweight. The national child measurement programme for 2006/7 showed that the prevalence of obesity in children measured in reception was the 3rd highest in the country. For year

6 children it was the 13th highest in the country. There were also huge health inequalities in the borough. Four wards (Mile End East, Whitechapel, Bethnal Green North and Shadwell) have mortality rates for cardiovascular disease which are close to twice the national average.

Research by City University and London Metropolitan University identified that school children were consuming large amounts of fast food sometimes several times a week. Ninety-seven percent of Tower Hamlets residents live within ten minutes of a fast-food outlet. In 2007 City University tested the nutrition content of some takeaway foods in the borough and found that many takeaway foods were high in calories, fat and salt.

The *Food4Health* award scheme was set up to encourage businesses to adopt healthier menus and catering practices and to make it easier for consumers to choose healthier options

#### Q What was the strategy you adopted?

**A** The initiative targets all types of out of home catering outlets across the borough. Food safety officers from the council are trained to provide basic healthy catering advice to food providers during their regular inspection visits. They undertake 300 awareness raising visits each year. During their first visit they explain the scheme to the business and leave a leaflet for the owner to read. There is then a follow-up visit to undertake a more detailed assessment of the business to identify which of the *Food4Health* criteria the business is already meeting and



## Section 5 Healthier catering initiative case studies

where changes are needed. Support is available from the Tower Hamlets Public Health dietician to provide further nutrition and healthy catering advice.

The business is directly involved in a discussion around what they could do to make their food healthier. It is very much seen as a collaborative exercise rather than just telling the business what to do. There is a degree of flexibility in the scheme which allows businesses to identify the best way of demonstrating that it meets key criteria. The scheme is used as a tool by which to start a conversation on healthier catering – to be very rigid would be defeating the object of the exercise which is to introduce small changes.

The initiative also offers healthier catering training for businesses. This is tailored to the type of businesses attending and is designed to be short, fun and very practical. The sessions are held at a time they can attend – usually 3.30/4pm. One of the reasons that the businesses are keen to attend these training events is that they are run by a dietician, and at the end of the session they can have a free informal consultation with her about their own or their family's personal health problems.

**Q** What did the businesses that you engaged with do? What was the incentive for them? How difficult has it been to encourage the businesses to adopt these changes?

**A** Takeaways signing up to the *Food4Health* scheme have been persuaded to change their cooking oil to a healthier variety, adopt healthier frying practices, offer reduced size portions, and use less salt. They are also encouraged to try offering a vegetable and need to demonstrate that they are promoting healthier eating.

The oil change has proved the easiest change for businesses to make. Some of the other criteria have been harder for them to adopt. Initially they were expected to offer fruit but experience has shown that placing a fruit bowl on the counter does not encourage customers in fast food takeaways to purchase fruit – so businesses are now asked to promote the local *Buywell* store instead. The *Buywell* scheme is an initiative designed to increase the amount of fresh fruit and vegetables in local stores. Free 5-hole salt shakers, designed to dispense less salt, were given to the businesses, but in some outlets this led to

long queues as customers spent longer trying to dispense the usual amount of salt. So the business owner is advised to dispense the salt him/herself instead and to wave the salt shaker back and forth over the food a bit so that it looks like a lot is coming out.

The scheme tried giving businesses free potato wedges. Unfortunately this did not work and the businesses still found it difficult to sell the wedges and soon reverted back to thinner chips. Similarly using smaller scoops for the chips led to complaints from customers. Owners were afraid that if they offered smaller portions their customers would go elsewhere.

Offering businesses lots of publicity when they sign up to the *Food4Health* scheme has been found to be the best incentive. Businesses gaining the award are invited to award ceremonies, promoted in local newspapers and on the web.







## Section 5 Healthier catering initiative **case studies**



### East Midlands *Eat Out Eat In Healthy* Initiative

A non-award bearing initiative focused on Indian takeaways in a specific geographical area.

#### Q What action have you taken?

**A** In 2009, a manager working for the National Social Marketing Centre rallied together several organisations, including Trading Standards East Midlands (TSEM) and the Food Standards Agency (East Midlands) to address alarmingly high levels of salt, fat and calories found in takeaway food in the East Midlands. Kelly Evans secured funding from NHS Lincolnshire and the Department of Health to form a partnership to research and pilot different initiatives. The project became one of the ten beacon partnership projects in England set up by the Department of Health to trial social marketing techniques in health improvement programmes. After some secondary research work, the East Midlands partnership decided to focus on Indian restaurants and takeaways in Lincolnshire, working initially with five Indian restaurants in different areas.

The project was designed to address two distinct behavioural challenges:

- 1) To get consumers to demand Indian takeaway products that are lower in salt, saturated fat and calories
- 2) To get the industry to respond to this demand by supplying food that is lower in salt, saturated fat and calories

A lot of preliminary research was undertaken to develop a detailed understanding of the sector, the local businesses and their consumers. This included telephone

interviews with staff in Indian restaurants and takeaways across Lincolnshire, case study interviews, and street interviews with regular customers of Indian takeaway food to understand the motivation and behaviour of the consumer. Intervention with businesses and consumers was then undertaken.

#### Q Why did you take it? What was the incentive/rationale?

**A** Working with NHS Lincolnshire the partnership identified areas where obesity levels are above the national average. One of the pilot restaurants was located in Boston which had one of the highest levels of heart disease in Europe. Random testing and sampling of takeaway food in the East Midlands in 2008 by TSEM found alarmingly high levels of salt, saturated fat, and calories in Chinese and Indian takeaway food – including restaurants in Boston and other towns in the county. Testing of food at the Boston restaurant found extreme levels of salt, fat and calories. Since little was known about the Indian takeaway sector at the time it was decided to focus on this industry.

#### Q What was the strategy you adopted?

**A** The project worked initially with a pilot group of five businesses, and then a further group of 18. Detailed testing of the salt and fat content of the dishes produced by these businesses and their standard stockpot was



## Section 5 Healthier catering initiative **case studies**

undertaken. The stockpot forms the basis of 95 % of all the dishes so reformulating this was key. Chefs employed by the initiative worked with the businesses on a one-to-one basis to encourage changes to recipes and menus and to the stockpot. A guide was produced which covered typical dishes and changes that could be made including where these might save money. The chef developed a dry spice mix recipe which the businesses could use instead of the oilier ready-made mixes. This was used as the basis for their stockpot. The chef returned a few weeks later to check that the businesses were still using it.

Consumer tasting sessions were held using dishes cooked using the reformulated recipes and most customers felt that the new menus were more authentic. They preferred the food since it now had less oil and colouring. In Boston, a very deprived area, there was less demand for healthier food so it was felt that the best strategy going forwards was to reformulate the recipes without the consumer knowing.

As well as 'health by stealth' the project also sought to find out if advertising healthier dishes and offering 'deals' would encourage consumers to choose 'healthier options'. The project persuaded the businesses featured in the pilot to offer a 2 for 1 deal on healthy alternatives – created using reformulated dishes and swapping ingredients to make dishes under 400 calories. The project helped them develop separate healthier menus, and vouchers for healthier meals appeared in magazines – including the county publication sent to every house in Lincolnshire. A website featuring all 23 restaurants offering healthier options was also developed. The project was keen to prove to the businesses that they could attract new customers by offering healthier alternatives. Over a six week period, 623 people redeemed a voucher in one of the 23 restaurants that took part. There were also 5,434 unique visits to the website.

**Q** What did the businesses that you engaged with do? What was the incentive for them? How difficult has it been to encourage the businesses to adopt these changes?

**A** The initiative persuaded the businesses to make lots of little changes such as adding less oil to their food, using water instead of oil to keep food moist, no longer adding ghee to rice etc., and was able to demonstrate that the healthier changes did not cost more or very little extra. Help was also provided in sourcing the cheapest healthier

ingredients. Businesses were persuaded to switch to rapeseed oil as a supplier was sourced that only charged an extra 4p per drum for rapeseed oil. A further factor that helped encourage businesses to make these changes was being able to demonstrate that customers liked them. Offering lots of publicity via the press, TV and a website was also an important incentive.

**Q** What are the benefits/evidence of impact on your population of having taken this action?

**A** The dry spice mix recipe spread across the Indian takeaway sector in the region and was so successful that the project manager got a call from Pataks and was told that their sales in the East Midlands had dropped significantly.

A key learning lesson was that feedback from customers is critical to encouraging businesses to take part in initiatives. Businesses would prefer changes to come from the customer rather than the authorities.

More information on this project is available at [www.social-change.co.uk](http://www.social-change.co.uk)



# Section 5

## Healthier catering initiative **case studies**



### *Lighter Bites*, Magherafelt District Council, Northern Ireland

An initiative working with takeaways operating in close proximity to secondary schools where pupils are allowed to leave the premises for lunch

#### Q What action have you taken?

**A** The *Lighter Bites* project aim was to work with retail premises serving hot food either in the morning or at lunch time with a view to reducing the saturated fat content of the food served. There was a particular emphasis on those with a large percentage of their customers from local schools.

##### The project

1. Undertook research on the eating habits of secondary level school children on their way to school, and at lunchtime using food diaries and questionnaires.
2. Identified a number of businesses that serve this target group (food businesses with hot food counters located beside schools)
3. Worked with the targeted food businesses (12-15) to establish the saturated fat and salt content of the food served through sampling of a range of foods
4. Reviewed raw materials, menus and cooking methods to provide a range of foods with a lower saturated fat and salt content
5. Undertook follow up sampling of alternative foods or amended cooking methods to identify the reduction in saturated fat and salt.

#### Q Why did you take it? What was the incentive/rationale?

**A** The survey showed that nearly all the students consumed low levels of fruit and vegetables and six of the students were consuming food of high fat content. There was also a high number of students who were not taking enough calcium in their diet and a significant number consuming high energy foods.

#### Q What was the strategy you adopted?

**A** The eating habits of a sample of school students were analysed. The dietician then provided individual comments to each student giving an overall summary and recommendations on how to improve their diets including trying out the “healthier” students specials which were on offer as part of the *Lighter Bites* project.

From the survey of students 27 food businesses were identified as being the premises that students visited in the morning for breakfast and during lunch time for lunch. A questionnaire was carried out with the businesses that served the target group to establish their current raw materials, cooking methods and choice of ingredients. This information was used to discover if there were small changes that could be taken to reduce the fat, saturated fat and/or salt content of their meals, without affecting the overall taste.



## Section 5 Healthier catering initiative **case studies**

The businesses were invited to participate in the *Lighter Bites* initiative and ten signed up for a period of 8 weeks.

Food sampling was undertaken of a range of foods characteristic of typical foods consumed from the participating food premises. These food samples were submitted for compositional analysis to identify the base levels of fat, saturated fats and salt. Follow up food sampling was undertaken on the new meals developed as a result of the intervention.

Marketing and promotional materials, such as posters, aprons/hats, comments cards/leaflets, and menu boards, were provided to each premises and a press release was included in the local newspapers. The businesses were also informed that publicity would be organised again at the end of the initiative for those businesses who successfully implemented their recommendations.

Follow up questionnaires were conducted with food business and pupils to establish opinions on the effectiveness of the project and potential improvements for future initiatives.

**Q What did the businesses that you engaged with do? What was the incentive for them? How difficult has it been to encourage the businesses to adopt these changes?**

**A** The businesses were persuaded to provide three healthier lunchtime student specials (e.g. chicken wraps, stews and salads) and two to three other changes to their menu, raw materials or cooking methods. The latter included changes such as using a 5 hole salt shaker, low fat spreads, offering reduced portion sizes, no MSG, offering bottled water with a student meal deal etc.

**Q What are the benefits/evidence of impact on your population of having taken this action?**

**A** Food samples of typical meals available were selected before and after the project, and the results after the project as compared to the pre-project sample results indicated a significant overall average percentage reduction in the fat, saturated fat and salt content:

- Fat content: 59.5% reduction
- Saturated fat content: 59.9% reduction
- Salt content: 24.1% reduction

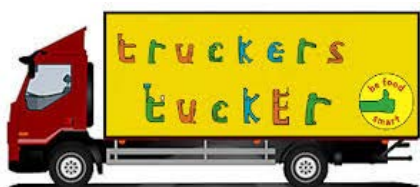
The project has given businesses an insight into how they can make their menu a “healthier” menu and make a profit while aiming to reduce the consumption of fat, saturated fat and salt in line with FSA targets. It is anticipated from the business owners’ comments that they will continue to offer the “healthier” options and adopt the changes, particularly in reducing the salt intake and providing a variety of food items.





# Section 5

## Healthier catering initiative **case studies**



### Truckers Tucker

A non-award bearing initiative focused on mobile catering vans.

#### Q What action have you taken?

**A** The Truckers Tucker project was developed by Worcestershire regulatory services with funding from the NHS and the local authority. It ran from 2011 to 2012 and has since been adopted by a number of other local authorities including Warwickshire and Stoke on Trent. The initiative aimed to influence food choices towards healthier options at caterers operating mobile services in lay-bys, truck stops and those located on or delivering to industrial estates in order to reach the target group of routine and manual workers, without impacting on the business's bottom line.

#### Q Why did you take it? What was the incentive/rationale?

**A** Truckers, a sub group of routine and manual workers, are known to be at a higher risk of becoming obese than their managers or professional colleagues. Much of the food sold by mobile catering vans frequented by this group has traditionally been high in saturated fat, sugar and salt.

#### Q What was the strategy you adopted?

**A** The project provided training and promotional material on improving the nutritional content of menus, reducing portion size, making fresh fruit and healthier options available and relocating visible unhealthy options from the till point. The initiative was promoted to the businesses by discussing how it would improve their bottom line, rather than discussing health problems in

the UK. It also offered an introduction to how social marketing can influence social behaviour.

A total of six visits were undertaken with each premises. Food samples of the most popular meal were taken before and after changes were made and these were analysed for salt, carbohydrates, protein and fat content and the results were explained to the proprietor. The officers agreed the top tips with each business and these were discussed and signed up to during the third visit, alongside an explanation of the sample results. A food and equipment pack and a guidance pack were given to assist the proprietor in implementing the top tips. Progress was checked during the fourth visit, and evaluation of the project was carried out during the fifth visit. The proprietor was required to collect sales and stock purchasing data during the project to allow a comparison to be made between the period before the changes and the period after the changes. A sixth visit was carried out six months later to see if the changes had been sustained.

#### Q What did the businesses that you engaged with do? What was the incentive for them? How difficult has it been to encourage the businesses to adopt these changes?

**A** The businesses were encouraged to adopt a number of healthier products and cooking practices. As an incentive each business was given a premises equipment and food pack including low fat mayonnaise, kitchen rolls, rapeseed oil, a vinegar dispenser (to be used for the oil), larder tongs, larder chip scoop, six bottles of pure fruit juice, a



## Section 5 Healthier catering initiative case studies

pack of low fat spread, a loaf of wholemeal bread and a fruit bowl and a selection of fruit.

Top tips that the proprietors found easiest to implement were using the lower fat mayonnaise, using the lower fat spread and only if requested, otherwise not using any spread, offering brown or granary bread, using less oil, removing visible fat from the bacon, using portion control, draining food on kitchen roll before service, removing fat from the griddle regularly and removing excess fat from the bottom of the bain marie.

The businesses found it harder to sell fresh fruit, fruit juices, mature cheddar cheese and a healthy meal deal.

None of the businesses saw a loss in profit as a result of taking part in the project, and some reported an increase in sales of the healthier options and new customers.

### Q What are the benefits/evidence of impact on your population of having taken this action?

A Customers reported that they were pleased with the healthy options such as soups, jacket potatoes, scrambled/poached eggs, brown bread and fruit.

For a copy of the resource pack see

<http://www.regionalplatform.org.uk/write/Truckers%20tucker%20pack%20electronic%20version.pdf>

and the toolkit

[http://www.obesitywm.org.uk/resources/Trucker\\_-\\_Toolkit\\_\(pc\\_version\).pdf](http://www.obesitywm.org.uk/resources/Trucker_-_Toolkit_(pc_version).pdf)



# Section 5

## Healthier business case studies

### Charlton Kebab House

Food Type: Kebabs

Best practice: Offers salad instead of chips and charges more for unhealthy extras



Charlton Kebab House is based in Charlton, in the London Borough of Greenwich in south London, SE7, very close to Charlton Athletic football club. The business has been in the Olgun family for 20 years. It specialises in kebabs but also sells pizzas, burgers and fried chicken. A typical meal, for example, a small lamb or chicken doner, or shish kebab, costs £4.90, or a chicken wings meal deal (two chicken wings, fries and a drink) is £4.20. Kid's meals are £1.50-2.0.

Customers are mainly local residents, and workers from the nearby construction sites, although fans attending the football on match days also provide a vital additional source of income. Although the Charlton area as a whole still suffers from a high level of deprivation there are now signs of gentrification and the area has become more mixed in recent years. As a result the business has been able to introduce small price increases, raising the price of its kebabs by 20p last year. This was also possible due to the limited amount of local competition - the nearest kebab shop is a 5 minute drive away.

### Healthier products

Charlton Kebab House was encouraged to introduce a range of healthier products and catering practices by the staff from Greenwich Co-operative Development Agency (GCDA), responsible for promoting the *Healthier Catering Commitment* initiative in the borough. The owner's son Lev, who manages the business, was originally very sceptical and thought it would be a waste of time. But having tried out a few suggestions made by the GCDA he is now sold on the idea and find it makes good business sense.

Salad is now offered with kebabs rather than chips. The kid's meal only includes a very small portion of fries and does not include a fizzy drink. The business has started selling a

lot more vegetarian alternatives such as wraps, falafel and hummus, and a wider range of salads, which has attracted new customers and so has been good for business.

Healthier frying practices have also been introduced. Rapeseed oil is now used instead of vegetable oil and some customers have commented that the food tastes better. Chips are well drained using the shake, bang, hang, technique. This took a bit of getting used to as customers don't like waiting for their food, but by making sure that there were enough fries ready for busy periods Lev has found that he can build in the time to drain the chips properly.



# Section 5

## Healthier business case studies

### Pricing strategies

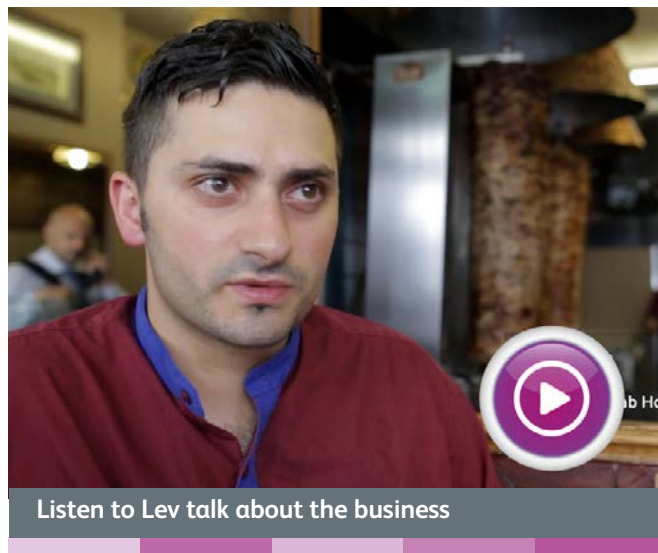
Customers have to pay more if they want to have unhealthy alternatives. For example if children do want a fizzy drink with their meal deal they have to pay extra for it. Most of the children can't afford the extra cost. Likewise if customers want chips instead of the salad that now automatically comes with a kebab these too cost extra.

Water is priced at 70p - significantly cheaper than fizzy drinks which cost £1.

### Healthier promotions and placing strategies

Other nudging techniques are also employed by the business to encourage customers to make healthier choices. These include hiding the salt shaker behind the counter and then, as Lev says, "Most people can't be assed to ask for salt". Water and fruit juices are placed at eye level in the fridge.

Customers have noticed the *healthier catering commitment* sign on the window and stop and look at the list of healthier practices that the business has adopted. This seems to encourage them to come in – so it has been good for business.



Listen to Lev talk about the business





## Section 5 Healthier business case studies

### Cater trailer Mobile Burger van

Food Type: Mobile burger van

Best practice: Offers free salad and fatter chips are sold in a small tray



Cater trailer has four mobile burger vans which operate outside the Arsenal Football stadium in the London Borough of Islington on match days. The business is run by Stephen Edwards and Maria Galea and her son Liam. They sell burgers, hot dogs, bacon rolls, hash browns, chips, and hot and cold drinks. Customers can help themselves to free salad.

A burger sells for £3 and a typical meal (e.g. burger and chips) is £5.50p. The average spend is £3. It is a highly competitive market place as there are 50 to 60 other outlets including several other burger vans and variety of permanent cafes and takeaways selling fast food nearby on match days. As a result Cater trailer has not been able to increase its prices for several years. People are also more cost conscious now because of the recession so the business has to be seen to be offering good value for money. Customers are almost exclusively football fans on their way to a game at the Arsenal.

### Healthier products

The business adopted a number of healthier changes following advice from the council's Environmental Health Department and in January 2102 it was awarded the *Healthier Catering Commitment* as a result. The changes included allowing customers to add their own salt, offering low sugar drinks, smaller portions for children, and promoting healthier eating. They also tried selling wholemeal burger baps but had to stop those as customers did not like them. Otherwise all the healthier changes have been accepted by customers without any complaints and there has been no impact on sales.

The business also incorporates a number of healthier cooking practices including grilling sausages, burgers and bacon rather than frying, heating oil to the correct temperature for deep fat frying, and draining the excess fat before serving. When they started selling chips they used fatter chips and served them in smaller trays and customers seem to be happy with this. By selling fatter chips from the start they avoided making changes which customers might object to. Using fatter chips in a smaller tray gives the illusion of providing a larger portion than is actually the case. The standard portion of chips is just 166gm. Fatter chips cost more than the thin ones and the oil they use is also slightly more expensive than other less healthy options. However the owner, Stephen, is prepared to pay more for better quality food and believes that selling better tasting/quality food encourages customers to return.



# Section 5

## Healthier business case studies

### Pricing, promotion and placing strategies

Salad is included free with all of the meals and customers can help themselves to whatever type of salad they want.

Water and diet drinks are prominently displayed at eye level and on the counter.



Listen to Maria talk about the business



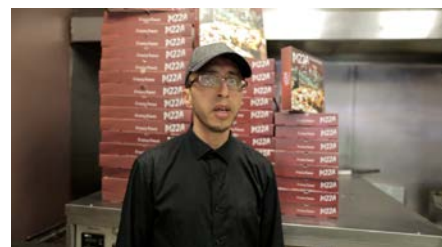
# Section 5

## Healthier business case studies

### Oregano Pizza

Food Type: Pizza and Pasta

Best practice: Pasta accounts for 50 % of sales. The salt content of pizza dough has been reduced by 50 %



Oregano Pizza and Pasta is based in Leytonstone, in east London. The business was set up by Mr Abdelghani Elhassani Alaoui two and a half years ago. It is based in a part of London which is amongst the 20% most deprived areas in the UK. There is a lot of local competition and within a 10 minute walk of the business there are 15 other outlets selling pizza. As a result Oregano Pizza has to keep its prices low.

Oregano Pizza offers 27 varieties of pizza as well as 14 pasta dishes and a number of side dishes such as corn on the cob, mushrooms and salads. Prices range from £2.49 for a 7" pizza and from £3.99 for pasta dishes with £3.50 – £5 being the average spend per head for adults and £1.60 for children. Customers are mainly local residents.

### Healthier products

In the early days Abdel found it very hard to make a living as so many other local businesses were offering pizza. So he decided to start offering pasta dishes – a much healthier alternative. He uses the same basic sauces as he uses for his pizza toppings, and pasta is very easy to cook, so it has been quite easy to make this swap. The pasta dishes have proved to be very popular and now account for 50% of sales. They have attracted a new group of customers, particularly women, who like to have a lighter alternative to pizza and this has led to a 20% increase in profits.

After attending a one day course on healthier catering run by Walthamstow council Abdul was persuaded to reduce the amount of salt he adds to the pizza dough and pizza/pasta sauces. He now uses just one and a half tablespoons of salt per eight kilogrammes of pizza flour – half the amount he previously used. This is good for his customer's health and also saves him money. Since Abdul makes all of his own sauces from fresh ingredients himself he is able to control the amount of salt that is added, and he has substituted herbs – fresh rosemary and oregano, thyme and garlic for salt in the sauces. Customers have not noticed that the amount of salt has been reduced and love the fresh tasty pizza and pasta he cooks.



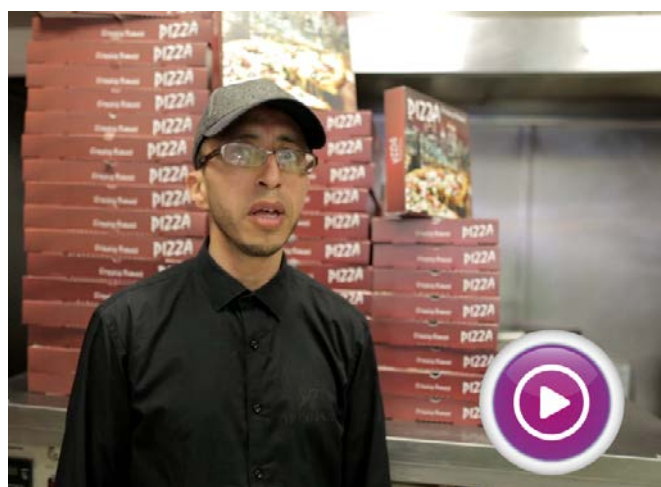
# Section 5

## Healthier business case studies

### Pricing, promotion and placing strategies

Abdul's pricing policy on drinks encourages people to buy water instead of fizzy drinks. He charges 50p for a bottle of water and 65p for a can of fizzy drink. Water is also placed at eye-level in the fridge to encourage the purchase of this healthier alternative. As a result he sells a lot of water.

To help increase sales Abdul has registered with the online fast food websites Just-Eat and Hungry House. He can charge a premium to people who order through these websites and they are becoming increasingly popular. Fifty percent of his sales now come via these sites. Although both companies take a percentage cut of the sales and he has to pay for a delivery man, selling this way has been a crucial strategy for keeping the business afloat.



Listen to Abdul talk about the business



# Section 5

## Healthier business case studies

### Sam's Chicken: the healthier franchise

Food Type: Fried and grilled chicken

Best practice: Pricing strategies encourage sale of grilled chicken and rice instead of fried chicken and chips



Sam's Chicken is a franchise operation which was first established in 1990. It now has 34 outlets across the UK, ten of which are based in London. The company policy has been to locate on the fringes of the inner city where rents are cheaper and there is a good pedestrian flow of low-middle income groups who tend to comprise Sam's main customer base.

The business specialises in fried and grilled peri-peri chicken with chips as well as chicken burgers and wraps. Sides include sweet-corn, salad, rice and potato wedges. A typical meal deal of two pieces of chicken, chips and a drink is £3.89. Several small meals/snacks such as hot dogs (99p) and chicken rice (£1.99), chicken or veggie burgers (£1.99) are also available. Other menu items can be seen on their website [www.samschicken.com](http://www.samschicken.com).

### Healthier products

Sam's Chicken is very committed to offering healthier alternatives and operating healthier catering practices. A range of healthier alternatives to the typical fried chicken meal deal are offered:

- Grilled peri-peri chicken is a speciality and accounts for 50% of the chicken sold. It offers a similar profit margin to fried chicken.
- Rice is offered as an alternative to chips and is more popular in areas with large Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities.
- Salads are available and offered with meal deals. A family peri-peri meal deal includes two plain salads, for example.
- Aqua and Rapidz fruit juices, which are approved by schools, are targeted at children
- Healthier snacks include a chicken hot dog in a baguette for 99p which is proving very popular with both children and adults
- Dips have been sourced from suppliers who use natural ingredients with minimal or no salt
- Portion sizes of chips have been cut down. A kid's portion of chips is now only 70gms. A kid's size chip bag has been specially designed without a gusset to limit the number of chips that can be put in the bag.





# Section 5

## Healthier business case studies

The cooking methods incorporate a number of healthier practices:

- Over the past few years the amount of flour and salt used in the chicken batter for fried chicken has been halved.
- The chicken is now single rather than double-breaded and this has reduced the salt content by 50%.
- The high tec ovens used mean that no oil is needed in the cooking of peri-peri chicken. Special oven trays collect and drain the natural chicken oils instead.

### Pricing strategies

Pricing strategies make it easier for customers to choose the healthier options:

- The cost of the healthier peri-peri chicken meals is the same as the fried chicken alternative.
- The peri-peri chicken also comes with free rice under a current promotional offer
- Water and fruit juices are priced at 60p whilst fizzy drinks are 70p

### Promotional and placing strategies

Sam's Chicken has adopted a number of promotional strategies to highlight the healthier alternatives offered.

- Water instead of the usual fizzy drinks features in the pictures on its menu boards and with the meal deals on its website.
- Peri-peri options and other healthier dishes and sides are grouped together on one side of the menu board making it easier for customers to easily identify the healthier alternatives.

However the business has found that promoting a product as healthier is a turn-off for some customers and it has had to adapt some of its packaging and marketing material to make healthier options, such as chicken rice in a box, look more appetising.



Listen to Niroch, Sam's Product Development Manager talk about the business

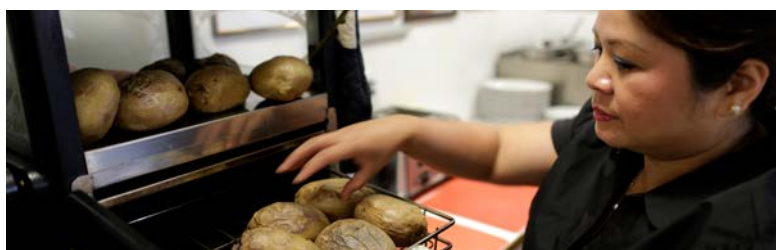


## Section 5 Healthier business case studies

### Sunrise Jacket Potato and Oriental Food

Food Type: Oriental Café specialising in jacket potatoes

Best practice: Jacket potatoes selling from £3 account for 70-80 % of sales



Sunrise Jacket Potato and Oriental Food is a cafe in Romford Market in the London Borough of Havering. The business is run by Edna Lobo, a Filipino lady who initially trained to be a teacher in Hong Kong and then followed her family to the UK.

She set up Sunrise, ten years ago, operating initially from a small outdoor stall in the market square which just sold jacket potatoes. When a unit inside the new Romford shopping mall became available she moved in there. The extra space allows for a wider range of food to be offered. As well as offering standard English fare, including lots of tea and snacks, Edna now sells a range of Asian and Filipino dishes. This sets her business apart from the local competition.

The menu includes quesadillas (toasted wraps) pasta, and stir fries and curries, and Filipino dishes with rice. A typical meal of a stir fry or curry with rice is £5. Jacket potatoes only cost £3 - 4 including a filling and side salad and are a popular takeaway option. Prices have not been increased by more than 10p in the last eight years because of the recession. The café is popular with local residents visiting the outdoor market and staff working in the nearby shops and council offices. Around 30% of sales are takeaways with purchases being generally taken away to eat back in the office rather than on the go.

#### Healthier products

Jacket potatoes make up 70-80% of the business's food sales. Edna has two special Victorian style baked potato ovens which can be purchased for £1,200. These make really moist potatoes which are much tastier than those cooked in a microwave. There are 4-5 other cafes in the shopping centre which also sell baked potatoes for similar prices, but Sunrise is well known as offering the best. Selling baked potatoes is also quite profitable as a box of 40 good quality Maris piper potatoes can be brought for between £8-16 depending on the season giving a 70-80% mark-up.

The stir fry dishes such as chow mein are popular and include lots of fresh vegetables. Edna loves her salads, so salad is offered and actively promoted with everything. Brown bread is also available, and smaller portions and tap water can be requested. Very little of the food is fried but when it is healthier frying practices are adopted. This involves heating the oil to the correct temperature (170 degrees C) and using the shake, bang, hang technique to ensure that it is well drained. No salt is added during the cooking process and customers are left to add their own salt and salad dressings.



# Section 5

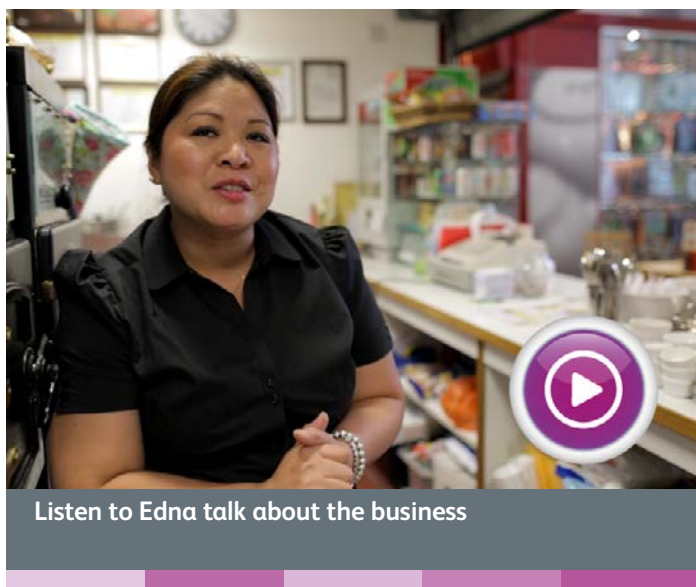
## Healthier business case studies

### Pricing strategies

Edna's pricing strategies encourage customers to choose healthier options. Jacket potatoes are the cheapest main dish. Water is priced at 60p – considerably cheaper than fizzy drinks which are 85p.

### Promotional and placing strategies

Salad is included free with most of the main meals and the rolls. Water and diet drinks are prominently displayed





## Section 5 Healthier business case studies

### Tasty Buds

Food Type: Caribbean

Best practice: Wholesome healthy meals at very affordable prices. Clever use of social marketing techniques to encourage the purchase of healthier options



Tasty Buds is located in a former hairdressers shop on West Green Road, Tottenham, in the London Borough of Haringey. The area is amongst the 20% most deprived in the UK. The business is a family run business run by Sandra Sousa, her husband, and his aunt Joan. Tasty Buds specialises in healthy affordable Caribbean food for the local community 36% of whom are from Black African, Caribbean or Asian groups. It is also popular with local workers and students from the nearby College of North East London.

Tasty Bud's menu includes traditional Caribbean dishes such as Jerk chicken, ackee, salt fish, and patties, as well as dishes inspired by Sandra's Portuguese South African background and her husband's Jamaican roots. The average price paid for a meal is £3. Home-baked Jamaican patties, a popular snack with children, cost £1.35.

#### Healthier products

The outlet offers a wide range of fresh meat, fish and vegetarian dishes, all of which include a choice of one of eight salads. Most food is baked or grilled, and rice is the default option. Natural fruit juices are available. The business bakes its own patties (wholemeal as well as white flour) and cakes.

Porridge is one of the business's most popular products. A variety of different types are offered, including traditional Caribbean cornmeal porridge. At just £1.50 it is a cheap and popular breakfast or mid-morning snack. Whilst most takeaways don't open before midday selling porridge has

meant that it is worthwhile for Tasty Buds to open at 8.30am and capture this additional morning trade. This helps to increase business turnover and maximize the use of the premises.

Their African-Caribbean heritage customers tend to experience higher than average levels of high blood pressure and heart disease and have become very concerned about the amount of salt in food. As a result several customers complained about the salty taste of the Chinese flavouring that Tasty Buds used to add to many of the dishes. Having listened to these customers Tasty Buds decided to stop adding salt to food during the cooking process, and seasoning is now used to flavour the food instead.



# Section 5

## Healthier business case studies

### Pricing Strategies

Prices are kept low, well below the local competition, and thus are affordable for local people. The business relies on a high turnover and an efficient operation to remain profitable. As Sandra herself acknowledges, she runs a very tight ship.

### Promotional strategies

Tasty Buds has adopted several promotional strategies designed to increase turnover and secure customer loyalty. Staff are encouraged to only offer customers the healthier options. For example with main dishes customers are asked whether they would like rice and peas or plain rice. Chips are only provided if customers insist on them.

A student's/kid's healthy meal deal is promoted for £2.60. This includes a main dish, side salad or vegetables and a drink. Then there is the Cuppa Club loyalty scheme for those buying porridge on a regular basis which now has over 100 members. After their fifth purchase card holders get the next one free.

Tasty Buds was awarded the *Healthier Catering Commitment* in January 2014 and Sandra feels that this has given added credibility to her healthier catering practices. "It's made it more official" and enabled the business to advertise its healthier status on Facebook and Twitter.

### Placing strategies

Tasty Buds tries to make it easy for customers to access healthier food whilst making it harder to choose unhealthy options. Salt is nowhere to be seen on the premises, for example, and chips are not advertised on the menu board. Students at Walthamstow College can text their order and have the food delivered. A tiffin delivery is also being planned for local offices whereby customers will be able to pre-order a £5 meal online.

Staff have clear sales targets and know that their job depends on it. The business also generates 25% of its income by providing the catering for office events, weddings, parties and other key events – in particular the Notting Hill Carnival.



Listen to Sandra and Joan talk about the business





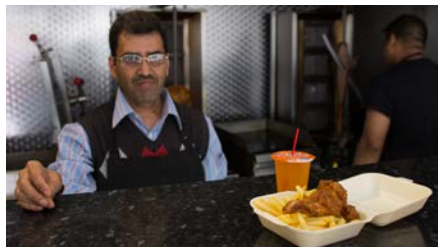
# Section 5

## Healthier business case studies

### Tasty Chicken & Pizza

Food Type: Chicken and chips

Best practice: Rice and salad are offered instead of chips.  
Healthier frying practices are adopted



Tasty Chicken & Pizza is located in a former post office on Devon's Road, in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The owner, Mr Masood, used to be the local post master and set up Tasty Chicken & Pizza when the post office had to be shut down 4 years ago. There are three full time staff.

The business is located in quite a deprived residential area – one of the 20% most deprived in the UK. The local community is largely Muslim, and of Bangladeshi origin. These local residents are the business's main customers and they generally come in for cheaper food with the average-spend per visit ranging from £2 to £3, and £1 for children. Prices have to be kept low because customers cannot afford any more and Mr Masood has not been able to increase them for four years. Main sales are from burgers, and chicken wings with chips.

#### Healthier products

Tasty Chicken & Pizza serves salads, offers rice instead of chips at the same price, and offers pita bread with chips. Customers can choose potato wedges instead of chips. There are several vegetarian options such as rice and lentils. The menu also includes rice with a variety of curries, biryani etc. However these haven't proved very popular because they are more expensive and local residents generally cook these at home and prefer to eat something different such as burgers when they eat out.

Mr Masood makes his own chilli sauce using lots of fresh ingredients and garlic which is good for health and this is very popular with customers.

Healthier frying practices have been adopted by the business including using rapeseed oil, frying at the correct temperature, and using the shake, bang, hang technique to reduce the amount of fat retained on fried food.

Smaller cartons are available and smaller portions of chips are offered.

#### Pricing, promotional and placing strategies

Healthier options such as rice are priced at the same as the less healthy chips to encourage customers to choose the healthier alternative.



# Section 5

## Healthier business case studies

A free 100ml sugar-free flavoured drink is included with kid's meals and children appreciate this and are less likely to purchase a fizzy drink as a result.

A number of nudging techniques are used to encourage customers to go for the healthier choices. For example, salt shakers are hidden, water is displayed prominently, and rice and curries are advertised. The fact that Mr Masood is well known in the area as he used to be the post master makes it possible for him to persuade some customers to choose the healthier options.



Listen to Mr Masood talk about the business



## Section 5 Healthier business case studies

### Shalamar Kebab House

Food Type: Kebabs

Best practice: Offering salad instead of chips has given the business a competitive advantage



Shalamar Kebab House is located on Commercial Road in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The business was established 20 years ago and is currently managed by Mr Khan. There are two full time staff in addition to the owner who comes in sometimes to help out. The business is located on a busy commercial street, close to a number of clothing warehouses and retail outlets, but also a densely populated residential area which is home to some of the most deprived communities in the UK.

There is a large Muslim population in the area, predominantly Bangladeshi, but also other more recent immigrant groups including a large number of Somalis. The East London Mosque – the largest mosque in Europe is just a 5 minute walk away on Whitechapel Road. Shalamar Kebab House's clientele includes local school children and students, local workers and local residents, as well as passers-by. The main sales are from kebabs, chicken and chips and burgers. The average price paid for a meal is £2-4 with kids meals available for £1- £1.50p. It is a highly competitive marketplace with 3 kebab shops and 4-5 chicken and chip shops in the immediate vicinity and as a result Shalamar has not raised its prices for 7 years.

#### Healthier products

When Tower Hamlets council and the Primary Care Trust were promoting the *Food4Health* healthier catering scheme the local environmental health officer encouraged Mr Khan to start offering free salad. This is now offered with all main dishes and customers are also encouraged to choose salad as an alternative to chips. This has proved very popular, especially in summer, and the business now gets through 2-3 huge bowls of salad a day. Half the chip tray is filled up with salad unless the customer complains, and wants it filled completely with chips and no salad. Around 5% of the customers complained

about this initially and wanted extra chips, but most were happy. Prior to introducing the salad sales had dropped by about 15% because of increasing competition in the area. However the free salad, which his competitors don't offer, has attracted more customers and now sales are more or less back up to where they were before. Salad is also cheaper than chips so saves the business money. Children also get free salad with their meal deals and about 40% take at least some types of salad i.e. some lettuce or cucumber etc.

Grilled chicken and wedges are available and a number of other healthier sides are also offered including naan and baked beans.



# Section 5

## Healthier business case studies

Mr Khan makes his own slightly spicy tomato sauce from fresh ingredients that is popular.

Diet drinks, fruit juices and water are sold and tap water is available on request. Skimmed milk is available with tea and coffee.

### Pricing, promotional, and placing strategies

The healthier grilled chicken and wedges cost a bit more than fried chicken and chips but are still affordable. A grilled chicken leg is available for £1.50p compared to £1 for a fried chicken leg. Wedges are sold for just 20p more than chips. Wedges cost the business a lot more but since wedges are bigger fewer are needed to fill the box so it does not make a huge difference cost wise, and Mr Khan doesn't mind as it brings in more customers.

Healthier drinks such as water cost just 50p and salad portions can be brought separately for 50p.

As a result of the healthier alternatives and catering practices adopted Shalamar Kebab was awarded a bronze award by Tower Hamlets *Food4Health* Award scheme. The certificate is prominently displayed on the walls along with other posters encouraging the consumption of less salt. According to Mr Khan customers appreciate the fact that the business is concerned about their health.



Listen to Mr Khan talk about the business



## Section 6 Towards healthier catering



It would be a mistake to believe that any healthier catering intervention would make a significant dent on its own. Addressing takeaways should be part of a whole systems approach to obesity prevention as recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).<sup>21</sup> This calls for partnership amongst public, voluntary and private agencies and networks across a geographical area. This would enable engagement with the operation of food supply chains beyond the caterer-customer transaction. A co-ordinated approach could move towards effective, efficient, potentially cost saving procurement which would impact on the food environment in multiple settings: hospitals, schools and local takeaways.

More joined up working is required in the first instance across different council departments in working with fast food outlets to make this happen. This includes between trading standards and environmental health as well as public health, planning and childrens' services. Many local authorities have a stronger tradition of cross departmental working within the authority and intersect oral cooperation with other agencies, notably with the NHS, than is the case at central government level. Healthier catering initiatives need to be part of an overall town centre strategy. We can build on the learning afforded by the experience of Healthy Towns programme 2009-11, the most developed example of intersect oral action informed by the whole system approach.

There is increasing interest in the operation of supply chains with media coverage of, for example, contaminated chicken showing that caterers and supermarkets source their meat from a concentrated number of large firms. This is accompanied by recognition that capacity to monitor quality is compromised by cuts to trading standards. Taken together with recent central government policy decisions to extend free meal provision in schools, and to require hospitals to meet more stringent nutritional standards, the logic for taking a whole systems approach is strengthened.

21 NICE (2014) Obesity: Working with local communities, NICE public health guidance 42





# Section 7

## Links and resources

### Healthier Catering Initiatives (surveyed for this toolkit)

Bradford Good Food Award

<http://www.goodfood.wyjs.org.uk>

Eat Out Eat Well

<http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/business-and-consumers/food-advice/eat-out-eat-well-in-surrey>

Eatright Liverpool

<http://www.foodvision.cieh.org/pages/liverpool-eatright>

Essex Healthy Eating Awards

[http://www.healthylifeessex.co.uk/HealthyEating/HealthyEatingAward\(home\).html](http://www.healthylifeessex.co.uk/HealthyEating/HealthyEatingAward(home).html)

Healthier Business Award

<http://www.wigan.gov.uk/Business/Healthy-Business-Awards/Healthy-Business-Award.aspx>

*Healthier Catering Commitment*

<http://www.cieh.org/healthier-catering-commitment.html>

Healthy Choice Award (Brighton and Hove)

<http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/business-and-trade/food-safety/healthy-choice-award-0>

Healthy Choice Awards (Kirklees)

<http://www2.kirklees.gov.uk/community/environment/healthychoice/healthychoice.asp>

Healthier Menus Award

<http://www.southlakeland.gov.uk/community/food-and-safety/healthy-eating-and-nutrition/>

Healthier Options Norfolk

<http://www.norwich.gov.uk/Environment/EnvironmentalHealth/FoodSafety/pages/HealthierOptionsNorfolk.aspx>

Healthy Options Award (Hull)

[http://www.hullcc.gov.uk/portal/page?pageid=221,610409&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://www.hullcc.gov.uk/portal/page?pageid=221,610409&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

Healthier Options Award (all of Wales)

[http://www.cieh-cymruwales.org/uploadedFiles/Core/Policy/Food\\_safety\\_and\\_nutrition/guidance\\_healthy\\_options\\_award\\_v1.pdf](http://www.cieh-cymruwales.org/uploadedFiles/Core/Policy/Food_safety_and_nutrition/guidance_healthy_options_award_v1.pdf)

Heartbeat Award

[http://www.kettering.gov.uk/info/200045/food/118/food\\_safety/10](http://www.kettering.gov.uk/info/200045/food/118/food_safety/10)

Stoke salt and fat reduction.

<https://responsibilitydeal.dh.gov.uk/salt-and-fat-reduction/>

Tower Hamlets Food4Health Award

[http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/401-450/409\\_healthy\\_food\\_awards.aspx](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/401-450/409_healthy_food_awards.aspx)

Truckers Tucker

<http://www.worcsregservices.gov.uk/health--wellbeing/truckers-tucker.aspx>

### Policy

PHE Toolkits

[http://www.noo.org.uk/LA/obesity\\_prev/adults](http://www.noo.org.uk/LA/obesity_prev/adults)

NICE (2012) *Obesity: working with local communities*, NICE Guidance 42

<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph42>

### Catering tips

Public Health England (2014) *Healthier and More Sustainable Catering: A toolkit for serving food to adults*. Catering guidance that offers practical advice on how to make catering affordable, healthier and more sustainable.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthier-and-more-sustainable-catering-a-toolkit-for-serving-food-to-adults>

Tips for different types of business (Chinese, chip shops, Indian, sandwich shops, Italian and Pizza) can be found on the PHE Local Responsibility Deal website

<https://responsibilitydeal.dh.gov.uk/local-partners/>

Food Standards Agency (2010) *Reducing salt in pizza in smaller catering businesses*, Food Standards Agency

<http://www.food.gov.uk/healthiereating/healthycatering/cateringbusiness/pizza>