

Childhood Obesity - A Response by the Out of Home Sector

Eating out is an everyday event for millions of people, and we recognise the responsibility to offer nutritionally balanced food that is safe, tasty and of a quality that meets consumers' expectations. We are also encouraged to see that consumers want more information to make smarter food choices. This should be based on nutritional information, from calorie content of individual food items or dishes, to signposting for special dietary needs.

Much has been done by our sector to help consumers achieve a healthier, balanced diet. Healthier options have already been developed, recipe changes made and portion sizes reviewed, all aimed to reduce salt, sugar, saturated fat and/ or calories. In addition, we have made significant improvements in providing clear and easily understood consumer information either on menus, at point of sale or on websites. All these activities have been done gradually over a number of years using our extensive knowledge of consumers to ensure that any changes such as taste, nutrient composition and/or portion sizes are acceptable to them.

We agree that more needs to be done. The Government's Childhood Obesity Plan and Public Health England's programme provide a framework with stretching targets, which all in the food industry should be working towards.

As responsible food businesses - namely Caffè Nero, Costa, Greggs, McDonald's, Pizza Hut Delivery, Starbucks, Mitchells and Butlers, Wetherspoons and Whitbread Restaurants - we have developed a voluntary Code of Practice that contains a number of nutritional commitments that have been guided by Government strategy and positive engagement with Public Health England.

This is a long- term initiative to support the Government's aim of reducing childhood obesity in the UK and we encourage others to join us.

Code of Practice

Scope

This Code of Practice applies to all Out of Home food retailing and foodservice businesses including restaurant chains, pub chains, quick service restaurants, coffee shops, cafés and food to go outlets.

It covers Public Health England's sugar reduction and calorie reduction programmes as well as any future reduction programmes on salt and saturated fat.

Context

We set out below a series of commitments, in response to the Government's Childhood Obesity Plan that will reduce the key nutrients of concern in our products with a clear timeline attached. We have carefully considered the implications of the changes we need to make over time and we know that to succeed, we must bring our consumers with us. Experience such as salt reduction, shows that we can make significant achievements over time if consumers are unaware of any changes to the taste and quality of their products and dishes.

The Out of Home sector has a long lead time on product development and many companies will have products in the pipeline that will not yet be visible in the baseline data used by Public Health England. Much progress against each company's baseline has already been made and we will demonstrate this as new products roll out. Some examples of the progress already underway can be seen in the appendix.

In addition, everyone involved in delivering the Childhood Obesity plan cannot underestimate the technological challenges inherent in sugar, fat and calorie reduction. Many products rely on sugar and fat for their functional properties such as texture as well as for taste and their removal must be balanced in other ways. We need to overcome these critical challenges and are proactively working with our suppliers to tackle them.

We also fundamentally believe that whilst we need to consider all nutrients of concern i.e. salt, sugar, saturated fat and total calories, we should also look at positive nutritional attributes such as protein, fibre, calcium and support for 5 a day. We are committed to continuing our well-established individual company programmes on these nutrients and make the appropriate reductions wherever possible.

Our Commitments

1. Menu/Range Development

- We will each aim to achieve Public Health England’s sugar reduction target of 20% by 2020. This will be done by a combination of any or all of the following: adapting recipes through reformulation, reviewing portion sizes, introducing healthier options.
- We will engage with PHE on their calorie reduction programme and work towards the overall target of 20% calorie reduction by 2024.
- We will continue with our salt reduction programmes and work with PHE to ensure that any future targets reflect the role of salt in the manufacture and safety of specific foods such as cured meats, cheese and bread.

2. Menu Choice

- We will continue to offer healthier options on our menus for all meal occasions throughout the day including snacks. This will be delivered through a combination of any or all of the following: reformulation, smaller portion sizes or specifically designed healthier products or dishes.
- We will continue to ensure that fruit, vegetables or salads are available and appropriate to each meal occasion to support the “5 a day” message and that these are credible healthier choices e.g. served with healthier dressings or dressings on the side, pure fruit with no added sugar, more vegetarian and vegan products and dishes.
- We will review ways of making healthier choices the easier choice for consumers such as price incentives, clear merchandising and signposting.

3. Responsible Promotion

- We will continue to adhere to the BCAP, Ofcom and CAP codes for advertising to children.
- We will include healthier options within the range of packaged offers. Examples include fruit bags alongside biscuits and cakes in coffee shops and food to go outlets and unlimited salad and vegetable bars in restaurants.

- We will work with the Department of Health and other devolved Governments on their respective proposed frameworks on advertising and promotion of HFSS foods to ensure all promotional activities are proportionate and responsible whilst offering choice and value for money opportunities for customers.

4. Children

- We will continue to provide children's menus that offer credible healthier choices with lower levels of salt and added sugar without compromising food safety, quality and taste.
- We will continue to support the "5 a day" message and ensure that wherever appropriate, a choice of vegetables, salad and fruit is on offer.
- We will commit to promoting healthier choices and encouraging healthier alternatives on menus or on other consumer communication channels.

5. Consumer Information

- We will provide clear, easy to understand and readily accessible calorie information on core menus at the point of sale/choice, on either restaurant/food to go menus or websites. Further nutrition information including salt, sugar, saturated fat, total fat and calories as a minimum will also be available on websites and on retail packs where appropriate.
- We will work with Government on their proposals for mandatory calorie labelling on menus and menu boards to ensure accuracy and clarity of information for customers.
- We are committed to providing clear and accurate allergen information of all products and dishes and to support this with training and development of our staff to minimise the risk to public health.
- Where possible, we will utilise new technology and digital media to encourage consumers to access nutrition and allergen information through smart phones and similar devices.
- We will provide training to staff to enable them to provide or signpost nutritional information to consumers.

- Where appropriate, we will develop 'nudge' initiatives to encourage consumers to change their behaviours e.g. product positioning of drinks - no added sugar drinks first and clear merchandising

6. Stakeholder engagement

- Where relevant, we will engage with trade associations, other industry bodies and related NGOs to ensure the business decisions we make are sound, sustainable and provide genuine benefit to our customers.
- We will continue to work with our supply chain partners to promote best practice and so ensure that they can help us deliver the targets that have been set.
- We will continue to support industry-wide initiatives, which help promote nutrition and healthier lifestyle awareness among consumers - for example Government and PHE's 400, 600, 600 calorie campaign, Change4Life and Peas Please campaign which may be adopted in such a way that they are complementary to individual company nutrition strategies.
- We will continue to provide training and education for our company colleagues and ensure that what we do for our consumers, we do for our employees.