

The Takeaway Snowball

STATUS REPORT 1, FEBRUARY 2010

Numerous initiatives are underway focussed on hot food takeaways. They seek to restrict the numbers of such outlets and/or to improve the quality of the food on offer.

This note is a first attempt to list what is happening. It is almost certainly incomplete. Other projects are being planned and will be announced shortly. Suggestions for additional entries are welcome.

Together, they suggest that a movement is developing to take action on the problems (social and economic as well as nutritional) created by the large number of takeaways.

At present, many are working separately. They do not know that others are actively concerned with the same issue. The list seeks to inform each about all. Recipients are encouraged to pass this note on to others interested in the problems.

* **NATIONAL CONFERENCE:** Sandwell Council is organising a national meeting on takeaways in Birmingham on 30 June. The programme will be finalised shortly.

* **NATIONAL SEMINAR:** Children's Services Network of the Local Government Information Unit will hold a seminar on children and obesity, in London 19 March. It includes two sessions on takeaways.

* **WALTHAM FOREST:** The local authority pioneered the use of planning controls to restrict the number of takeaways. The policy is being actively implemented, including enforcement action against illegal establishments.

* **EATRIGT LIVERPOOL:** The Trading Standards Department, in collaboration with Liverpool John Moores University, is developing a programme towards takeaways, including the nutritional improvement of the basic products. Details by the end of February.

* **BARKING & DAGENHAM:** This local authority too is finalising a policy, combining the two strategies above, plus a £1000/yr levy on all takeaways. Approval expected by the end of March.

* **TOWER HAMLETS:** The Primary Care Trust commissioned research from London Metropolitan University on innovative policies for fast food outlets in the borough. Several establishments are now working towards a Food4Health Award. Training programmes on healthier frying for chips are underway.

* **MUNICIPAL STRATEGIES:** London Metropolitan University and City University of New York, together with the Mayor's offices in both cities, have published ObesCities, an analysis of municipal strategies against childhood obesity. Its first recommendation is to control takeaways. Follow up work is underway.

* **LAW SEMINAR:** The European Food Law Association is considering a day seminar on takeaways later in 2010. A decision is expected this month.

* **TEMPTATION TOWN:** The School Foods Trust conducted a national survey of junk food outlets near schools, including takeaways and newsagents. It found 23 such establishments per school in England. It advocates a "stay-on-site" policy to control schoolchildren's access to junk food at lunchtimes.

This status report will be updated from time to time, as developments warrant. It will be distributed electronically to all who register an interest and will be posted on the Nutrition Policy Unit website, www.nutritionpolicy.org.

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