# McDonald's faces opposition but plans to open hundreds of new outlets in UK and Ireland



The fast-food corporation McDonald’s is reportedly advancing its plans to establish hundreds of new outlets across the United Kingdom and Ireland, despite opposition from local councils who aim to limit its expansion. Through an investigation by the British Medical Journal (BMJ), it has come to light that McDonald’s has successfully countered attempts by councils to block new store openings by asserting that these establishments can contribute to promoting "healthier lifestyles."

The investigation revealed that McDonald’s has been winning planning appeals in some of the most disadvantaged regions of England, particularly those where child obesity rates are notably high; for instance, around a quarter of children are classified as obese by the time they complete their schooling. In its appeals, McDonald’s has employed various arguments, including claims that customers have the option to order salads from the drive-through and that the accessibility of the outlets encourages cycling or walking. Furthermore, the company has pointed to its sponsorship of local football teams as a means of promoting health and wellness within the community.

Alice Wiseman, the vice president of the Association of Directors of Public Health and director of public health for Gateshead and Newcastle, expressed concern over these tactics. Speaking to the BMJ, she stated that such appeals undermine the ability of local governments to foster a healthy environment, noting, "We haven’t got the resources that the likes of McDonald’s have got to be able to get into any legal battles with this. It’s David and Goliath."

Additionally, experts are emphasising the advantage that large multinational corporations hold over smaller businesses and local councils in navigating the planning system. Thomas Burgoine, a principal research associate at the MRC Epidemiology Unit at Cambridge University, commented on the situation, explaining that large companies possess the resources and knowledge to effectively object and appeal planning decisions. He stated, "They know the sorts of arguments that work and hire planning consultants and businesses who know the ins and outs of the UK planning system to work on their behalf."

In the previous year, McDonald’s disclosed plans to open 200 new restaurants in the UK and Ireland within a four-year timeframe, indicating a significant commitment to expanding its presence in these markets amidst ongoing health discussions and community concerns.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.reportlinker.com/article/7708> - This article supports McDonald's expansion plans in the UK and Ireland, highlighting the company's commitment to opening 200 new restaurants and creating jobs. It also touches on McDonald's strategy to support town centers.
* <https://247wallst.com/retail/2025/02/07/mcdonalds-is-adding-10000-new-restaurants-heres-where-theyll-be/> - This article provides further details on McDonald's global expansion plans, including the UK and Ireland, as part of its broader strategy to reach over 50,000 locations by 2027.
* <https://www.bmj.com/content/378/bmj.p1831> - This could potentially be a source from the British Medical Journal discussing health-related issues, though it is not directly linked to McDonald's expansion tactics. However, it might provide context on health discussions relevant to fast-food chains.
* <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-applications> - This UK government resource provides information on the planning application process, which is relevant to how McDonald's navigates and appeals planning decisions in the UK.
* <https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/mrc-epidemiology-unit> - This link to the MRC Epidemiology Unit at Cambridge University could provide background on research related to public health and obesity, which is relevant to discussions around fast-food outlets.