# Ebbw Vale’s obesity crisis deepens as fast food outlets dominate local diet



Ebbw Vale, a town in South Wales, has recently been dubbed the 'UK's fattest town', with alarming statistics highlighting a significant obesity crisis among its residents. Investigations reveal that a staggering 80% of the local population is classified as either overweight or obese, primarily due to a diet heavily reliant on fast food. The town’s dietary challenges appear to stem from a considerable oversupply of fast food outlets, compounded by a lack of accessible and affordable healthy food options.

In a striking revelation, a viral YouTube video featuring social media influencer Callum Airey, known as Calfreezy, showcased the stark contrast between Ebbw Vale's food landscape and health needs. According to his exploration, out of the town’s 75 eateries, an overwhelming 55 are fast food establishments. The meagre presence of healthy alternatives is starkly illustrated by only one traditional greengrocer operating in the area. Calfreezy noted that “fruit is more expensive than a sausage roll in Greggs,” encapsulating the economic barriers to healthier eating.

The overwhelming prevalence of fast food is mirrored by broader statistics indicating that Blaenau Gwent—more broadly encompassing Ebbw Vale—houses the highest percentage of fast food outlets in the UK, with about 73% of its food establishments classified in this category. Such data highlights an urgent need for intervention, as local community efforts strive to combat the rising obesity rates linked directly to these food choices.

Residents have attributed their dietary habits to convenience and affordability. Many acknowledge a lack of cooking skills among younger generations, leading to a reliance on ready meals and takeaways. One resident expressed, “McDonald's is too easy,” indicative of a cultural shift towards fast food as a primary dietary source. Furthermore, testimonies from fast food workers reveal a concerning trend, with some customers reportedly visiting establishments multiple times a day, further exacerbating health concerns tied to excessive calorie intake.

The repercussions of Ebbw Vale's eating habits extend beyond individual health, impacting public health systems significantly. The NHS is feeling mounting pressure due to obesity-related health issues, which include increased rates of heart disease, diabetes, and certain types of cancer. In fact, estimates suggest that obesity-related conditions could cost the UK economy nearly £100 billion annually, encompassing healthcare costs and lost productivity.

Recent developments point to a looming crisis in nutrition, with healthcare professionals warning of a dramatic rise in vitamin deficiencies. Thousands have been treated in hospitals for conditions linked to inadequate nutrient intake, a stark parallel to the fast food obsession. This alarming trend has driven health chiefs to call for strategic public health interventions to encourage healthier eating habits and to reduce the prevalence of fast food establishments in vulnerable areas.

The intersection of dietary behaviour, accessibility of nutritious food, and public health ramifications presents a critical challenge for Ebbw Vale. As community advocates seek meaningful solutions, the urgency for both local and national support becomes evident. Addressing these deeper public health issues will require a concerted effort to counter the burgeoning fast food culture that has taken root in this town, not just in Ebbw Vale, but across similar communities facing the daunting spectre of obesity.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14691905/Video-UK-Ebbw-Vale-residents-obesity-YouTube-calfreezy.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/17269750.attempts-made-tackle-obesity-blaenau-gwent-highest-proportion-fast-food-outlets-uk/), [[3]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1780247/uk-fattest-town-ebbw-vale), [[4]](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/uk/ebbw-vale-the-uks-fattest-town-battling-obesity-and-fast-food-deliveries/articleshow/105020804.cms)
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## Bibliography

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* <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/17269750.attempts-made-tackle-obesity-blaenau-gwent-highest-proportion-fast-food-outlets-uk/> - Blaenau Gwent, including Ebbw Vale, has the highest proportion of fast food outlets in the UK, with 73% of food establishments offering fast food. Efforts are underway to combat obesity in the area, which is linked to the prevalence of these outlets. The local community is actively seeking solutions to address this health crisis.
* <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1780247/uk-fattest-town-ebbw-vale> - Ebbw Vale, located in Blaenau Gwent, is recognized as the UK's 'fattest town,' with approximately 80% of residents classified as obese. The high density of fast food outlets contributes to this issue, with some residents consuming multiple takeaways daily. The situation is placing significant pressure on the NHS, prompting calls for intervention.
* <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/uk/ebbw-vale-the-uks-fattest-town-battling-obesity-and-fast-food-deliveries/articleshow/105020804.cms> - Ebbw Vale, situated in Blaenau Gwent, Southeast Wales, faces alarming obesity rates, with reports of residents ordering fast food deliveries up to three times a day. The town's high density of fast food outlets exacerbates the problem, highlighting the need for effective public health interventions.
* <https://ijbnpa.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12966-018-0699-8> - A study published in the International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity found that a higher proportion of fast-food outlets in neighborhoods is associated with increased body mass index (BMI) and obesity rates. This research underscores the impact of fast food availability on public health.
* <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10952272/> - Research published in Health Economics indicates that proximity to fast food restaurants is linked to weight gain during childhood and adolescence. The study highlights the role of environmental factors, such as the density of fast food outlets, in influencing obesity trends among young people.
* <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22516506/> - A study published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine found that consumption of fast food is associated with higher BMI, increased body fat percentage, and a greater likelihood of obesity among teenagers. The research emphasizes the need for nutritional education and public health interventions to address these issues.