# Fife Council pilots portion and calorie controls in takeaways to curb obesity



In an innovative approach to combat Scotland's escalating obesity crisis, Fife Council is set to launch a pilot scheme aimed at regulating portion sizes and calorie counts in local takeaways. This initiative, in collaboration with food standards inspectors and the NHS, seeks to mitigate overeating, a pressing public health concern impacting substantial segments of the population.

Dr Joy Tomlinson, NHS Fife’s Director of Public Health, advocates for a collective effort to create healthier environments, asserting that “takeaways and full-service restaurants have lots of scope for calorie reduction and helping communities achieve a healthy weight.” Her focus on the potential effectiveness of portion size reduction aligns with growing evidence that such measures could significantly dampen calorie intake. The pilot, which is still in exploratory stages, is positioned as a potential template for other local authorities across Scotland to emulate.

This localised effort to tackle obesity complements similar initiatives across the country. For instance, Dundee City Council is also considering a ban on 'go large' meal deals in restaurants and takeaways, with plans for mandatory calorie labelling. The council's push stems from alarming statistics indicating that Dundee has the highest obesity rate for primary one-age children in mainland Scotland. By encouraging smaller portion sizes and promoting healthier eating habits, local authorities aim to alleviate the growing pressure on the NHS caused by obesity-related illnesses.

Beyond portion control, Fife Council has proposed a radical shift in public advertising strategies, with plans to replace junk food advertisements on roundabouts with promotions for healthier options like fruits and vegetables. This aligns with movements in other regions such as Peterborough and Sefton, where local councils are scrutinising advertising policies, aiming to limit the exposure of unhealthy food options to vulnerable populations, particularly children. In Sefton, a recent decision to ban junk food advertisements on billboards reflects a broader commitment to enhancing community health standards.

Moreover, Fife’s approach to regulating the clustering of fast-food outlets in deprived areas aims to tackle the structural barriers that currently hinder access to healthier diets. As Dr Tomlinson identifies, significant challenges exist for residents in accessing nutritious food and maintaining active lifestyles. By ensuring that fast-food establishments are not disproportionately concentrated in lower-income areas, the council hopes to promote healthier eating culture across all demographics.

Statistics reveal the urgency of these measures: a staggering 32% of Scottish adults are classified as obese, with substantial rates of overweight children refusing to decline. This dire situation underscores the imperative for coordinated action. The National Obesity Forum has lent its support to Fife Council's plans, calling for regulatory powers to limit the unhealthy offerings of takeaways and fast-food outlets. Chairman Tam Fry has remarked on the stagnation of progress on calorie labelling in Scotland and posits that Fife’s initiatives, while welcome, are merely catching up to the problem at hand.

The convergence of health initiatives across multiple councils exemplifies a growing recognition of the urgent need for policy reforms to address dietary issues. As Fife Council prepares to implement its pilot programme, it stands at the forefront of a broader movement aimed at reshaping Scotland’s food landscape and promoting a healthier nation. With local authorities taking decisive steps, the push towards enhanced public health and dietary awareness continues to gain momentum.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/fife/5253338/fife-takeaways-portion-council-pilot/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/fife/5253338/fife-takeaways-portion-council-pilot/), [[2]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/dundee/828365/dundees-council-wants-to-ban-go-large-offers-in-calorie-crackdown-at-restaurants-and-takeaways/), [[3]](https://www.scotsman.com/regions/dundee-and-tayside/scottish-council-supports-ban-on-go-large-takeaway-promotions-113870)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5112jzxyklo), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-merseyside-68748619)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/fife/5253338/fife-takeaways-portion-council-pilot/), [[6]](https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/calls-to-tackle-the-soaring-number-of-fast-food-outlets-in-scotland-555192)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/fife/5253338/fife-takeaways-portion-council-pilot/), [[7]](https://www.gov.scot/news/plan-to-make-eating-out-healthier/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/fife/5253338/fife-takeaways-portion-council-pilot/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/dundee/828365/dundees-council-wants-to-ban-go-large-offers-in-calorie-crackdown-at-restaurants-and-takeaways/> - Dundee City Council is considering banning 'go large' meal deals in restaurants and takeaways to combat obesity and weight-related illnesses. The council's draft response to a Food Standards Scotland consultation advocates for mandatory measures, including smaller portion sizes and calorie labelling on menus. The report highlights the adverse health impacts of a diet high in calories, fats, sugars, and salt, leading to diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers. The council aims to promote healthier lifestyle choices and reduce the strain on the NHS by encouraging healthier eating habits.
3. <https://www.scotsman.com/regions/dundee-and-tayside/scottish-council-supports-ban-on-go-large-takeaway-promotions-113870> - Dundee City Council has expressed support for banning 'go large' promotions in takeaways and restaurants as part of efforts to tackle Scotland's obesity crisis. The council's community safety and public protection committee has endorsed plans for mandatory measures, including smaller portion sizes and calorie labelling on menus. The initiative aims to address the high rates of obesity in Dundee, which has the highest obesity rate for primary one-age children in mainland Scotland. The council emphasizes the need for mandatory actions to improve the out-of-home food environment and promote healthier eating habits.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5112jzxyklo> - Peterborough City Council is considering banning junk food advertising on its properties after concerns raised by the Peterborough Youth Council. The youth group petitioned the council to restrict the promotion of foods high in fat, salt, and sugar on council-owned land and buildings. The council's director of public health has recommended adopting a healthier food and drink advertising policy, with a report due for approval by cabinet members. This move aligns with similar actions taken by other councils, such as Luton, which has implemented a ban on unhealthy food adverts to combat high rates of obesity among children.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-merseyside-68748619> - Sefton Council has voted to ban junk food advertisements on its billboards as part of efforts to combat high levels of child and adult obesity. The new legislation prohibits advertising on council-owned spaces, including billboards, bus stops, taxi wraps, and stations. The restrictions aim to reduce the impact of unhealthy food promotions on public health. The council's decision reflects a growing trend among local authorities to limit the exposure of communities to advertisements for products high in fat, salt, and sugar, in response to rising obesity rates.
6. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/calls-to-tackle-the-soaring-number-of-fast-food-outlets-in-scotland-555192> - There is increasing concern over the rising number of fast food outlets in Scotland, with calls for councils to consider restrictions on their proliferation. In the Scottish Borders, councillors voted to ease restrictions on new businesses opening in town centres as part of a one-year pilot scheme. However, the significant increase in takeaways over the past eight years has raised alarms about the effectiveness of public health messages and the need for local authorities to play a role in managing the availability of fast food to promote healthier eating habits.
7. <https://www.gov.scot/news/plan-to-make-eating-out-healthier/> - The Scottish Government has unveiled the Out of Home Action Plan, aiming to make eating out healthier by introducing measures such as calorie labelling on menus in cafes, restaurants, and takeaways. The plan seeks to work closely with the food industry to tackle obesity by providing healthier food and drink choices. Public Health Minister Maree Todd emphasized the importance of empowering people to make healthier decisions when eating out or ordering in. The initiative aligns with Scotland's Good Food Nation ambition to promote healthier eating habits and reduce health inequalities.