

An Outsmart factsheet

Breaking the myths about the City Hall Food Team's claims about out of home advertising and the increased incidence of childhood obesity in London

<u>The myth</u>	<u>The facts</u>	<u>The data</u>
<p>The Amsterdam Healthy Weight Programme was successful and we should replicate it in London.</p> <p>This was a holistic approach to obesity in children including changes in curriculum, increase physical exercise and education and training of children and adults.</p>	<p><u>Indeed, it was!</u> Between 2012 and 2015 a small cohort of children amounting to under 20% of the population DID see a reduction in weight and overall there was a reduction in this groups mean body weight.</p> <p>However, this was in <u>no way due to the ban</u> on Metro advertising in the city, as this was introduced some three years later after the study had closed, in 2018</p>	<p>BMJ 2018;361: K2534 (published June 2018)</p>
<p>Junk Food advertising bans work:</p> <p>Junk food advertising was banned in Quebec in 1980 (but not the rest of Canada). There are claims that this was a success.</p>	<p><u>This is untrue.</u> In the 15 years of the junk food advertising ban (in French and English), childhood obesity rates in Quebec grew by 140%.</p> <p>This was faster than the rest of Canada where 'junk food' advertising across all platforms was still allowed.</p>	<p>A range of citations in medical press</p>
<p>The Mayor's Food Team suggest that out of home marketing influences consumption of HFSS food in children.</p>	<p><u>False:</u> The impact of Marketing and Advertising on Food Behaviours: Evaluating the Evidence for Causal Relationships (addressing childhood decision making for food choices) does not mention outdoor advertising in its comprehensive report with over 100 citations.</p> <p>In the 17-page study 'transport advertising' is mentioned only one</p> <p>The report mentions the influence of TV advertising and TV programmes 13 times, product placement in movies 17 times, internet 17 times, digital 4 times,</p>	<p>Scully, M et al. 2012: Association between food marketing exposure and adolescent' food choices and eating behaviours (sub-section looking at Sweden and a cohort of children self-reporting potential stimulus for decision making which included TV, print, school and digitally in their selection).</p>
<p>The mayor is targeting children with the out of home advertising ban on TFL</p>	<p><u>The reality is different,</u> actually the Mayor is targeting adults with his ban. Recent 2018 data confirms that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only a small proportion of the users of TfL services are under 16. Estimates of 	<p>Exterion Media 2018</p>

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<p>Children are bombarded by media advertising across TfL for high fat, sugary and salty food</p>	<p>the proportion of children that use the London Underground to travel to and from school range from 1-3%. Therefore, <u>schoolchildren would make up a very small proportion of the people impacted by a ban of HFSS across the entire TfL estate.</u></p>	
<p>Londoners see the outdoor advertising ban as a Mayoral priority</p>	<p><u>Not true!</u> YouGov research confirms that people living in London put tackling childhood obesity (3%) at the bottom of a list of 10 priorities which were most important to them for the Mayor to pursue. The issue is way behind making London safe (51%); tackling knife crime (49%) and creating more home (38%).</p>	<p>YouGov November 2018</p>
<p>Londoners believe that outdoor advertising is a significant influencer on children's food choices</p>	<p><u>Untrue!</u> When it came to the 3 main causes of childhood obesity, 60% blamed lack of parental discipline, 57% blamed widespread availability of high calorie foods and 34% blamed a reduction of physical education in schools.</p>	<p>YouGov November 2018</p>
<p>Londoners think that outdoor advertising for 'junk food' is aimed at children</p>	<p>Again, <u>absolutely not the case!</u> Londoners recognise by a significant margin that outdoor advertising is aimed primarily at adults (47%) rather than children (5%). Of a list of different platforms on which advertising takes place, 48% said social media was the most influential on children; 25% said TV channels, 10% said online media channels and just 4% said outdoor advertising.</p>	<p>YouGov November 2018</p>