

EC Workshop on audiovisual commercial communication of foods high in fat, salt and sugar to children

British rules on food advertising to children

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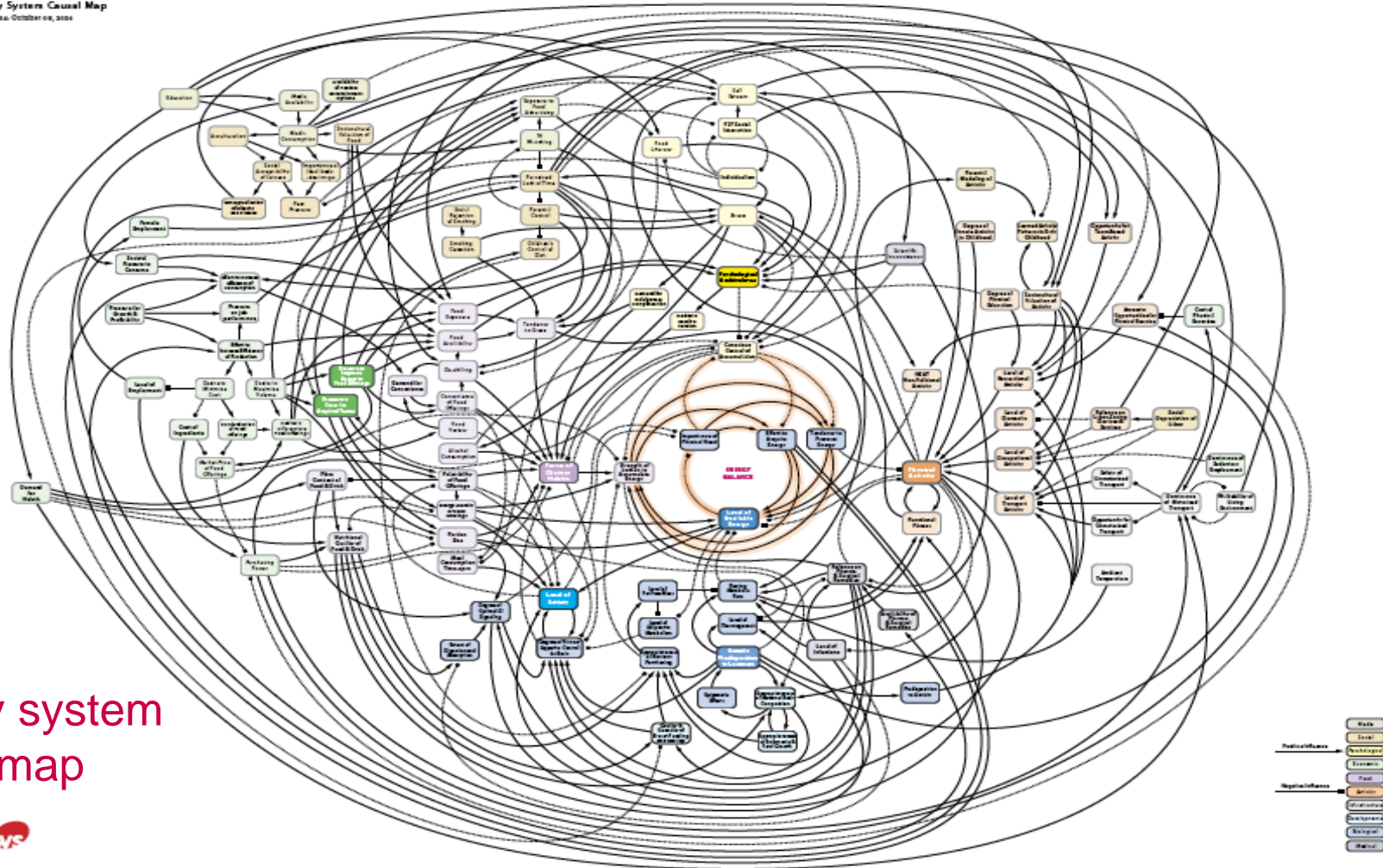
British rules on advertising of food and drink to children



- Why the UK Government wanted to restrict advertising of food and drink to children
- Why Ofcom imposed TV advertising restrictions
- Which products are restricted and why
- Rules for television, non-broadcast and VOD services
- Results to date

Why restrict food advertising to children?

Obesity Systems Causal Map
Version 1.0a, October 04, 2008



Obesity system
causal map



Why Ofcom imposed TV advertising restrictions

Government's public policy objective of reducing obesity

- Ofcom's research review suggested that TV advertising had a modest effect on children's food preferences
- Government committed to other interventions to reduce childhood obesity
- Ofcom's impact assessment suggested that long-term benefits of advertising restrictions could exceed the costs
- Ofcom therefore concluded that it should play its part, and impose proportionate restrictions on TV advertising



Just Eat More
(fruit & veg)



Which products are restricted, and why

Restricted products

- Products that are **high in fat or salt or sugar** (HFSS), according to the nutrient profiling (NP) scheme developed by the Food Standards Agency (FSA)



Unrestricted products

- Products that are **low in fat or salt or sugar**, such as fruit, vegetables, fish and pulses



Objectives

- To limit children's exposure to advertising for HFSS products
- To restrict the use of advertising techniques appealing to children

Television services

Current co-regulatory arrangements

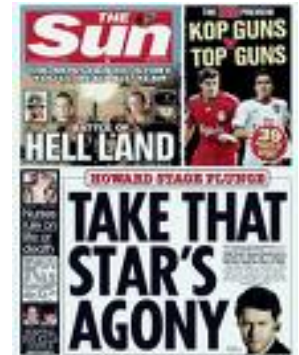
- **HFSS advertisements may not be shown:**
 - during children's programmes
 - during programmes for which the child audience is disproportionately high (e.g. family films)
- **HFSS advertisements aimed at children at other times may not:**
 - use techniques attractive to children (e.g. licensed cartoon characters)
 - make health claims



Non-broadcast media

Current self-regulatory arrangements

- **ASA Code of Advertising Practice**
- **Food and drink advertisements targeted at children should not:**
 - condone unhealthy diets
 - include promotional offers
 - use exploitative techniques
 - include licensed characters (e.g. cartoon characters)
 - encourage pester power
- **Restrictions do not apply to fresh fruit and vegetables**



Video-on-demand services

Implementation of AVMS Directive requirements

- **Generic advertising rules (Art. 3e1g)**
 - Advertising may not
 - cause minors physical or moral detriment
 - encourage pester power
 - exploit children's credulity
- **Advertising codes (Art. 3e2)**
 - ASA Code of Advertising Practice
- **Product placement**
 - banned from children's programmes
 - Government consulting on whether placement of HFSS / alcohol products should be permitted



Sky Player

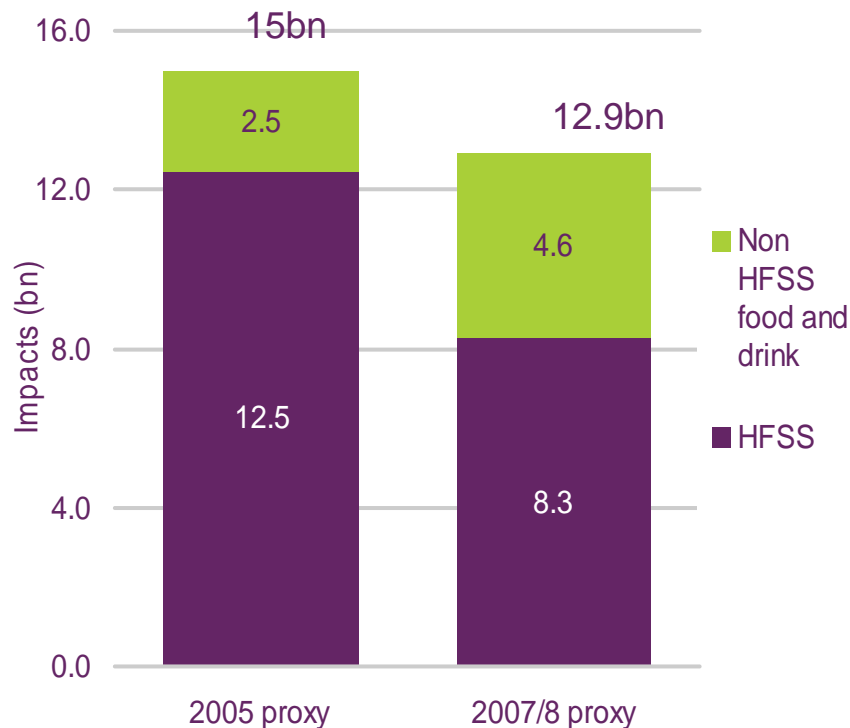
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hulu

Children saw much less HFSS advertising in 2007/8 than in 2005

All TV food and drink impacts: Children 4-15 (Nielsen)

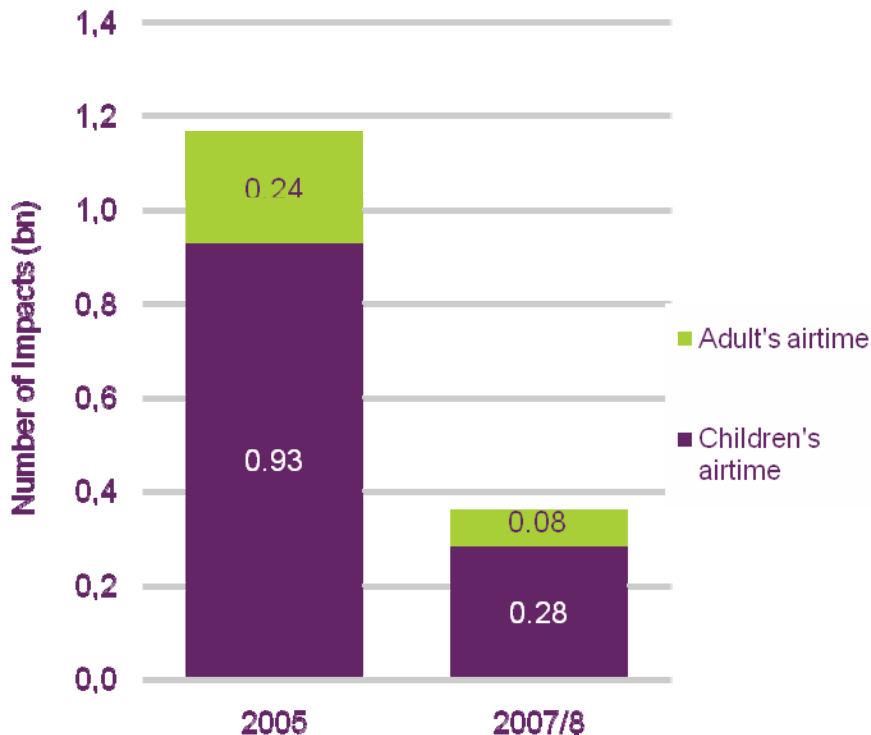


Our assessment is that the number of HFSS ads seen by children:

- fell by an estimated 34% overall
- for younger children (4 – 9) the drop was greater – 39%
- for older children (10 – 15) the drop was smaller – 28%

Children saw less advertising featuring attractive techniques

Number of food and drink impacts featuring licensed characters (Billets)



Children saw fewer impacts for advertising featuring the following techniques:

- licensed characters (-69%)
- brand equity characters (-36%)
- other characters* (- 4%)
- promotions (-36%)
- health claims (-18%)

but more advertising featuring celebrities (22%)

* Other characters = treatments including characters not covered by the licensed or brand equity categories e.g. animated inanimate objects, people in costume etc

Broadcasters complied with stricter content rules



- ASA carried out compliance surveys in July 2007 (published January 2008) and July 2008 (published December 2008) – available online
- Both studies reviewed unique food and drink advertisements on over 100 TV channels (July 2007 - 292 adverts; July 2008 – 208 adverts)
- In 2008 one advertisement breached BCAP's TV rules on the content of food and drink advertising, resulting in a 99% compliance rate

Relevant publications

- 'Tackling Obesities: Future Choices – Building the Obesity System Map'. Published October 2007 (<http://www.foresight.gov.uk/OurWork/ActiveProjects/Obesity/Obesity.asp>).
- 'Child Obesity in Context – children's food choices, parents' understanding and influence, and the role of food promotions'. Published July 2004. (http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research/tv/reports/food_ads/)
- 'Television Advertising of Food and Drink to Children' – Ofcom's final statement on advertising restrictions. Published February 2007 (http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consult/condocs/foodads_new/statement/statement.pdf)
- 'Television Advertising Standards Code' (<http://www.asa.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/2F6FFB29-614E-4065-A7EA-E41E49BF9CEA/0/BCAPTVAAdCode.pdf>)
- 'BCAP rules on the scheduling of advertisements' (http://www.asa.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/7F763788-6A51-4A73-B35B-C60346FD5F6C/0/BCAPRulesontheSchedulingofTelevisionAdvertisements_20080108.pdf)
- 'Changes in the nature and balance of food advertising to children' – Ofcom's review of the effects of the advertising restrictions. Published December 2008 (<http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research/tv/reports/hfssdec08/hfssdec08.pdf>)