

<b>Institution:</b> London Metropolitan University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 17 – Business & Management Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Healthier catering amongst takeaways: influence on business, policy and local authorities		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2008-2017		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Susan Bagwell	Research Development Manager	01.06.1993 - 31.07.2017
Prof. Eileen O'Keefe	Senior Lecturer Professor of Public Health Strand Leader (Health)	09.09.1968 - 31.07.2006 01.08.2006 - 31.08.2008 01.09.2008 - 31.08.2011
Simon Doff	Sector Bus Dev Mgr, Food AL - Income Generation Senior Lecturer Associate Lecturer	01.08.2003 – 31.07.2008 01.08.2008 - 15.08.2013 16.08.2013 - 16.09.2016 10.11.2016 - present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014- 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		

### 1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

With the prevalence of obesity in deprived areas linked to a high concentration of fast-food takeaways, research at London Met by Bagwell, O'Keefe and Doff resulted in a 'takeaway toolkit' aimed at supporting takeaway businesses, their suppliers, and public health practitioners to provide healthier catering options for consumers. The use of the 'takeaway toolkit' has been effective in implementing and developing specific viable business models; introducing changes to suppliers' marketing and pricing policy to promote healthier products for businesses to purchase; and enhancing public health practitioners' abilities to deliver healthier catering practices with local authorities. The introduction of the 'takeaway toolkit' by local authorities has resulted in 1,422 takeaway businesses being recruited to healthier catering schemes; all 33 London boroughs and 3 local authorities in England used the toolkit to promote healthier catering programmes; and new national government policy has been developed.

### 2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

The underpinning research encompasses the work led by Prof. Eileen O'Keefe (Centre for Primary Health and Social Care), Susan Bagwell and Simon Doff (Cities Institute). Based on collaborative research (2008-2010) from the City University of New York and London Met, O'Keefe sought to examine the role of municipal government in the cities of New York and London in tackling childhood obesity as well as in reducing socioeconomic and racial/ethnic inequalities in its prevalence. The research recommended 11 broad strategies to be enacted at the municipal level to reduce childhood obesity, and one of these recommendations was to 'use the municipal food safety workforce to promote healthier eating' [R1]. O'Keefe's research extended to develop collaborative work on how health promotion can use planning as a tool to enhance healthy eating choices, drawing on research on the availability and concentration of fast food outlets in the London borough of Tower Hamlets [R2].

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At the same time, Bagwell's research focused on local authorities' healthier catering initiatives designed to encourage businesses in the out of home food sector to develop healthier menus. First, Bagwell evaluated the Healthier Catering Commitment (HCC) in London, a voluntary scheme that helps and recognises businesses that offer healthier food options, providing evidence that the scheme had been more successful with businesses already offering relatively healthy menus, and in more affluent areas [R3]. This finding was a particular concern since research studies have associated obesity with social and economic deprivation and the concentration of fast food outlets in deprived areas.

Bagwell's research extended further to address specifically which interventions were successful in engaging with fast-food businesses in deprived areas and the type of changes that they could realistically make without compromising their profitability. The research was funded by the ESRC and it was led by Bagwell (PI) and O'Keefe and Doff (co-investigators) and recruited different key stakeholders: Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Healthier Catering Commitment (London Network), Association of London Environmental Health Managers, Greater London Authority Food Team. Firstly, the research developed a survey with data from 23 different UK healthier catering initiatives and interviews with 30 takeaways in deprived areas in London. Findings identified that targeted initiatives involving intensive public health practitioners outreach work with businesses and focusing on a small number of changes (such as salt reduction and healthier frying practices), were more likely to be successful with takeaways in deprived areas [R4]. Secondly, a key output from the project was the development of a 'takeaway toolkit' with an interactive web-based resource designed to support those working to encourage healthier catering amongst fast-food businesses in deprived areas [R5]. It focused particularly on the business perspective, acknowledging the challenges of trading in more deprived areas, and identifying strategies for change without compromising business profitability. It also offered case studies (illustrating videos) of independent takeaways operating in such areas that have successfully adopted healthier business practices to be used by health practitioners as learning points for business to consider. The research also emphasised work with suppliers of independent fast food outlets to identify ways in which products can be reformulated or promoted to encourage businesses to purchase healthier varieties [R4, R5].

A further expansion of Bagwell's business model was the 'health by stealth' approach i.e. subtle changes made in recipes unnoticed by customers [R5, p.17]. Research funded by the London Boroughs of Hackney and Tower Hamlets, in conjunction with the charity Shift, led to the "Stealthy Fast Food Study", an intervention based on feedback from outlets which introduced new menus that were cost neutral to businesses, had no impact on sales, were stealthily (acceptable to customers) healthier, and had fewer calories than existing competitive options. [R6].

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

**R1** Libman K, Freudenberg N, O'Keefe E (2010) A tale of two ObesCities comparing responses to childhood obesity in London and New York City. City University of New York and London Metropolitan University.

Available at: [https://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY\\_GC/media/CUNY-Graduate-Center/PDF/Centers/Center%20for%20Human%20Environments/childhood\\_obesity.pdf](https://www.gc.cuny.edu/CUNY_GC/media/CUNY-Graduate-Center/PDF/Centers/Center%20for%20Human%20Environments/childhood_obesity.pdf)

**R2** Caraher M, O'Keefe E, Lloyd S and Madelin T. (2013) The planning system and fast food outlets in London: lessons for health promotion practice. *Rev. Port. Sau. Pub*; 31(1):49–57. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rpsp.2013.01.001>

**R3** Bagwell S. (2014) Healthier catering initiatives in London, UK: an effective tool for encouraging healthier consumption behaviour?, *Critical Public Health*, 24:1, 35-46, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09581596.2013.769670>

**R4** Bagwell S. (2015) Designing healthier catering interventions for takeaways in deprived areas. *J Environ Health Res.*;15(1). Available at: <http://repository.londonmet.ac.uk/875/>

**R5** Bagwell S, O'Keefe E and Doff S. (2014) Encouraging Healthier Takeaways in Low-income

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Communities: Tools to support those working to encourage healthier catering amongst fast food takeaways. October 2014. Available at: <https://www.cieh.org/media/1242/encouraging-healthier-takeaways-in-low-income-communities.pdf>

**R6** Shift (in collaboration with Bagwell) (2017) Healthier Fast Food. Mapping the Fast Food Environment in Hackney. Available at: [https://shiftdesign.org/content/uploads/2017/05/Shift-Healthier-Fast-Food\\_FINAL.pdf](https://shiftdesign.org/content/uploads/2017/05/Shift-Healthier-Fast-Food_FINAL.pdf)

**The quality of the underpinning research is also demonstrated by the following grants:**

Bagwell, S (PI) *Supporting interventions for healthier catering: tools and resources for SMEs in the independent fast food sector*, ESRC [ES/L002051/1], 2013-14 (£61,942). This grant led to output R4 and R5 above.

Bagwell, S (PI), *Local out-of-home food and drink toolkit specification*, Public Health England, 2015-16 (£42,770). This grant led to output S1 below.

Shift and Bagwell, S, *Development of a Healthier Retail Model for Hackney*, London Borough of Hackney 2016 (£9,016); and *Stealthy Food Feasibility Study*, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, 2015-16, (£64,740). These grants led to output R6 above and S4 below.

**4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

The research by Bagwell's team has had significant impact on:

- (i) the food industry (suppliers and business owners);
- (ii) local authorities (healthier catering schemes and training tools for health practitioners); and
- (iii) health policy development (Public Health England (PHE) commissioning research for extending the toolkit to other areas of the food environment).

**(i) Food Industry:** The research findings of Bagwell's team highlighted the need to work with the main suppliers to the fast food sector to make it easier for food outlets to sell healthier takeaways. Bagwell's team informed the Mayor of London's decision to support the London Food Board in involving the main supplier to takeaway outlets in London, JJ Food Services Ltd (JJ) [S1, Annexes]. In February 2016, the Mayor announced that JJ would be promoting the Healthier Catering Commitment (HCC) to their customer base of 13,000 restaurants [S2]. In assessing their involvement in the project, Terry Larkin, JJ's Group General Manager commented on the benefits to the company's profile and their ability to attract new customers as a result of participation in the HCC, "*The opportunity to present at City Hall created a significant level of interest and we achieved at that time the most social media engagements we had ever had, so being seen as a pioneer in improving the health and wellbeing of Londoners was not only good for our company profile but became a useful selling tool when pitching to potential customers*" [S3-A].

Since becoming involved in Bagwell's project, JJ have made significant changes to the company's business and marketing strategies, including the introduction of an alternative economic model by using a price differential between healthier and less healthy options together with a promotional 10% discount on the healthier options for outlets which had signed up to HCC or similar schemes such as TuckIN [S1, Annexes, p.34]. Outside of London, Brighton & Hove, Luton, Essex councils have negotiated a similar 10% discount with JJ for outlets signing up to their healthier schemes [S3-B]. In 2019, in order to gain insight on the continuity and effectiveness of the strategies introduced as a result of their involvement in the HCC, Larkin was asked to repeat the survey run by Bagwell's team in 2015 [S3-C]. In 2019, JJ's pricing structure most clearly demonstrates their commitment to the healthier catering schemes with the costs of healthier options such as thicker cut chips, which use less fat, being sold at GBP10.00 less per 27kg pack than the Julienne cut option; and the use of a "promoting healthy eating" logo alongside the benefits of healthier ingredients in their product brochure [S3-A]. Larkin described the changes his company had

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introduced following their involvement with Bagwell's team "*Since starting this campaign we have extended our range of fruit and vegetable options [...], all of which were not stocked when we first embarked on this journey*" [S3-A]. The success of the new marketing strategy was demonstrated immediately, when in their first three months involvement with the scheme, JJ saw a 23% increase in sales of rapeseed oil, which contains just 6.6% saturated fat compared with 12% for sunflower oil [S1, Annexes]. Despite additional economic pressures during the Covid-19 pandemic, JJ has continued to offer discounts on the costs of healthier options.

Moreover, the cost savings for individual takeaway businesses were also demonstrated after the introduction of healthier changes, such as the use of grilled chicken instead of fried chicken, as recommended by Bagwell's 'takeaway toolkit.' As a result of the 'Stealthy Fast Food' intervention, conducted by Bagwell and Shift in Tower Hamlets in 2015-16, which introduced healthier changes without compromising profitability, one outlet owner reported on the cost savings made to their business through following Bagwell's advice: "*It was good for me because I make an extra 60p on the Boss Meal [grilled chicken] than on the fried chicken wing meal - it's more profitable. There's five wings instead of six, there's no batter on the chicken, the chip portion is half because it comes with salad. It costs me less to make than Meal 1*" [S4, p.38].

ii) **Local authorities:** At least 36 local authorities across England have adopted Bagwell's 'takeaway toolkit', including some authorities which already had healthier catering initiatives. These bodies have used the 'takeaway toolkit' to modify their schemes thereby increasing benefits to both local takeaway businesses and their customers. These include, Essex County Council ('TuckIN Toolkit'); Royal Borough of Kingston ('Eat Well, Exercise more and Drink sensibly Project'); and Croydon Borough Council ('Eat well Croydon' project) [S5].

Feedback on the 'takeaway toolkit' from over 20 local authorities indicates that it has been actively used to support public health staff working with businesses to encourage healthier catering practices. As the Senior Environmental Health Officer with Haringey Council observed, the toolkit's case study videos with takeaway owners can be used to "*demonstrate that people like them can successfully make changes without compromising taste, losing customers, [with] little or minimal cost impact*" [S6]. Speaking of Luton Council's TuckIN initiative, the Portfolio Holder for Public Health for Luton Council said "*Making small changes like [lowering salt, sugar and fat] can really make a significant impact on the health and well-being of local people.*" [S3-B]

By 2020, all 33 London boroughs had become members of the London HCC and are promoting the HCC or similar schemes, up from 27 in 2016. [S7 p.20]. Since its introduction, the 'takeaway toolkit' has been used across London boroughs and local authorities in England to recruit a total of 1,422 takeaway businesses to different schemes (HCC: 1,177 businesses in London; and the TuckIN: 245 businesses in Essex and Luton) [S8].

iii) **Health policy:** The takeaways toolkit has been highlighted in key national and regional reports including: a citation as a case study "based on best practice from across the UK" in the Mayor of London's response to the London Health Commission (2015) [S9, pp.43-44]; a citation in Good Food for London (2016) on how London boroughs can help secure a healthy and sustainable food future [S7, p.20].

Building on the success of this work, in 2016, Public Health England commissioned Bagwell to develop a new toolkit with the aim of extending its scope to the 'out of home' food environment (cafes, restaurants, corner shops, leisure centres, children's centres and private nurseries) [S1]. With a focus on outlets serving children, young people and their families, this second toolkit currently features on PHE guidance, dated September 2020, and is aimed at supporting "*local councils and independent food businesses in helping children and families to choose healthier food*" [S1]. As PHE said: "*Susan Bagwell from London Metropolitan University led on this piece of work. The review included evidence from different sources including Bagwell, S. Encouraging healthier takeaways in low income communities. Cities Institute, London Metropolitan University; 2014*" [S10].

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

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- S1** PHE (2017) Strategies for Encouraging Healthier 'Out of Home' Food Provision. A toolkit for local councils working with small food businesses (March 2017). See also accompany document: 'Annexes: evidence, tools, resources, local practice examples and guidance'. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/encouraging-healthier-out-of-home-food-provision>
- S2** Greater London Authority (2016) Mayor leads healthy takeaway revolution. [www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-leads-healthy-takeaway-revolution](http://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-leads-healthy-takeaway-revolution)
- S3** JJ Food Services: A. JJ-Food Manager (2019) Corroborative letter. B. JJ-Food Service (blog) (2019) JJ extends healthier eating initiative to Luton and Essex. <https://blog.jjfoodservice.com/2019/01/03/jj-extends-healthier-eating-initiative-to-luton-and-essex%EF%BB%BF/>. C. Bagwell, O'Keefe and Doff (2015) Survey of recommended measures taken by JJ- Food Service. Corroborative survey.
- S4** Shift (2017) Stealthy Fast Food: Phase 2 Evaluation Report. Submitted to Tower Hamlets Council, July 2017. <https://shiftdesign.org/content/uploads/2017/12/Stealthy-Fast-Food-Phase-2-Evaluation-Report.pdf>
- S5** Local authorities healthier catering initiatives: Croydon Borough (2015) Eat well Croydon project (p.73) <https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/documents/s1155/19%20October%202015%20-%20Members%20questions%20inc%20index.pdf>; Essex council (2016) Scrutiny Report on Obesity Issues in Essex (p.53) [link](#); Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames (2015): Annual Public Health report: Eat Well, Exercise more and Drink sensibly Project (p.90). <https://www.kingston.gov.uk/downloads/file/167/annual-public-health-report-2015-eat-well-exercise-more-drink-sensibly-full-report->
- S6** Bagwell, O'Keefe and Doff (2015) Encouraging Healthier Takeaways in Low-income Communities: Feedback survey on Toolkit. Corroborative survey.
- S7** Sustain (2016) Good Food for London 2016. <https://www.schoolfoodmatters.org/sites/default/files/GoodFoodForLondon2016.pdf>
- S8** Healthier catering schemes: Healthier Catering Commitment (2020) Find Businesses. <https://healthiercateringcommitment.co.uk/find-businesses/>; TuckIN (2020) Food by region. <http://tuckin-uk.co.uk/>
- S9** Greater London Authority (2015) Mayor of London's response to the London Health Commission. <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/health/health-publications/mayor-londons-response-london-health-commission>
- S10** Public Health England (2019) Corroborative letter.