



## Centre for Food Policy

Policy and practice to redesign food systems

# Lessons from English promotions regulations

Christina Vogel  
Professor of Food Policy  
Director, Centre for Food Policy

Adjunct Professor  
University of Southampton

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# The City for Food Policy

## Vision:

To inform policy and practice that redesigns food systems which are fair, healthy, environmentally sustainable and resilient

## Our primary activities:

Generate  
evidence

Provide  
spaces  
for debate

Impact  
policy &  
practice

Educate  
in food  
policy

*Partnership, engagement, lived experience*

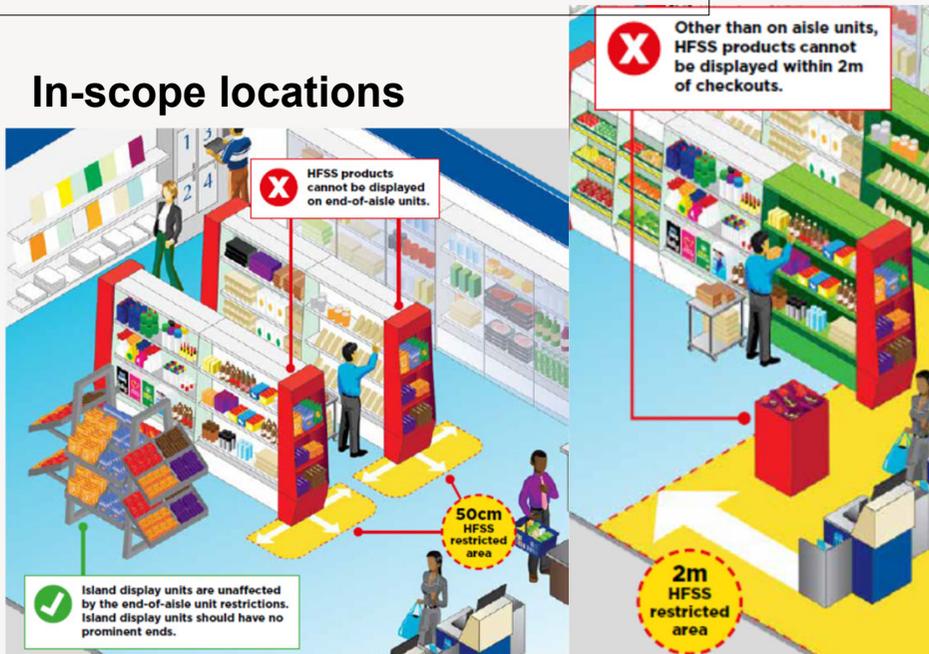


# Food (promotions and placement) Regulations 2021

## In-scope businesses

50+ employees; stores >2,000 sq. ft  
non-food & online retailers

## In-scope locations



## In-scope products



Nutrient Profiling Technical Guidance

January 2011



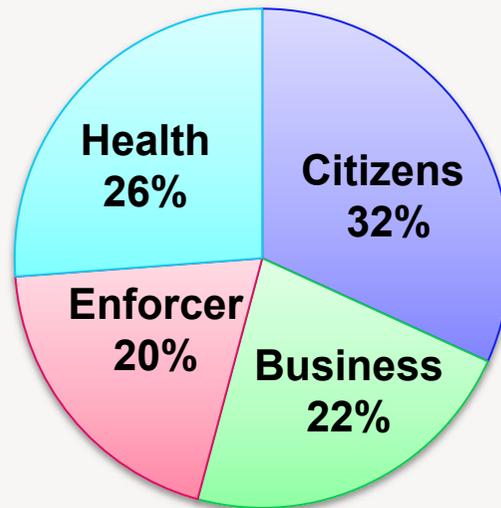
Enforcement by:  
Local authorities

# What did people say about the regulations?



Rapid qualitative methods

n=108 stakeholder interviews



Systems approach



n=453 delegates free online conference



Validation & prioritisation

# Theme 1: legislation is ‘good first step’ but...

## Exploitation of loopholes

*“that’s kind of the thing that worries me a bit, are we really going to replace this with something that’s good for your health.”*

(11001, Business)

## Exemptions may increase inequalities

*“a significant number of small businesses won’t be caught by the regulations; our children are going to those smaller stores after school.”*

(13036, Enforcer)

## Complex issue

*“this policy alongside others are a really important to address childhood obesity.”*

(12026, Health Group)

## Rebalancing food cost

*“I do strongly believe the government should keep the price of sugar and fat foods higher and the healthier food lower in price.”*

(6303, Consumer)

## Theme 2: Inconsistent approaches may affect impact

### Priorities

*“We do promotions to attract customers to come to buy stuff. If we can’t do it, they go to a supermarket. Obviously we’re losing customers. How are we going to survive?”*

(11086, Business).

*“There could be that rush to the top as it were, instead of the bottom where we’re all trying to find new ways to promote healthy stuff.”*

(11011, Business).

### Complexity

*“Using square footage to determine in-scope businesses is complex. Will not be sending officers out with a tape measure.”* (13011, Enforcer)

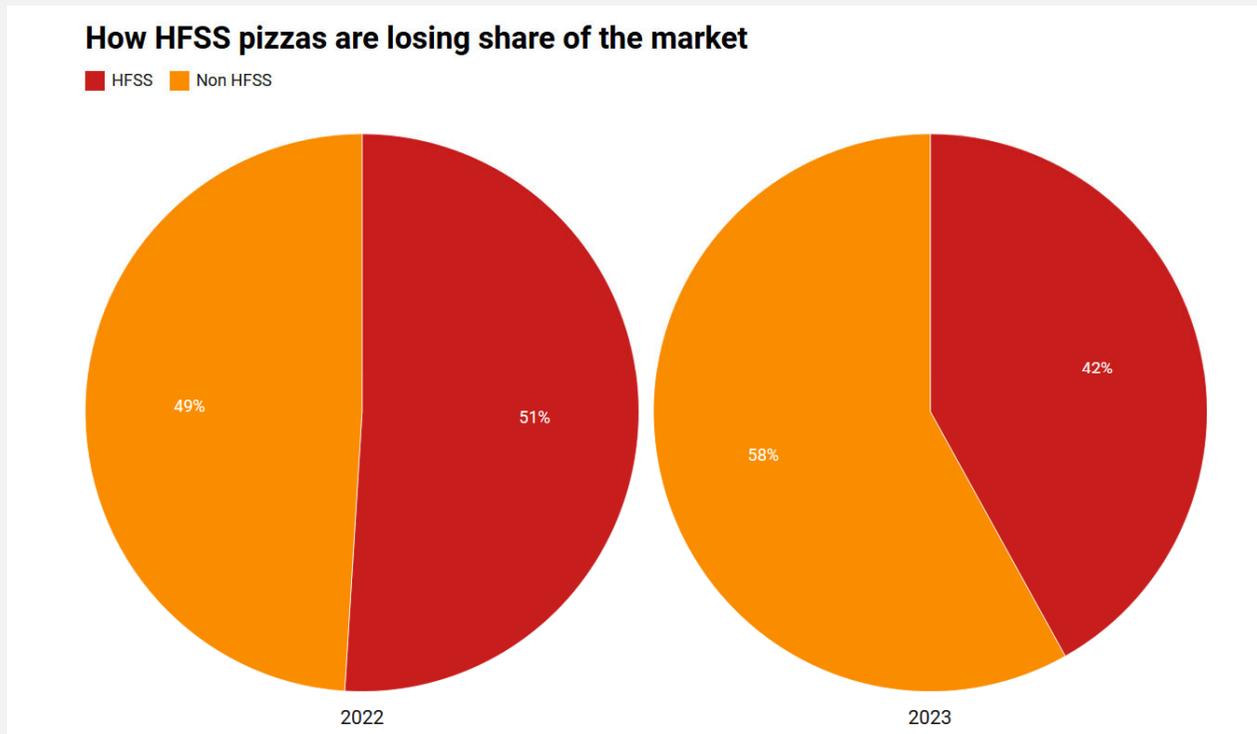
### Resource limitations

*“You’ve got limited resources, you have to target those at stuff that has probably the most imminent risk.”* (13011, Enforcer)



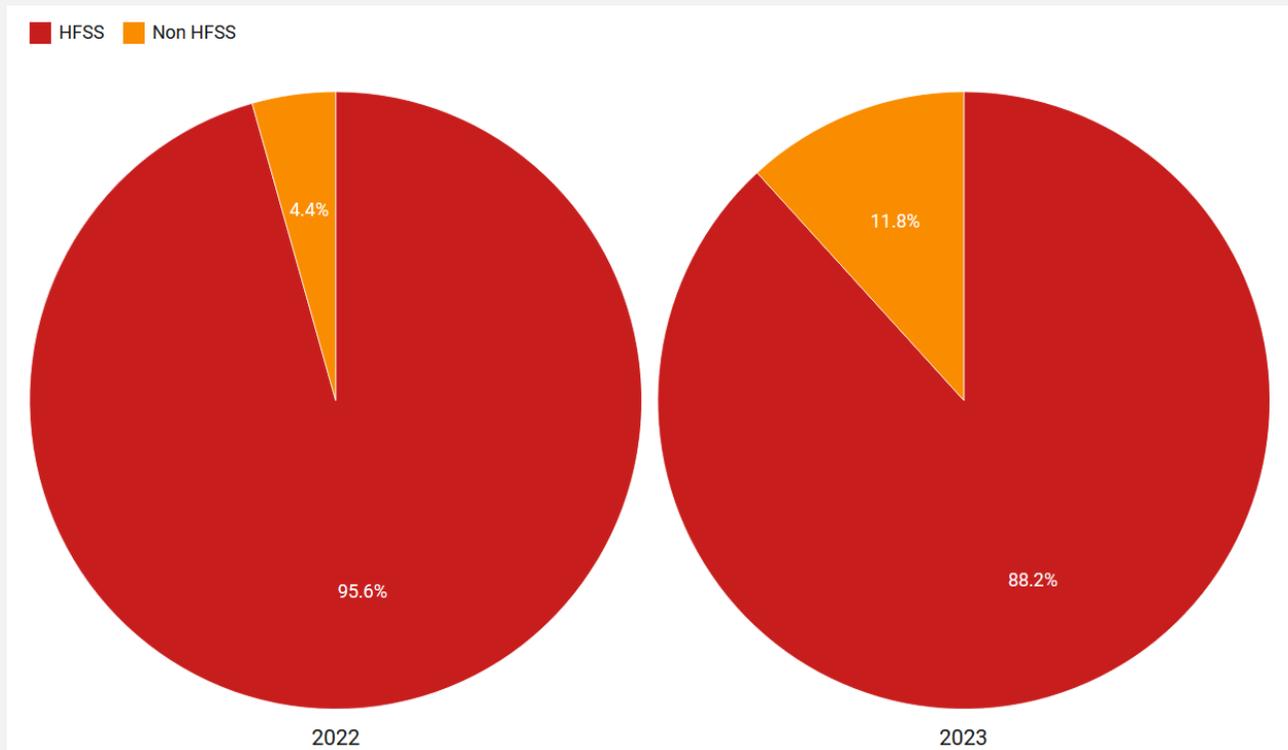
# Early findings show reduction in HFSS foods

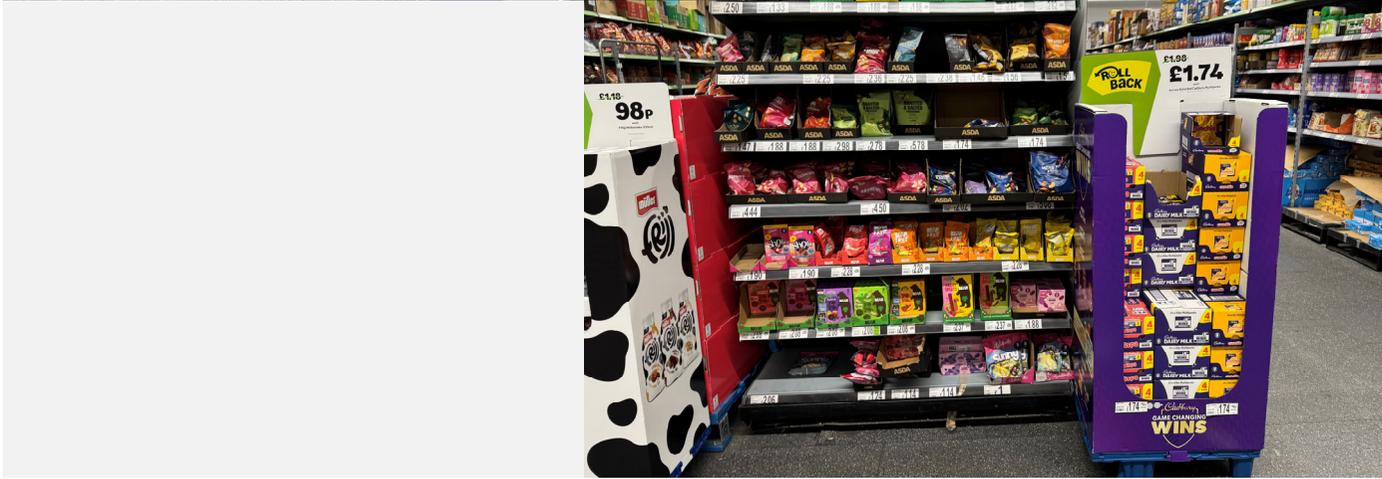
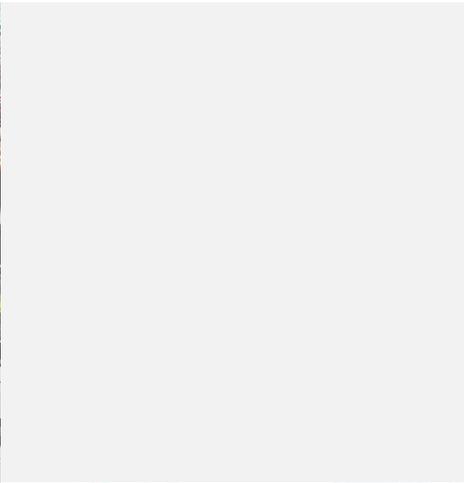
## Pizzas



# Early findings show reduction in HFSS foods

## Crisps





# Insufficient enforcement

## **New enforcement framework**

*“How many bargain buckets, do you need in a row for that to constitute as an aisle? You'll have someone in Cornwall saying six in a line, I know that that's aisle, but you might have an officer in Lincolnshire saying no, they're just buckets, they're fine.”*

(13029, Enforcer)

## **Regional and local activity**

*“We do have good food retail meetings. Environmental Health is represented, our business support team is there, our Public Health team is there. And we've got a social enterprise in our borough, that works specifically around food, that often gets commissioned by the Council. So, there are things in play that might help with this legislation.”* (13036, Enforcer)

## **National government leadership**

*“Tricky to see any long-term enforcement without funding”* (13004, Enforcer)

# Insufficient funding for enforcement

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Kantar website with links for 'About', 'Careers', 'Logins', and 'Contact us'. Below the navigation, there are menu items for 'Expertise', 'Industries', 'Inspiration' (which is underlined), and 'Kantar Marketplace'. The main content area features the Kantar logo, a link 'Get more Inspiration', and the article title 'Treading lightly on HFSS trading compliance'. Below the title is a short paragraph: 'With the high in fat, salt and sugar legislation in place for a number of months now, is the government taking it seriously or have retailers seen this as an inevitable step change and complied.' The date '14 March 2023' is visible on the right side of the article. At the bottom right, there is a small portrait of a woman and a large yellow rectangular redaction box covering the bottom left portion of the page.

Fol request showed:

- £179,000 – year 1
  - £102,000 – year 2
- ➔ shared by >300 LGAs



# Evidence on price promotions



## Exemptions may increase inequalities

*“Will the problem shift so we see a huge amount 25% off or 50% off price promotions instead?”*

(13013, Enforcer)

## Rebalancing food cost

*“Far from saving people money promotions lead to more purchases and contribute to greater consumption, resulting in overweight and obesity.”*

(12039, Health expert)

*“I do buy treats for my children but like I said they’re treats so if they’re not on offer then I would still get them but probably not as frequent.”*

(6029, Consumer)

# Recommendations

1. Make a central HFSS calculator freely available

2. Refine legislation to enhance intent and close loopholes

3. Conduct a robust evaluation – intended & unintended effects

4. Provide greater support for small businesses

5. Provide ring-fenced enforcement resources for local authorities

6. Create and communicate a long-term food & health roadmap



**Centre for Food Policy**

City St George's, University of London  
Northampton Square  
London  
EC1V 0HB  
United Kingdom

T: +44 (0)20 7040 5060

E: [foodpolicy@citystgeorges.ac.uk](mailto:foodpolicy@citystgeorges.ac.uk)  
[researchcentres.citystgeorges.ac.uk/food-policy](http://researchcentres.citystgeorges.ac.uk/food-policy)

**Thank you**

[Christina.Vogel@citystgeorges.ac.uk](mailto:Christina.Vogel@citystgeorges.ac.uk)

 White Rose Research Online    Home    Search    Browse    Contact

Has HFSS legislation led to healthier food and beverage sales? The DIO-Food protocol – using supermarket sales data for policy evaluation

Research Award    Active Award    Award ID: NIHR156535    Shortlist: 

Evaluating the impact of the placement regulations on the CONvenience store sector and co-creating solutions for a healthier system: ECON study

Research Award    Active Award    Award ID: NIHR207065    Shortlist: 

ENTHUSE EvaluatiNg The High fat sUgar Salt rEgulations: practice, response and impact across retail settings