

## Press release



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## FSA action plan turns spotlight on industry

The food industry will once again prove itself incapable of acting responsibly by failing to comply with the recommendations on food promotion to children which will be discussed at a meeting of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Board today [1].

Whilst the FSA Board papers include a range of positive options, they also acknowledge that “*industry’s approach to responsible food promotion is crucial*” [2]. However, the reality is that industry is unwilling to curtail its highly profitable promotion of fatty, sugary and salty foods to children. More than 95% of the foods advertised during children’s television programmes are high in fat and/or sugar and/or salt [3].

One hundred and eight organisations now support Sustain’s call for legislation to protect children from unhealthy food advertising [4]. This coalition recognises that voluntary approaches have been ineffective and that children have a right to grow up free from commercial activities promoting fatty, sugary and salty foods which put their health at risk [5].

Charlie Powell, Project Officer at Sustain commented, “*Since the FSA first decided to look at this issue in September 2000, most in the junk food and ads industry have systematically objected to any measure which might restrict their capacity to promote junk foods to children.*”

*The FSA’s Action Plan will fail because industry is not capable of acting voluntarily on this issue. To protect their health, we urgently need statutory controls to prevent companies from promoting unhealthy foods to children”.*

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## Editorial notes

[1] The FSA will discuss and agree its Promotional Activity and Children's Diets Action Plan at the its open Board Meeting at 9.30am on Thursday 11 March at Kensington Town Hall. For more information, see: [www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/boardpromo](http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/boardpromo)

[2] See Paper FSA 04/03/02, para 14: [www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/fsa040302.pdf](http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/fsa040302.pdf)

[3] See '*TV Dinners – what's being served up by the advertisers*', published by *Sustain* in July 2001. Available from [www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org) or tel: 020 7837 1228.

[4] For a full list of the 108 supporting organisations, see: [www.sustainweb.org/labell\\_wp.asp](http://www.sustainweb.org/labell_wp.asp)

[5] Supporting organisations have confirmed their support for the following campaign policy statement:

*We call upon the UK Government to introduce legislation to protect children from advertising and promotions, targeted directly at children, which promote foods that contribute to an unhealthy diet. These include confectionery, crisps, savoury snacks, soft drinks and other processed products containing high levels of fat, sugar or salt, excessive consumption of which is known to be detrimental to children's health. Voluntary approaches are not working, so statutory controls are needed to end commercial activities which promote these foods specifically to children.*

[6] *Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming* advocates food and agricultural policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the working and living environment, enrich society and culture and promote equity. Sustain represents over 100 national public interest organisations working at international, national, regional and local level. Membership is open to national organisations which do not distribute profits to private shareholders and which therefore operate in the public interest.