# Case study options

The case studies in this pack are intended for use with the exercise set out in 5c in the options pack.

Case studies in this pack include different health issues, risk factors for poor health and different public health approaches to addressing the health harms from the Commercial Determinants of Health as well as some of the barriers faced (including commercial practices).

Additional case studies could be developed using local experience or published examples. There are some examples of local authority action in:

* McGeoch L, Ewbank L, Dun-Campbell K, Burale H, Mulrenan C, Briggs A. Addressing the leading risk factors for ill health – a framework for local government action. The Health Foundation; 2023 (<https://doi.org/10.37829/HF-2023-HL03>). **See: Annex 1: The framework for action with examples from local authorities in England**

# Case study 5c.i. Sheffield City Trust: Introducing your own sugar tax

*Acknowledgement: this case study was adapted from Healthy weight, healthy futures, Local government action to tackle childhood obesity (update 2018), LGA:* [*https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/22.16%20-%20Health%20weight%2C%20healthy%20futures\_WEB.pdf*](https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/22.16%20-%20Health%20weight%2C%20healthy%20futures_WEB.pdf)

In autumn, 2015 Public Health England published an evidence review setting out the expected impact of the Government’s sugar tax (which came into force in April 2018). Locally, this spiked the interest of leisure group SIV, part of the not-for-profit Sheffield City Trust. “It really made us think,” said Robert Womack, SIV’s Health, Wellbeing & Partnerships Manager.

Following discussions internally and with the Sheffield City Council’s public health team in spring 2016, SIV decided to act. Several options were considered, including getting rid of high-sugar drinks altogether, but SIV decided introducing its own sugar tax was the best approach.

A 20p levy on soft drinks with more than 5 grams of sugar per 100ml came into force in July 2016. It excluded milk-based drinks and fruit juices, as the PHE review recommended. The tax was introduced in the eight sports and leisure venues SIV runs and applied to both vending machines and cafes. It was decided any money raised would be put into a fund that would then be reinvested into the local community to encourage healthy lifestyles. Stickers were placed on the drinks that were affected – 21 in total.

The impact has been evaluated by researchers at Sheffield University in collaboration with SIV and the council. The review found in the first year after the introduction of the tax sales of high sugar drinks fell by 31 per cent per visit. The sales of lower sugar alternatives rose by 27 per cent, suggesting that the public did not simply purchase the drinks elsewhere. This was the equivalents of removing 1.3 million tonnes of sugar from the diet of local people.

The SIV tax is still in place, but as manufacturers have reformulated their drinks there are now only two drinks stocked by the group that are subject to the 20p tax.

Mr Womack said one of the key steps was training their front-of-house and catering staff in how to communicate messages around sugar to the public. ‘We didn’t want to shame people who did want to buy the high sugar drinks, but we did want to use it as an opportunity to engage them in a conversation about sugar. If someone was buying a high sugar drink we would point out that it had the tax placed on it and there were other alternatives that were lower in sugar.’

# Case study 5c.ii. using the local planning system to regulate hot food takeaway outlets

*Acknowledgement: this case study was adapted from How does local government use the planning system to regulate hot food takeaway outlets? A census of current practice in England using document review, Keeble, Burgoine et al 2019:* [*https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1353829218310414*](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1353829218310414)

*And: No new fast-food outlets allowed! Evaluating the effect of planning policy on the local food environment in the North East of England, Brown et al, 2022:* [*https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953622004324*](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953622004324)

**Background**

Methods used across the country include:

* Exclusion Zones: Opening of new takeaway food outlets will be restricted within these zones
* Limit Density: Opening of new takeaway food outlets will be restricted, where numbers exceed stated acceptable thresholds
* Minimise Impact and Protect Vicinity: Potentially negative consequences associated with takeaway food outlet operation are to be minimised
* Other Strategies: Other approaches not common enough to receive individual classification

The places within which these strategies are employed include:

* All Areas Within a Local Government Area Boundary: Planning criteria applied to all proposals within a local government area, regardless of specific location of proposed takeaway food outlet site
* Immediate Vicinity of Existing Hot Food Takeaway Outlet Site: The area immediately surrounding existing takeaway food outlet sites
* Places for Children & Families: Locations commonly used or attended by, young children accompanied by family members, and/or older children independently
* Retail Areas: Designated retail zones. Sometimes referred to as ‘high-streets’
* Residential Areas: Designated zones, mostly comprising residential housing

**Case study**

Gateshead aimed to reduce its childhood obesity rate to less than 10% by 2025. To achieve this goal, it implemented all three types of planning guidance (a school exclusion zone, restricting new outlets by retail density, and restricting new outlets by childhood obesity rates). This was effectively a blanket ban on establishing a new premise for use as a fast-food outlet if the building was not already being used for that purpose. Buildings that were being used for fast-food could change ownership and continue to sell fast-food.

The density and proportion of fast-food outlets decreased compared to other local authorities in the North East of England which had not implemented such guidance. There was not a significant reduction in the number of fast-food outlets after controlling for population density. Anecdotal evidence provided by the environmental health team in Gateshead, suggests that prospective business owners who applied for permission for a restaurant with ancillary take away service were able to circumvent the planning restrictions.

# Case study 5c.iii. development of the i-MARK and education & schools

*Acknowledgement: this case study was adapted from information on the Alcohol Forum Ireland website* [*https://alcoholforum.org/i-mark/*](https://alcoholforum.org/i-mark/) *and in ‘Denormalising alcohol industry activities in schools’ van Schalkwyk et al (2023)* [*https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(22)00341-3/fulltext*](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667%2822%2900341-3/fulltext)

**Background**

The I-Mark Supporting Independence from Alcohol Industry Influence initiative includes a toolkit, an evidence summary, a conflict-of-interest checklist to guide decision making and membership forms.

Guidance from the Irish Departments of Health and Education is that schools should not use alcohol industry-funded educational materials.

Some of the issues are set out in a [journal article](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667%2822%2900341-3/fulltext):

* Fiduciary responsibility to shareholders means corporations are unable to support programmes that threaten their business interests.
* Previous studies reveal that the type of youth education programmes supported by harmful industries
	+ normalise those industries’ products and their position in society;
	+ distort the evidence on risks of harm;
	+ cast children, young people, their choices, peers, and behaviours as the problem;
	+ adopt personal responsibility framings that echo industry-promoted narratives;
	+ focus on individual-level or technological solutions.

**Case study**

Paula Leonard from Alcohol Forum Ireland explains how the initiative was developed in response to concerns across communities in Ireland (<https://alcoholcampaign.org/2022/03/14/i-mark/>):

“Five years ago, when we formed the Irish Community Action on Alcohol Network (ICAAN), we were very concerned about the activities of the alcohol industry and alcohol industry funded organisations in attempting to influence health policy. They have no expertise in delivering programmes to our children in schools, but they are good at promoting their brand names so that our children and their parents form a good impression of them. They have no expertise in distributing health information about alcohol, but they do have good reasons to minimize the harms from their products. And they have no expertise in promoting research on alcohol, but their funding of scientists does create a conflict of interest that interferes with the development of unbiased science. What they are good at is finding ways to interfere with effective alcohol policies that will reduce the excessive amounts of drinking by our youth and adults. In those early years we struggled; focusing on the power, the resources and influence of the industry. But over the last year, we committed to building a movement to challenge the industry influence.”

Following the launch of the I-MARK (March 2022), there was particular interest in alcohol industry involvement in education. Media coverage highlighted that materials from industry-funded organisations were being used in some schools (<https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-40974134.html>).

In December 2022, the Irish Department of Education and Health Service Executive issued a formal letter to all schools explicitly warning them against using materials funded by the alcohol industry. The letter recognises that funding by the alcohol industry represents a conflict of interest and goes on to state: “In the same way, these guidelines apply in regard to resources funded by other industry sectors where there is a potential conflict of interest”. ([https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(22)00341-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667%2822%2900341-3/fulltext))