

Press release



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Report backs Children's Food Bill as it proceeds to Commons Second Reading

The Children's Food Bill campaign has published a major report detailing the repeated failure of voluntary controls [1] as the Children's Food Bill gets its Second Reading in the House of Commons this afternoon [2]. The Bill seeks to protect children from junk food advertising and promotions.

The report, '*Children's Food Bill – Why we need a new law, not more voluntary approaches*' demonstrates the ineffectiveness of voluntary approaches used to control, amongst other things, tobacco advertising, alcohol promotion, marketing of breastmilk substitutes, and shows that, in a competitive market, voluntary codes of practice inevitably fail.

It also shows how voluntary codes are weak, unenforceable, lack independence and are used by industry to avoid effective regulation. Despite this well-known evidence, the Government has established a Food and Drink Advertising and Promotion Forum which includes a range of food and advertising industry bodies to develop voluntary codes.

The Children's Food Bill is already supported by around 10,000 parents, more than 250 MPs and 155 national organisations that have come together in recognition that voluntary controls will fail to protect children from junk food marketing. [3]

Sustain's Charlie Powell explained, "*Legislation is urgently needed to stop the junk food industry promoting unhealthy choices to children. Junk food advertising promotes profit at the expense of children's health. The Government should listen to parents, professionals and MPs and support the Children's Food Bill in its passage through Parliament.*"

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Notes to Editors

1. '*Children's Food Bill – Why we need a new law, not more voluntary approaches*' is published by Sustain. The full report is 48 pages and c.16,000 words in length and contains more than 180 references. Price £25 (£10 to voluntary and public interest organisations). To order tel: 020 7837 1228 or visit www.sustainweb.org.

The report draws upon case studies from tobacco advertising, alcohol promotion, the marketing of breastmilk substitutes, the use of pesticides and antibiotics in farming and the control of supermarket power to demonstrate the weakness and ineffectiveness of voluntary approaches over many years.

A **summary** of the full report is downloadable from:

www.sustainweb.org/CFB_MpReport.pdf (20 colour pages and approximately 3Mb).

2. The Children's Food Bill was presented to Parliament by Mary Creagh, Member of Parliament for Wakefield on Wednesday 22 June 2005. The Bill's Second Reading takes place in the House of Commons on Friday 28 October 2005.
3. The 155 national organisations already supporting Sustain's campaign for the Children's Food Bill to become law includes many prominent medical, health and consumer organisations, professional associations and children's charities - full list is available from: www.sustainweb.org/child_sup.asp

For a list of the 255 cross-party MPs who have confirmed their support for the Children's Food Bill by signing the Children's Food Early Day Motion, EDM 378, see: <http://edmi.parliament.uk/edmi/>

4. *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* is a registered charity and has a membership of around 100 national public interest organisations. For more information, see: www.sustainweb.org