

*Regional Group of the Association for the Study of Obesity*

## **TOPIC: 'Tackling the food swamp: community, third sector and council approaches'**

The North East Obesity Forum held a meeting on Thursday 27th April 2017 from 4 – 6pm at Newcastle University where different approaches to tackling food in the community were discussed. Approximately 30 delegates attended the session and four speakers presented. An abstract for each presentation is given below.

### **Abstracts**

**Community First West End. A group of local people that live, work or just have a passion for improving health and social issues in the West End of Newcastle**

**Title: "Citizen leadership in improving the health of our community"**

Community First West End is a group of local people that live, work or just have a passion for improving health and social issues in the West End of Newcastle. They felt that they were best placed to identify the challenges and wanted to be intimately involved in the planning and delivery of improving the health and wellbeing in their community. Their efforts resulted in the 'People's Charter for Health and Wellbeing' which detailed their priorities to improve the lives of their citizens. They wanted better links to decision makers and a voice in the process of how money is spent on services in their area. They have received a total of £13,460 to spend on local projects that they felt could improve the wellbeing of Elswick citizens and to-date they have funded 21 different activities. Additionally, they saw the large number and nutritionally poor offerings of local takeaways as something they wanted to change and have worked with Emma Simpson (PhD researcher, Newcastle University) to use new and exciting digital technology to engage with both local residents and traders with the aim to increase the number of healthy offering available within local takeaways.

**Steph Downey. #NoMcDondaldsKenton: Rule 6 Group**

**Title: "Never forget, David did beat Goliath!"**

This presentation is not available for circulation.

**Jamie Sadler. Food Nation managing director**

**Title: “Developing the Food Newcastle Partnership”**

Food Nation has created a sister company called Harissa. We wanted to demonstrate what a successful and economically viable restaurant and takeaway looks like and how it operates. We want to be an exemplar of how adopting a whole-systems approach into a business model can contribute to tackling important socio-cultural, environmental and public health issues connected to the industry.

Harissa is based in Sandyford, with 28 covers for sit-in customers, 20 outside covers and a home delivery service. It sells food inspired by the Mediterranean, Middle-Eastern and North African regions. The food is made using quality produce, free from unnecessary fats, salt and sugar. Ingredients are sourced mainly from the UK and the North East, or grown in-house at our allotment. We also carry out local litter picks, are a living wage employer, offer pre-apprenticeship training placements and run a lunch club aimed at tackling social isolation in the local area.

**Craig Blundred. Consultant in Public Health Newcastle City Council**

**Title: “A council approach to food and obesity in Newcastle”**

A council approach to food and obesity in Newcastle Craig Blundred, Consultant in Public Health, Newcastle City Council Newcastle City Council is currently engaged in developing a city wide food plan. The plan reflects the key priorities for the city which are:

- A working city
- Decent neighbourhoods
- Tackling inequalities
- A fit for purpose council

Newcastle currently has high levels of obesity and overweight children and adults. These are higher than the England average and show an increasing trend. Other important factors linked to the need to develop a comprehensive food plan include more structural concerns such as the density of Fast Food restaurants. The food plan developed from the Sustainable Food Cities programme which saw the development of the Food Newcastle partnership. The plan has built on the early experiences of this to encompass a broad range of activities including; production, distribution, consumption and waste. The main themes of the plan are:

- Diet related ill health and access to good food
- Good food for all: tackling food poverty
- Community food knowledge, skills, resources and projects
- Strengthen the local sustainable food economy
- Transforming catering and food procurement
- Reducing waste and the ecological footprint of the food system
- Approach and partnerships