



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Advertising Association Chief Executive responds to publication of Which? magazine report

Responding to the publication of the Which? magazine report and their calls by Which? for a 9pm watershed, Baroness **Peta Buscombe, Chief Executive of the Advertising Association** said:

“Obesity is a hugely important and multi-faceted social issue that must be taken seriously. As Which? admit themselves, there is no ‘silver bullet’ in fighting obesity. The increase in obesity can be attributed to a complex range of inter-relating causal factors including changes in lifestyle and diet and social, environmental and cultural factors, as the government’s Foresight Report on obesity recently acknowledged.

“A recent Advertising Association Report* showed that there have been clear and consistent falls in TV food ad spend for the last 3 years together with a significant reduction in the amount of food advertising children are watching and furthermore that many food manufacturers have significantly re-formulated their products to reduce salt, fat or sugar content. In many cases, the product being advertised is very different from before.

“Ofcom’s comprehensive and evidence-based report in July 2004 concluded that food advertising has “*modest direct effect*” – around 2% - on children’s food choices. Indeed recommendations on advertising only comprised three of the ninety one recommendations in the Government’s 2004 *Choosing Health* White Paper.

“Tackling obesity is about behavioural change. One has to question therefore why Which? are advocating a simplistic ban which is likely to produce unintended consequences and won’t tackle the root cause of obesity. It would far more effective if government and industry worked in partnership to help improve the health of the nation.”

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Notes to Editors:

1. The Advertising Association (AA) is a federation of 31 trade bodies and organisations representing the advertising and promotional marketing industries, including advertisers, agencies, the media and support services in the UK. It is the only body that speaks for all sides of an industry that was worth over £19 billion in 2006. The AA's Food Advertising Unit (FAU) is a centre for information, communication and research in the area of food advertising to children. Further information about the Advertising Association is available at: <http://www.adassoc.org.uk/>
2. *The AA's Food Advertising Unit report on changes in food and soft drink advertising and promotions since 2003, published ahead of the Government's interim review this autumn, is available [here](#) The report clearly demonstrates that there has been significant change in the nature and balance of food advertising to children between 2003 and 2006 – even before the new rules were introduced this year - with a downward trend in exposure by children to this advertising.

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