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The Culture of Bradford

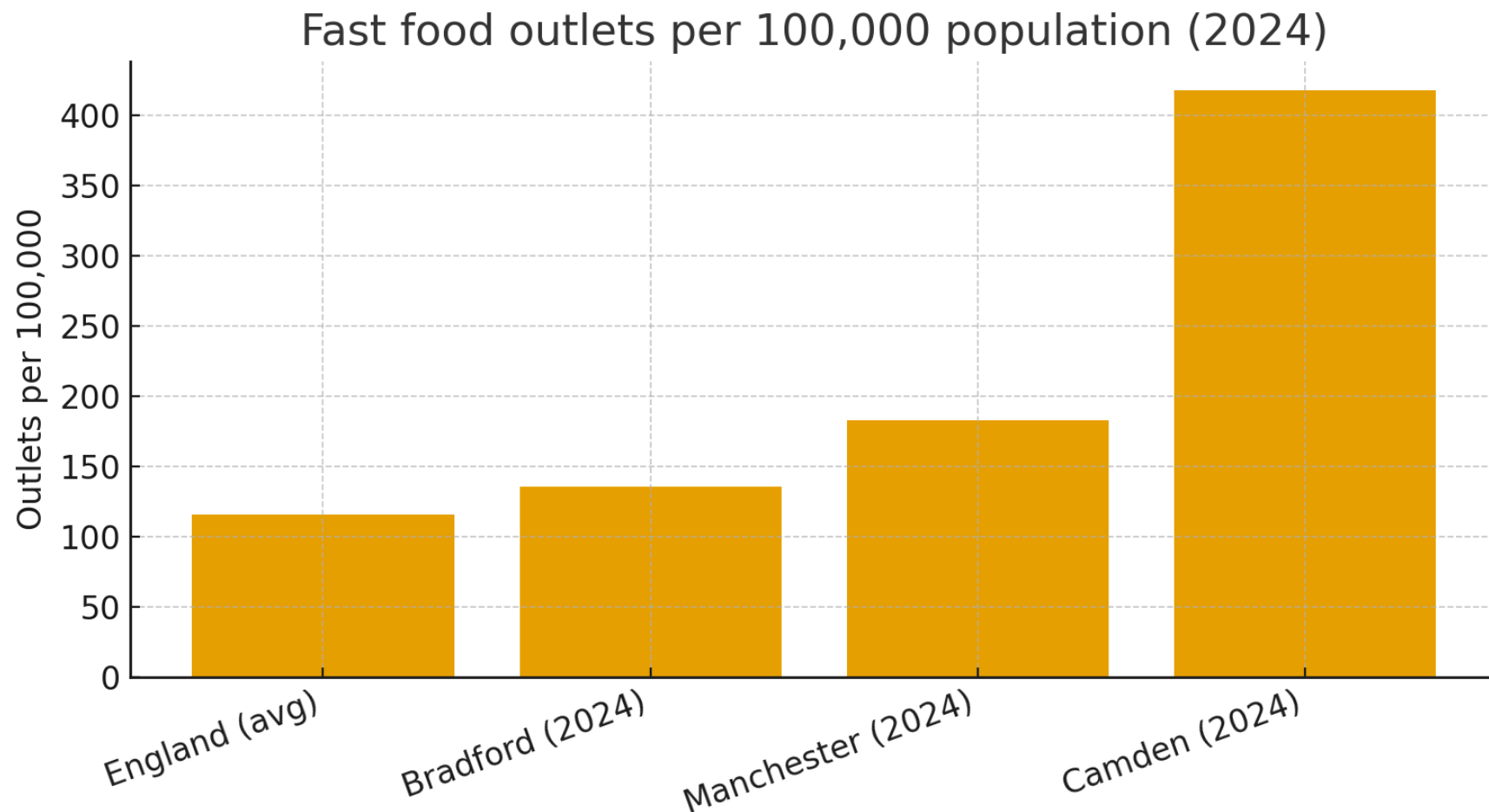


In Bradford, a rich tapestry of cultures comes alive on every plate, where food not only celebrates diversity but also brings the community together.

Bradford's Food Environment

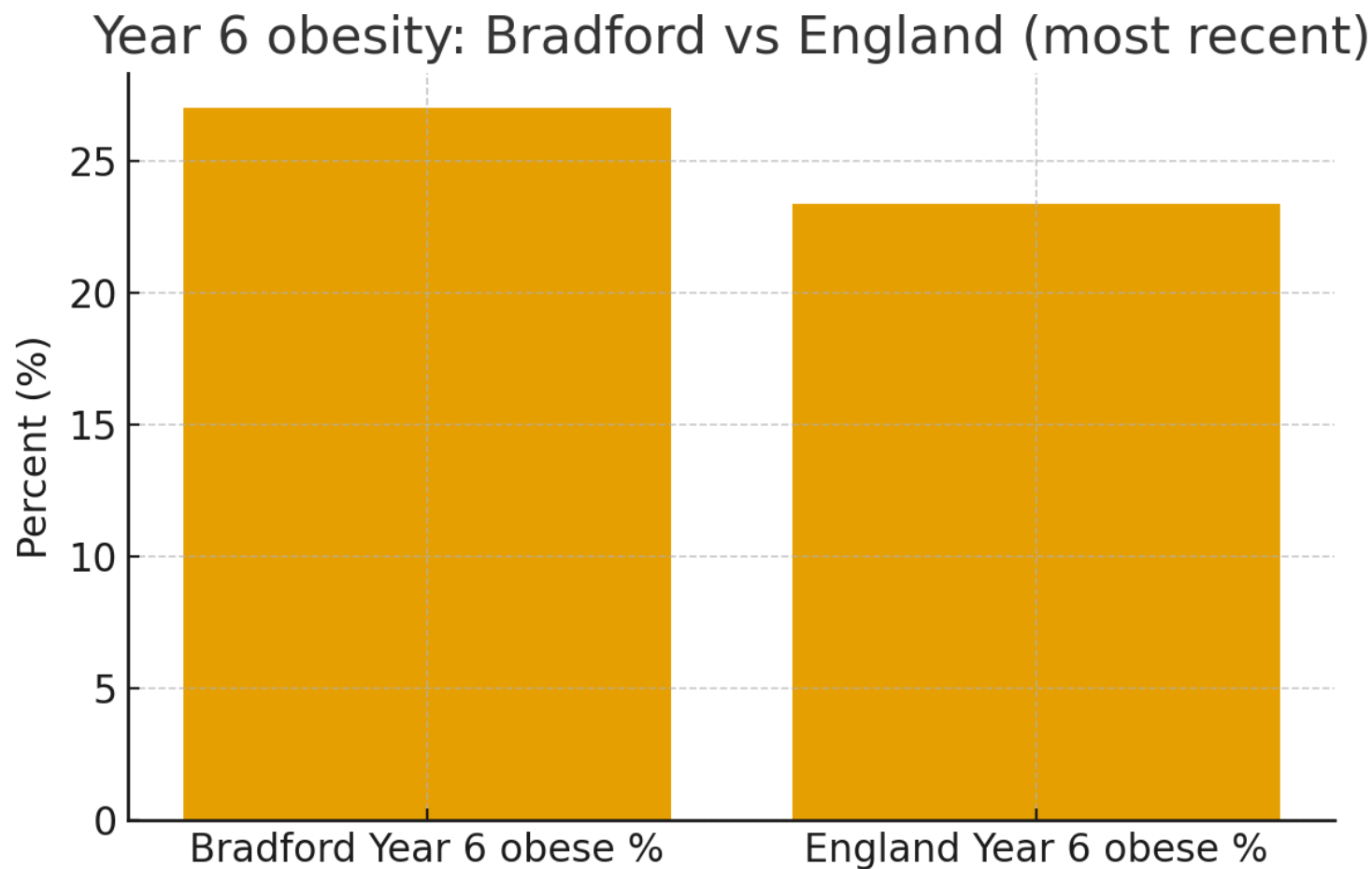
- Bradford has a dense takeaway / fast-food environment (135.5 outlets per 100k in 2024).
- High deprivation (IMD rank: 13th most deprived in England) correlates with higher outlet density.
- Local obesity and excess weight rates (adults ~67%; Year 6 obesity ~27%) are above England averages.

Fast-food outlets per 100k — Bradford vs comparators



Values: England avg 115.9; Bradford 135.5; Manchester 183; Camden 417.4. Source: OHID / GOV.UK and derivation exports.

Child Obesity (Year 6) — Bradford vs England



Bradford Year 6 obesity 27.0% vs England 23.4% (latest published). Source: Bradford DPH report / OHID.

Drivers of the Local Food Climate

- High deprivation and constrained household budgets influence food choices.
- Growth of meal delivery apps expands reach beyond local authority boundaries.
- Epidemiological evidence links higher fast-food exposure + lower income to higher obesity odds (Burgoine et al. 2018).
- National data: most deprived decile has ~146.6 outlets per 100k vs 73.1 in least deprived decile (OHID).

Health & Environmental Impacts

Health

- Increased risk of type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome (Pereira et al., 2005)
- High in calories, saturated fat, sugar, and salt → linked to obesity (Rosenheck, 2008)
- Associated with cardiovascular disease (Hu, 2003)

Environmental

- High greenhouse gas emissions from meat-heavy supply chains (Poore & Nemecek, 2018)
- Large amounts of single-use packaging → plastic and paper waste (DEFRA, 2022)
- Significant energy, water, and land use for production and operations
- Contributes to “food swamps” in urban areas → unhealthy food dominates local environment (Lake et al., 2010)

Living Well Takeaways



The aim of the Living Well Healthy Takeaways project is to support fast food businesses operating across the district to offer healthier options on their menus.

The project is focused on supporting takeaways to make it easier for customers to make healthier food choices. Thereby, supporting people to improve their health and wellbeing and combat increasing levels of obesity across Bradford district.

Consumer research November '23 and May '24

Over 350 people took part

“What are your main reasons for getting a takeaway?”

Lack of time – too busy to cook

A treat

To have a break from cooking

Not in the mood to cook

Tastes better than home cooking
– more authentic flavour

Social reasons, e.g. a
celebration or family visiting

Convenience

Consumer research November '23 and May '24

- 82.9% respondent said that they would like the food they purchase from takeaways to be healthier
- If a healthier version of their favourite dish was available 72% said they would choose it
- If the healthier option cost more this would not prevent 41.2% of respondents from choosing it but, would prevent 35.8%, whilst 23% were unsure whether or not it would prevent them.
- When asked if they were concerned about the health implications of eating unhealthy foods from takeaways 72.8% of respondents said yes they were,

Focus Group Findings

When the survey results were explored in greater depth through focus groups, several key themes emerged:

Takeaways as a Treat, Not a Time for Healthy Choices

Although participants expressed interest in healthier options during the online survey, many revealed that they viewed ordering a takeaway as an indulgence or treat. As a result, they were less likely to choose a healthy option when actually ordering.

Focus Group Findings

When the survey results were explored in greater depth through focus groups, several key themes emerged:

Desire for Transparency and Choice

While healthier options were not always the preferred choice, participants wanted the ability to make informed decisions. They valued clear information about what was in their food, including visible calorie counts and traffic light-style nutritional labelling, to help them understand their options.

Focus Group Findings

When the survey results were explored in greater depth through focus groups, several key themes emerged:

Influence of Price and Family Preferences

Purchasing behaviour was strongly influenced by price sensitivity and family dynamics. Many participants reported that their choices were guided by what others in the household preferred, as takeaway meals were often ordered for the whole family rather than for individuals.



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20 Small changes to create healthier food options for customers

- 1 Tap water is free and easy to access
- 2 Use reduced-salt stock
- 3 Do not add salt when cooking vegetables or starchy carbohydrates, such as when boiling potatoes. These foods can be seasoned to taste after cooking
- 4 Salt is not added as standard for serving, e.g. for chips, but rather served plain and under consumer discretion to season
- 5 Use alternative seasonings to salt such as spices and herbs
- 6 Only provide salt and sugar at point of service and not have it freely available on tables or countertops
- 7 Use 100% wholegrain flour in at least half of all recipes on offer
- 8 A minimum of 50% of the desserts offered are fruit-based (the main ingredient used in the dish is fruit)
- 9 Fresh fruit and/or fruit salad is available and is sold at a lower price than other desserts on offer
- 10 Salads have dressing provided separately or no dressing is offered at all

Working in partnership



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20 Small changes to create healthier food options for customers

- 11 More than half of the bread offered is wholegrain
- 12 In some recipes meat is replaced with vegetables and/or pulses
- 13 Savoury snacks, such as crisps and nuts, are only provided in 30g packet sizes or less
- 14 Any sugar sweetened beverages are sold at a maximum of 330ml drinks size
- 15 Reduced sugar or artificially sweetened beverages are offered
- 16 Offer a small plate option for all main meals
- 17 Healthy options on the menu are displayed in prime position, such as on menus and on menu boards
- 18 A portion of fruit or vegetables are served with every children's meal
- 19 A portion of fruit or vegetables are served with every adult meal
- 20 Serve skin on wedges instead of skinny fries

Working in partnership



Living Well Healthy Takeaways Offer Year 1 & 2

Nutritional Support:

Businesses were offered support from a nutritionist to identify areas within their individual menus where small, practical changes could be made to improve the overall nutritional quality.

Business Coaching:

Each participating takeaway received tailored one-to-one support from a business coach, that helped make sure changes were practical, affordable, and made sense commercially

Changes most frequently implemented across businesses

- Introduced low-sugar drink options
- Expanded selection of water-based beverages
- Offered smaller portion sizes
- Added side salads as an option
- Increased vegetable content in meals
- Implemented healthier cooking methods, including grilling instead of frying
- Reduced salt usage through alternative techniques (e.g., different shakers, not pre-salting, removing salt from tables/counters)
- Switched to healthier cooking oils

Barriers

Healthy options not viewed as a business priority

- Takeaways operating mainly at night, limiting engagement opportunities
- Limited time from management/owners, who are often working on a busy shop floor
- There is a lack of trust and fear of being penalised, fuelled by the misperception that team members are part of food/Environmental Health
- Secrecy around ingredients, preventing nutritional support
- Language barriers
- Perception that unhealthy items are more appealing to customers than healthier alternatives
- Worries that offering healthier options could negatively impact profits
- Inability to make changes due to ingredient restrictions from wholesalers

Darley Street Market



References

- Bradford District Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023 (Bradford Council).
- Bradford Good Food Strategy & Living Well Takeaways (2023-24).
- Hot Food Takeaway SPD — Bradford Council (2014).
- OHID Wider Determinants of Health: Fast food outlets per 100,000 (Feb 2025 update).
- Burgoine T. et al., 2018. Examining the interaction of fast-food outlet exposure and income on diet and obesity.