

Derry City and Strabane District Council Implements Nutritional Standards in Vending at Foyle Arena

The move will help meet growing consumer demand for healthier choices when 'on the go'. Explaining challenges consumers face when trying to make healthier food choices Jennifer McGonagle, Public Health Nutritionist and Dietary Health Lead for Northern Ireland at the Food Standards Agency said:

"We know from research that most of us (86%*) want to eat more healthily, but with the average person making over 200 food choices every day, it can be a challenge. Our recent 'Making Food Better' survey also shows people struggle to make healthy food choices at vending machines. We hope that this move will be a good starting point in creating a healthier food environment."

Outlining how introducing nutritional standards to vending machines at the Foyle Arena will benefit visitors/users, Leisure Area Manager with Derry City and Strabane District Council, Steve Setterfield, said:

"A key priority for Derry City and Strabane District Council is supporting and enabling its residents to improve their health and wellbeing. By introducing nutritional standards into our vending at Foyle Arena we are increasing the availability of lower calorie products to consumers. It also makes it easier for parents who are often under pressure to buy treats for children and encourages them to make healthier choices from a young age. I am confident the move will have a really positive impact on our users."

There are two phases to the nutritional standards. In Phase 1, all food in the vending machine must be below 250kcal, while Phase 2 goes further by reducing the calorie cap to less than 200kcal. There are also limits for sugary drinks. Under phase 1 less than 10% of drinks can be high in sugar reducing to 0% in Phase 2.

Discussing the benefits, Jennifer McGonagle said:

"What is offered in vending really matters because it often provides access to food and drink when other services aren't available. We know that changes of this nature can have a big impact with a potential 25% reduction in total calories at Phase 1 and between 35-50% reduction in total calories at Phase 2. By embracing these standards Derry City and Strabane District Council are supporting the creation of a healthier food environment for their citizens."

RSM, a company that specialises in strategy, economics and policy consulting has been commissioned to evaluate the introduction of the nutritional standards. The guide to nutritional standards is available to [download](#).

* ShopperVista research, IGD 2024