

Press Release

16 December 2009



Product placement plans will increase children's exposure to junk food and alcohol brands, say North West health campaigners

Government proposals to allow product placement in UK-made commercial television programmes will expose children to marketing messages from junk food and alcohol companies, according to North West wellbeing and health campaigners Our Life.

UK television broadcasters are not currently allowed to include product placement in programmes which they have made or which have been made for them. However the government is now reconsidering its position and says it is "minded to permit product placement on UK television, subject to safeguards". They have launched a consultation on the issue which runs until 8 January 2010.

Commenting on the proposals, Our Life chief executive Dr Alison Giles said: "We are concerned that product placement will result in children being exposed to even more marketing for junk food as well as promotions which will glamorise alcohol. Although the government's proposals wouldn't include children's TV, they could end up allowing unhealthy food and alcohol being pushed to children through their family entertainment programmes such as X Factor and Coronation Street," said Dr Giles.

"This Christmas, parents across the North West will be under enough pressure from children bombarded with advertising. Allowing junk food and alcohol brands on to family TV shows is advertising by the back door. These proposals will do nothing to help tackle the North West's obesity and alcohol problems," Dr Giles claimed.

Our Life is also unhappy at the government only allowing eight-weeks to collect views over the Christmas period and is concerned that officials are trying to rush through the consultation. Our Life is encouraging all its members and supporters to respond to the consultation and is also gathering views on the issue from people in the North West.

“Anyone who is concerned about marketing to children and the potential negative effect on their health needs to respond to this consultation and tell the government that any move towards product placement is a no-go,” said Dr Giles.

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For further information contact Andy Walker, Head of Corporate Affairs, Our Life, on 0161 233 7503 or 07818 568573 or email andy.walker@ourlife.org.uk

Notes to Editors:

1. Our Life is supporting the national online petition on product placement organised by Sustain and available at www.sustainweb.org/childrensfoodcampaign/action/
2. The full government consultation on product placement can be read at www.culture.gov.uk/images/consultations/Consultation_productplacement.pdf
3. Our Life is a campaigning organisation working with individuals and organisations who want to achieve the real and lasting changes that will make the North West a healthier place to live.
4. Established as a social enterprise, Our Life offers creative ways for the NHS, local government, the public, business and voluntary organisations to work in partnership to make sure that the North West becomes one of the healthiest regions in the country.
5. The North West has almost seven million inhabitants and 230,000 companies. Its economy is worth a remarkable £106 billion. Despite this, the North West has one of the worst health records in the country. A boy born in the region might expect to live ten years younger than one born in the South East of the country.