

Takeaway Sector Unites To Call On New Government To Back £94 Billion Industry That Employs Over 23,000

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The British Takeaway Campaign (BTC), a new industry umbrella body led by Just Eat, launched today (Monday), urging the Government to recognise its economic, social and cultural contribution to the UK and to back its growth by boosting training and access to skills.

New research, commissioned by Just Eat for the BTC, and compiled by the Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr), reveals takeaway restaurants directly contributed £4.5bn in gross value added (GVA) contributions to GDP in 2016 - an increase of 38% since 2009. That rises to £9.4 billion when factoring in the multiplier effect of supply-chain and employee spending - equivalent to 0.5% of GDP and more than the holiday industry and passenger air travel.

But despite the burgeoning sector creating record numbers of jobs, its many smaller businesses are facing a challenging operating environment as skills shortages, business rates and inflation are starting to bite. Among the measures the BTC is calling on the Government to introduce are:

- Ensuring vocational training is relevant to the industry and addresses skills shortages in cuisines like curry, sushi, Chinese and fish frying;
- Ensuring the immigration system enables the takeaway sector to access the skills it needs from within and outside of the EU. For example, by revising the Occupational Shortage List to include specialist chefs in shortage cuisines, such as curry, who are seeking employment in takeaway restaurants.
- Overhauling the current business rates regime to make it fairer and more transparent, including more frequent revaluations.

Graham Corfield, UK MD at Just Eat, the UK's leading takeaway delivery service, which co-founded the BTC, said:

"Everyone loves their local takeaway, but few would realise these small, often family-run businesses, are behind so much of the UK's economic growth. These high street heroes have experienced a digital revolution enabling them to offer even more choice and convenience. British consumers are now increasingly enjoying North African and Middle Eastern takeaways - with orders for Syrian food increasing ten-fold since 2014. That's alongside firm favourites like Italian, Chinese and Indian and all at the touch of a button. This report shows that with the right policies from the Government, the takeaway sector can continue to thrive."

The BTC is backed by major industry bodies representing fish and chip shops, kebab and curry houses, and pizzerias across the country.

Restaurateur, Ibrahim Dogus, Chair of the British Takeaway Campaign, added:

"The takeaway industry has transformed the high street and the British palate - from fish and chips to the latest fusion food. Takeaways up and down the country contribute billions to growth and are behind thousands of jobs. But many are being hamstrung by skills shortages, rising food and wage costs, as well as business rates. We want to get more young British people fired up about working in this exciting industry by ensuring they get the right training to build successful careers in the sector. While the Government's move to clarify the status of EU nationals is a welcome step, more needs to be done to ensure takeaways can access the skills they need. That's why we are calling for an immigration system that addresses areas of genuine skill shortage, rather than one that focuses on skill level alone."

The Takeaway Economy Report also reveals:

- Spending on takeaways across the UK supports 231,350 jobs, more than telecoms, advertising and premier league football - with 41,000 new jobs created since 2009.
- The public spent £9.9bn on takeaways last year, with spending predicted to grow to £11.2bn by 2021. This is expected to create 30,000 new jobs in the sector.
- Spending habits and tastes vary across the UK, with London and the South East the biggest takeaway markets, spending £2.7 billion, followed by the North West on £1.1 billion.
- The UK's favourite takeaway is pizza or Italian, followed by Chinese and Indian food. However, in Wales, Northern Ireland and the West Country Chinese is the most popular, while in Scotland and

Yorkshire, Indian is first choice.

Skills

Looking at the report's findings on skills in more detail, while the sector is bullish about its future, over a third of the 300 takeaways surveyed by Just Eat for the report say they are experiencing skills shortages, particularly for chefs, front of house staff and delivery drivers. Over a third (37%) believe the UK's decision to leave the EU will make it harder to recruit staff for their business, while 29% say they need to recruit skilled labour from outside the EU.

Innovators

Takeaways have been early adopters of digital technology, with new apps helping to provide greater choice and quality for consumers - at a time and place of their choosing. Almost 35,000 establishments now use online apps. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of takeaways surveyed say these have been positive for their business. More than a third (39%) are seeing a rise in the number of deliveries outside normal meal times, since using apps - such as at breakfast or lunchtimes. And takeaways are increasingly catering for consumer demand for healthier options, with 73% offering smaller portion sizes, 65% offering lower fat and 59% offering low salt options.

Takeaways at the heart of the community

As well as the economic and cultural contribution takeaways make, they have deep roots in their local communities. Most (88%) view being a valued part of the local community as important or very important. More than two-fifths are actively involved in community-based activities - of these, 62% sponsor local events or sports teams, and 61% provide food to charities, care homes or for local events.

Company Contact:

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Pressat Wire

E. [support\[\]@pressat.co.uk](mailto:support[]@pressat.co.uk)

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