

TAKEAWAYS EXCLUSION ZONES

Newsletter 4, July 2023

Welcome to the fourth newsletter for PPI contributors to the Takeaways Exclusion Zones Study.

In this issue we:

- Report early reflections from **Bea Savory** on her go-along (walk and talk) interviews with young people attending school in an exclusion zone. (Page 2.)
- Outline the 4-month process of training and accreditation that the work package 3 team (our economists) have been through so that they can use data from the [Office for National Statistics](#). (Page 3.)
- Profile new starter, **Nina Rogers**. Nina is taking the reins from **Bochu Liu** who left the team in June to take up a new role as Assistant Professor at the University of Shanghai. Nina will be collaborating with **Oliver Mytton** and **Tom Burgoine** on modelling the health impacts of exclusion zones. She brings with her a wealth of experience in evaluation of public health interventions as you will see from her profile. (Page 4.)

We submitted our first article for publication in a peer-reviewed journal in June. Published articles will be Open Access, and will be made available on our web pages as soon as they are published:

www.mrc-epid.cam.ac.uk/evaluation-planning-policy-takeaway/

We'll be in touch in September to arrange our annual online PPI meeting, and look forward to seeing you then. If you have any questions or feedback in the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact us:

annie.schiff@mrc-epid.cam.ac.uk



As always, thank you for your ongoing contribution.

Takeaways Exclusion Zones Study team, left to right: Bea Savory, Daniel Derbyshire, Oliver Mytton, Annie Schiff, Steve Cummins, Tom Burgoine, Bochu Liu, Claire Thompson, Matt Keeble, John Rahilly.

“Walking and talking”: Go-along interviews with young people attending secondary school in an exclusion zone

In a previous newsletter we reported on PPI work with the [Hertfordshire Young Peoples' Advisory Group](#) (YPAG). The YPAG helped us design our go-along interviews with young people (11-17) attending school in an exclusion zone. Researcher **Bea Savory** carried out the interviews in the London boroughs of Islington and Redbridge during January and February this year.



Map showing the location of Islington and Redbridge within greater London

Bea spoke with 46 young people in depth while walking with them around their school area, and visiting some of their regular food haunts. She talked with them about their eating habits, what they thought about exclusion zones and their suggestions for improving health.

Ten years ago, **Islington** introduced a policy of **denying planning permission to new hot food takeaway outlets within a 200m radius of schools**. The young people we spoke to felt it was good to try to limit access to unhealthy food, but that exclusion zones were unlikely to be effective because students would travel further to access takeaway food, or order through online apps. They talked about takeaway outlets as social spaces where they could hang out with friends after school. Students talked about leaving school hungry due to short lunchtimes or unappetising school dinners and stopping to fill up on convenience and takeaway food on the way home. Suggestions for alternatives included better healthy eating education in schools, improved school dinners and more access to sports.

Redbridge introduced its exclusion zone in March 2018 to **deny permission to new takeaway outlets within a 400m radius of schools**. Our interviewees in Redbridge were concerned about the impact of this policy on food choices, especially within the context of the cost of living crisis. They suggested offering incentives for affordable healthier takeaways to open, and said that they would buy more healthy foods such as salad or wraps from takeaways if this was available and affordable. Another suggestion was to focus on corner shops selling sweets.

We are grateful to all the young people who took the time to give us their views on exclusion zones. We learnt so much that we hope to publish two papers from this work, one focusing on how young people perceive takeaway exclusion zones around schools, and a second broader paper on food environments in and around schools.



Gaining access to ONS data

In Work Package 3, we're studying the **economic impacts of exclusion zones** such as how they effect local jobs and taxes.

To do this, we need to process information ("data") about work hours, salaries and business taxes from the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

This data is considered highly sensitive and can only be accessed by accredited researchers from inside SafePod, a standalone "pod" with a controlled access system, CCTV, a researcher area for dataset analysis and secure IT cupboard.

Our WP3 team applied to the Research Accreditation Panel (RAP) to access business microdata from the ONS. The application process took around 4 months, and involved 2 training sessions and 2 assessments.

We're delighted that WP3 researchers **Daniel Derbyshire** and **Antonieta Medina-Lara** have now achieved accreditation to work with this data as it will add a lot of value to the project.

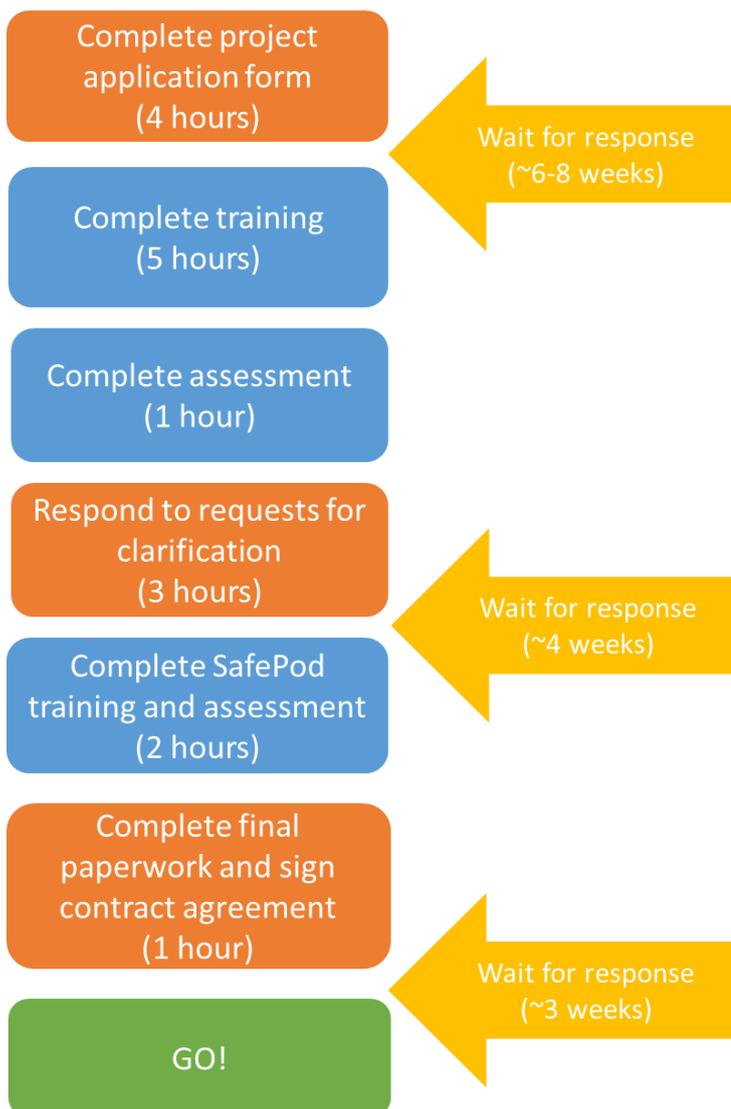
The flow chart below shows the 4 month process of application, training and assessment that Daniel and Antonieta completed to gain accreditation



The image above shows the SafePod at the University of Exeter where Daniel and Antonieta will be working with ONS data.

Daniel describes the SafePod as:

"...a windowless box with a computer in it...but there is a button that moves the desk up and down which I thought was quite fancy!"



Researcher profile: Dr Nina Rogers

Role: Research Associate

Work location: A combination of working on-site at the MRC Epidemiology Unit and homeworking

Background: I am a life course epidemiologist interested in improving population health from childhood to older age. I have worked at the University of Cambridge for over 2 years, previously researching the dietary and health impacts of the UK Soft Drinks Industry Levy before recently joining the takeaways exclusion zones study.

Why I research takeaways. The numbers of takeaway outlets are increasing and there is evidence to suggest they are contributing to inequalities in non-communicable diseases such as obesity.

I am interested in exploring how low agency, population-level, public health interventions such as takeaway exclusion zones can improve health in the population.



Project news

Website update – your feedback needed

As we move to the later stages of the project, we'll be updating our pages on the MRC Epidemiology Unit website to make it the go-to place for information and resources on takeaway exclusion zones.

We'd like to hear your thoughts on our web pages, in particular on how we might make it more useful and accessible for people outside of academia.

You can review our pages at www.mrc-epid.cam.ac.uk/evaluation-planning-policy-takeaway/ and send your feedback to annie.schiff@mrc-epid.cam.ac.uk

Jean gives seminar at the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID)

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) is a unit within the UK Department of Health and Social Care that leads national efforts to improve public health policy across England. Project researcher **Jean Adams** spoke with around 100 policymakers and practitioners at an OHID internal seminar in May. There was a good deal of interest in our work when it was discussed as part of Jean's talk on *"Eating from the out of home sector & dietary public health"*.

John is sent to Coventry (City Council)

At a more local level, **John Rahilly** presented the unpublished results of his Interrupted Time Series Analysis (ITS) of the impact of exclusion zones on new planning applications to a meeting of the Coventry City Council in February. His analysis, which has been covered in previous issues of this newsletter, suggests that exclusion zones are likely to be effective in stopping the rise of takeaways.

Tom shares results at innovation agency Nesta

Tom Burgoine spoke with around 40 researchers and practitioners at [Nesta, the UK's innovation agency for social good](#) back in April. It was a great forum for dissemination and discussion of our results so far.

Wider news & find out more

Agent based modelling for urban health impact assessment

On 12 May, **Tabea Sonnenschein** from the University of Utrecht gave a fascinating and highly accessible talk on the use of agent-based modelling to understand how urban planning and city design affects our health. You can [watch a recording here](#).

You can keep up with all the **latest news from the MRC Epidemiology Unit** at www.mrc-epid.cam.ac.uk/news/ and sign up to the department's quarterly newsletter **epigram** as well as alerts to our seminars and vacancies. Read past issues of epigram at www.mrc-epid.cam.ac.uk/news/epigram/ and subscribe at www.mrc-epid.cam.ac.uk/subscribe/

Get Involved

We want to make sure that we are focussing our efforts on the right research questions, that our work is relevant and that the findings of our studies are communicated effectively so that our work can benefit as many people as possible.

We're looking to recruit more people to join our regular PPI contributors for annual discussion groups.

Please send this newsletter to anyone in your network who you think might be interested in contributing to our work.

You do not need to have any PPI experience to join a group, (although many of our contributors do) just an interest in public health research and a willingness to listen to others and share views constructively with researchers.

We offer a £25 Amazon voucher as a thank you for each PPI discussion session attended.

The full name of the Takeaways Exclusion Zones Study is: **Evaluation of planning policy to regulate takeaway food outlets for improved health in England**

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You are receiving this newsletter because you have provided PPI input for this study or because you have signed up to our study mail list. If you no longer wish to receive our newsletters [let us know](#).

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