

UK Supermarket Spotlight

Summary of Methodology



ACCESS TO
NUTRITION
INITIATIVE

ATNI developed this methodology to assess the extent of disclosure of each of the UK's 10 largest food retailers on nutrition and health. It has been adapted to the retail sector from the well-established methodology ATNI uses to assess food and beverage manufacturers in its Global and Spotlight Indexes. ATNI consulted several UK-based stakeholders, including government, NGOs, academics, former company employees, independent experts and key investors, to identify the appropriate adaptations. Each company was assessed on up to 120 indicators across eight topics. The number of indicators per section is shown in the table. Companies' disclosure about both their commitments and performance on each topic were assessed. Where certain indicators were not applicable to a particular retailer, they were not applied, and the scoring was adjusted appropriately. For example, if a retailer does not have in-store cafés, or does not make complementary food for young children, it was not assessed on the indicators pertaining to these topics. The results of the research are set out in the [UK Supermarket Spotlight report](#).

Topic	Rationale for methodology section	What the Indicators measure, in brief
1: Governance Max: 14 indicators	A company can better sustain and scale up its nutrition-related activities if its commitment starts at the top of the organisation and is integrated into its core business strategy and management systems. Nutrition issues are then more likely to be prioritised as the company allocates resources, tracks performance and reports to its stakeholders.	<p>Commitments: intention to play a role in tackling the UK's poor diets, and childhood obesity specifically; whether there is a strategic focus on nutrition; sales of healthy packaged products and fresh foods.</p> <p>Performance: evidence of Board leadership and responsibility; recognition of obesity and diet-related health issues as material business risks; clear plan to deliver nutrition strategy; key metrics on sales growth of healthy packaged products and fresh foods; sales of products in PHE priority categories and drinks subject to the Soft Drinks Industry Levy.</p>
2: Nutrient profiling Max: 8 indicators	A nutrient profiling system (NPS) is a tool used to analyse the nutritional quality of products. It is essential to inform retailers' efforts to develop new healthy products and reformulate existing products to make them healthier. They can also be used to guide decisions on the pricing, positioning, promotion, marketing and labelling of healthier products.	Use(s) of a nutrient profiling system; alignment to established government dietary recommendations and standards; nutrients included; how nutrition content is determined; products covered; detail made available.
3: Product formulation Max: 30 indicators	Retailers can help consumers to access healthier options by improving the nutritional quality of their own-brand products (by, for example, cutting levels of sugar, calories, salt and fat, and increasing healthy ingredients such as fruit, vegetables and wholegrains). They can also engage with the major brand manufacturers to encourage them to improve the nutritional quality of their products. Those retailers that have in-store cafés can use various techniques to encourage customers to make healthier choices.	<p>Commitments: stated targets to: reduce sugar, calories, salt, saturated fat in own-brand products, and portion size; increase fruit/vegetable and wholegrain content; engage manufacturers of branded products in improving formulation; in-store café offerings.</p> <p>Performance: progress on achieving targets on sugar, calories, salt, saturated fat, portion size, fruit/vegetables and wholegrains; demonstrated engagement with manufacturers of branded products; in-store café offerings.</p>
4: In-store marketing Max: 31 indicators	Consumers not only need retailers to offer a wider range of healthier food and beverages, they also need those products to be accessible and affordable – especially to those on low incomes. Retailers can address this need by offering healthier options at competitive prices, making sure they are widely distributed and easily available across different store formats and geographies. Moreover, they need to ensure that healthier products are promoted effectively – using a full range of marketing techniques – from product positioning in-store and on-shelf, to the use of nudge techniques and reward and incentive schemes.	<p>Commitments: consistency of healthier offerings across all store formats and all parts of the UK; 'price promise' for healthier products; healthy checkouts; increased promotions on healthier products; use of in-store cues; incentives and rewards to buy healthier products.</p> <p>Performance: use of price promise; physical positioning of healthier products; evidence of sales being driven by its promotions.</p>



<p>5: Responsible marketing Max: 11 indicators</p>	<p>Ensuring that all marketing beyond the store environment is conducted responsibly is essential to reaching customers with healthier foods and beverages. This is particularly critical with respect to marketing to children. While the UK has self-regulatory measures in place (the CAP Code and BCAP Code), retailers can take additional steps to demonstrate their commitment to responsible marketing.</p>	<p>Commitments: responsible marketing policy that includes restrictions beyond those set out by the CAP Codes, such as, but not limited to, defining a 'child' as up to 18, not advertising unhealthy products near schools, and not using fantasy and/or cartoon animation and characters on packs or in-store signs in relation to unhealthy products.</p> <p>Performance: third-party auditing of compliance with policy; greater emphasis on advertising healthy products.</p>
<p>6: Labelling Max: 6 indicators</p>	<p>Retailers can help consumers to identify healthier options by providing them with accurate, easily understandable and consistent information about the nutrition composition and potential health benefits of all of the products they sell – on-pack, in-store and online.</p>	<p>Commitments: traffic-light labelling on all own-brand products; other in-store labelling to identify more and less healthy products.</p> <p>Performance: provision of nutrition content labels on-pack, in-store and online.</p>
<p>7: Engagement Max: 6 indicators</p>	<p>Retailers can have a significant impact on consumers' access to healthy foods through the positions they take on government consultations and regulatory proposals on nutrition issues. They also have an influence through the industry and trade bodies to which they belong, who lobby on their behalf. Retailers' transparency about their own public policy positions and their membership of organisations that lobby on their behalf is essential so that other stakeholders can understand the positions companies are taking. In addition, constructive engagement by companies with a wide range of other stakeholders is important to inform corporate nutrition strategies, policies and practices.</p>	<p>Commitments: policy on responsible lobbying and engagement with stakeholders.</p> <p>Performance: disclosure of trade/industry association memberships; public-policy positions; involvement in third-party initiatives to address the UK's poor diets; active stakeholder engagement in nutrition strategy and policy development.</p>
<p>8: Infant and young child nutrition Max: 14 indicators</p>	<p>The International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes (BMS) was adopted in 1981 and has since been augmented by a series of World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions. Together, these set out comprehensive recommendations on the responsible marketing of breast-milk substitutes and complementary foods. The recommendations are designed to protect and encourage breastfeeding and avoid use of BMS where possible. Breastfeeding has been proven to be the best start in life an infant can have, as it provides both optimal nutrition and protection against many childhood diseases and against obesity in later life. It also has beneficial effects on mothers' health. The Code's goals will be most readily achieved if manufacturers, distributors and retailers of BMS and complementary foods all uphold The Code (which, in the UK, means going beyond current national regulations, which do not encompass all of the recommendations of The Code).</p> <p>Moreover, in 2019, the WHO Regional Office for Europe published, for the first time, a series of compositional standards for complementary foods with maximum thresholds for sugar, salt or fats, and guidance on the inclusion of fruits and vegetables.</p>	<p>Commitments: to uphold the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and related WHA resolutions; threshold for maximum levels of sugar, energy density and salt, and more fruits and vegetables, in own-brand complementary foods for children 6–36 months in line with 2019 WHO Europe guidance.</p> <p>Performance: evidence of adherence to The Code; use of an NPS for own-brand complementary foods; progress towards achieving sugar, energy density and salt thresholds in those products and more fruits and vegetables.</p>

