Understanding changes in the British diet

November 2013
What do we learn?

- From 1980-2007
  - overall calories purchased have declined
  - although calories from food out, confectionary and soft drinks have increased
  - people have switched to *more expensive* calories

- From 2005-7 to 2010-12, for food in
  - calories purchased have declined further
  - people have switched to *cheaper* calories
  - people have switched to less calorie dense foods
  - people have switched to less nutritious calories
Raises immediate questions

• How can we reconcile declining calorie purchases with increasing average weights and obesity rates?
  • We know there has been shift to more sedentary lifestyles
  • Is this the missing piece of the puzzle?

• Is shift to cheaper calories over recession linked to reduction in nutritional quality of calorie purchases?
  • People may be able to switch to cheaper calories without compromising nutritional quality by
    • Exploiting sales more
    • Visiting more supermarkets and more often
    • Buying larger pack sizes
  • But they may also have switched to cheaper nutrients (e.g. switched from high protein to fatty meat)
  • How has this differed across household types?