

Hot food takeaways guidance note - July 2025



Cheshire West and Chester Council





Hot food takeaways guidance note

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# 1 Summary of information requirements

Please note since this guidance note was produced the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been updated. Please refer to paragraph 97 of the [NPPF December 2024](#) to view the update.

**1.1** If any part of your planning application site falls within a 400m education setting exclusion zone the proposal is likely to conflict with the development plan on health grounds. It is very likely that a hot food takeaway in these zones would not promote and positively contribute to the health of the borough in line with [Local Plan \(Part One\)](#) policy [SOC 5](#) and [Local Plan \(Part Two\)](#) policy [DM 29](#) and such a proposal is therefore unlikely to be supported.

**1.2** If no part of your application site falls within an exclusion zone, does the proposal fall within one or more of the categories in Table 1.1 below?

Table 1.1 Hot food takeaway checklist

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| <p><b>A location with high concentration of hot food takeaway premises? ('High concentration' can be defined as more than two existing units selling hot takeaway food within 400m* of the unit frontage).</b></p> <p>See <a href="https://www.feat-tool.org.uk/">https://www.feat-tool.org.uk/</a> or as an alternative a site survey should be undertaken to identify the concentration of hot food takeaways.</p> | <p><b>Yes/No</b></p> |
| <p><b>A ward with higher than average childhood obesity levels (according to the National Child Measurement Programme)?</b></p> <p>See Hot Food Takeaway guidance note (Figure 5.1)</p>  | <p><b>Yes/No</b></p> |
| <p><b>A lower-layer super output area (ie. neighbourhood) in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> most deprived decile for Multiple Deprivation?</b></p> <p>See <a href="#">Index of Multiple Deprivation</a></p>  | <p><b>Yes/No</b></p> |

\*Calculated as the crow flies.

# 1

## Summary of information requirements

**1.3** If you have answered **'yes' to all three of the questions** in the above table, the proposal is also likely to conflict with the development plan on health grounds. It is very likely that a hot food takeaway in these locations would not promote and positively contribute to the health of the borough in line with [Local Plan \(Part One\)](#) policy [SOC 5](#) and [Local Plan \(Part Two\)](#) policy [DM 29](#) and such a proposal is therefore unlikely to be supported.

**1.4** If you have answered 'yes' to two of the three questions in Table 1.1 we will assess your application having regard to the following criteria and may request further information after submission.

- Proximity to schools
- % of the ward population made up by children and young people
- % of ward population in poor health
- Life expectancy for the ward
- Causes of death data for the ward
- Environmental data e.g. air quality if a drive-thru

**1.5** If you have answered 'yes' to only one of the questions in Table 1.1 (or no to all of them), the application is likely to be acceptable on health grounds. Please provide details of your answers above in any submission.

**1.6** For all hot food takeaway applications, an assessment of noise and odour impacts will be required to address policy DM 2. To produce you may require specialist advice, the following guidance provides more information [Control of Odour and Noise from Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Systems](#). Whether mitigation is required, depends on the outcome of the assessment. Please note, the assessment should ensure that there is compliance with BS4142 in relation to noise. The completed assessment should be submitted at the start of the application process to avoid any delays.

**1.7** Details of waste storage will also be required for all hot food takeaway applications. The type and location of the storage should be marked on a proposed site plan.

## 2 Introduction

**2.1** The purpose of this guidance note is to provide appropriate planning guidance for applications covering hot food takeaways (for the sale of hot food where consumption of that food is mostly undertaken off the premises) and mixed use developments including hot food takeaways. This includes applications for new uses and variations to existing conditions. It is aimed at those involved in preparing and submitting a relevant planning application and those involved in the determination of applications. The guidance set out in this note is in accordance with policies [SOC 5](#) in the Cheshire West and Chester [Local Plan \(Part One\)](#) and policies [DM 2](#) and [DM 29](#) in the Cheshire West and Chester [Local Plan \(Part Two\)](#). It aims to provide additional insight into how to meet planning policy and explains what information is needed to demonstrate that requirements of the above policies will be met. This will help avoid any delays during the application process.

**2.2** In a bid to help tackle a growing obesity problem, this note incorporates 400 metre (5-minute walk) exclusion zones around secondary schools and colleges that are in wards with above borough average childhood obesity levels. If relevant applications fall within an exclusion zone it is likely to give rise to significant adverse effects on health and wellbeing and will not be supported, however all applications will be considered on a case by case basis, based on the evidence provided and potential cumulative health impact. The more cumulative impacts identified, the increased likelihood the proposal will conflict with policies [SOC 5](#) and [DM 29](#), in addition, an assessment of noise and odour impacts will be required to address policy [DM 2](#).

**2.3** Cheshire West and Chester Council appreciate the benefits brought by this type of provision - economic, convenience and cultural variety, to name a few. The health impact associated with hot food takeaways calls for guidance to ensure people living in the borough are supported in living a healthy lifestyle.

**2.4** The data and maps within this guidance note will be updated annually based on the latest Public Health England Child Measurement Programme data. As a result, catchment areas could be subject to change depending on the wards that are above the borough average each year. More information regarding the sources of the data used in the guidance note and how wards are determined to be 'high risk' can be found further on in the document. Table 1.1 'Hot food takeaway checklist' in Section 1 'Summary of information requirements' demonstrates the process for planning applications of hot food takeaway premises.

## 3 Planning Policy

**3.1** [Local Plan \(Part One\)](#) policy [SOC 5](#) pertains to health and wellbeing and sets out that proposals will be provided to meet the health and wellbeing needs of residents. [SOC 5](#) states that development that gives rise to significant adverse impacts on health will not be permitted. [Local Plan \(Part Two\)](#) policy [DM 2](#) outlines that proposals for new development will be expected to safeguard the quality of life for residents within the development and those living nearby, this includes noise and odour that can be linked with hot food takeaways premises. [DM 29](#) states proposals should take every reasonable opportunity to promote and positively contribute to the health of the borough in line with [Local Plan \(Part One\)](#) policy [SOC 5](#).

**3.2** In addition, other policy requirements include [ECON 2](#) which establishes a retail hierarchy and promotes this type of use in identified town centres. Relevant policies [DM 14](#) and [DM 15](#) in the [Local Plan \(Part Two\)](#) also cover main town centre uses and develop upon [ECON 2](#) further.

**3.3** [The National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) revised in 2021 is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF encourages sustainable development via three overarching objectives including a social objective which is to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities (paragraph 8b). The document identifies that the planning system can play an important role in creating healthy, inclusive and safe places (paragraph 92). Specifically, planning policies should enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs (paragraph 92c). Planning Practice Guidance (Healthy and Safe Communities) supports local authorities using exclusion zones to ensure hot food takeaways are discouraged near to locations where children and young people congregate such as schools, community centres and playgrounds (paragraph 4).

**Please note since this guidance note was produced the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been updated. Please refer to paragraph 97 of the [NPPF December 2024](#) to view the update.**

## 4 Health Evidence

**4.1** In 2019 the Council signed up to the [Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight](#). The Declaration encapsulates a vision to promote healthy weight and improve the health and wellbeing of the local population. By signing this declaration, the Council has shown commitment to take a whole-systems approach to reducing unhealthy weight in our communities and in protecting the health and wellbeing of staff and residents. Within this declaration, the Council has pledged to consider supplementary guidance for hot food takeaways, specifically in areas around schools, parks and where access to healthier alternatives are limited.

**4.2** [Cheshire West and Chester's Health Improvement Strategy -2022](#) supports the healthy lifestyle of residents with a particular focus on healthy eating. The foundations of the Health Improvement Strategy are based on the [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) (JSNA) and its key priorities. The JSNA presents information about the current and future health and wellbeing needs of the local population. A recommendation of a Universal Prevention Approach emerged from the JSNA to limit the availability of unhealthy food premises near schools.

**4.3** The government's [Eatwell Guide](#) (previously Eatwell Plate) was updated in 2016 to recommend that foods high in salt, fat and sugar are eaten less often and in small amounts. A large proportion of the items on the menus of the fast-food restaurants, cafes and hot food takeaways are high in fat, salt and/or sugar, they are therefore considered as less healthy.

**4.4** Research shows that food bought from hot food takeaways is usually less nutritious and can be viewed as unhealthy.

**4.5** "Some hot food takeaways offer 'energy-dense' or 'fast food' with high levels of fat, sugar and salt which are linked to obesity and related health conditions including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke and some cancers. Of particular concern is the effect of fast-food consumption on children's diets and eating behaviour as significant health problems related to obesity start to develop at school age and has been shown to track into adulthood"<sup>(i)</sup>.

**4.6** Research also indicates that increased access to unhealthier food retail outlets is associated with increased weight status in the general population, and increased obesity and unhealthy eating behaviours among children residing in low income areas<sup>(ii)</sup>.

**4.7** Further evidence suggests that:

- People who eat more takeaway food had lower intake of vitamins A and C, milk, fruits and vegetables and higher intake of calories, fat, saturated fat, salt and fizzy soft drinks<sup>(iii)</sup>.

i <https://www.healthyrurbandevelopment.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/HUDU-Control-of-Hot-Food-Takeaways-Feb-2013-Final.pdf>

ii [https://www.sustainweb.org/secure/Hot\\_food\\_takeaways.pdf](https://www.sustainweb.org/secure/Hot_food_takeaways.pdf)

iii Paeratakul, S., Ferdinand, D. P., Champagne, C. M., Ryan, D. H., & Bray, G. A. (2003). Fast-food consumption among US adults and children: dietary and nutrient intake profile. *Journal of the American dietetic Association*, 103(10), 1332-1338.

- Those never eating fast food had a 2–3-times higher odds of having a healthy diet versus those eating fast food more than once a week<sup>(iv)</sup>.

- Children who ate fast food, compared with those who did not, consumed more total energy, fat, carbohydrates, sugars, sugar-sweetened beverages per gram of food and less fibre, fewer fruits and fewer non starchy vegetables. Children ate more total energy and had poorer diet quality on days with, compared with without, fast food<sup>(v)</sup>.

#### 4.8 Further to this, studies relating to the proliferation of hot food takeaways:

- In areas where there was a higher number of takeaway premises there were also lower levels of fruit and vegetable intake<sup>(vi)</sup>.

- Children that lived near to fast food outlets or convenience stores or lived near to a high number of these premises were also less likely to consume two or more portions of fruit a day<sup>(vii)</sup>.

#### 4.9 Consumption of hot food takeaway food and health outcomes:

- Frequent consumption of foods from fast food outlets or takeaways contributes to a variety of other negative health outcomes, including cardiovascular disease, insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes<sup>(viii)</sup>.

- Increases in fast-food consumption was associated with weight gain and insulin resistance (which can lead to diabetes)<sup>(ix)</sup>.

**4.10** Obesity is one of the biggest health challenges facing the UK. The causes of obesity are complex and multifaceted, including social, economic, biological and environmental factors but the overall impact of the 'obesogenic' environment is an important determinant of both energy intake and expenditure<sup>(x)</sup>. Public health interventions targeted at controlling the availability of, or exposure to, palatable, inexpensive foods and drinks with a high energy density, are likely to be part of any successful broader strategy to reduce obesity.

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- iv Moore, L. V., Diez Roux, A. V., Nettleton, J. A., Jacobs, D. R., & Franco, M. (2009). Fast-food consumption, diet quality, and neighborhood exposure to fast food: the multi-ethnic study of atherosclerosis. *American journal of epidemiology*, 170(1), 29-36
- v Bowman, S. A., Gortmaker, S. L., Ebbeling, C. B., Pereira, M. A., & Ludwig, D. S. (2004). Effects of fast-food consumption on energy intake and diet quality among children in a national household survey. *Pediatrics*, 113(1), 112-118
- vi Fraser, L. K., Edwards, K. L., Cade, J., & Clarke, G. P. (2010). The geography of fast food outlets: a review. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 7(5), 2290-2308
- vii Timperio, A., Ball, K., Roberts, R., Campbell, K., Andrianopoulos, N., & Crawford, D. (2008). Children's fruit and vegetable intake: associations with the neighbourhood food environment. *Preventive medicine*, 46(4), 331-335
- viii Jaworowska, A., Blackham, T., Davies, I. G., & Stevenson, L. (2013). Nutritional challenges and health implications of takeaway and fast food. *Nutrition reviews*, 71(5), 310-318
- ix Bowman, S. A., Gortmaker, S. L., Ebbeling, C. B., Pereira, M. A., & Ludwig, D. S. (2004). Effects of fast-food consumption on energy intake and diet quality among children in a national household survey. *Pediatrics*, 113(1), 112-118
- x <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tackling-obesities-future-choices>



**4.11** Cheshire West and Chester's JSNA highlights that being overweight or obese is now the norm amongst adults. Data from the [2021/2022 Active Lives Survey](#) shows that 60.2% of adults in Cheshire West and Chester are overweight or obese<sup>(xi)</sup>. This is higher than both the England and North West average. High levels of unhealthy weight are apparent across all socio-economic groups within the population.

**4.12** Childhood obesity has a correlation with both obesity in adulthood and higher chances of premature death and disability. Overweight and obese children are more likely to remain obese into adulthood and to develop noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes and cardiovascular diseases at a younger age<sup>(xii)</sup>. As childhood obesity often translates to obesity in adulthood it is therefore critical to tackle at the earliest possible stage. Data from the 2021/22 National Child Measurement Programme shows 18.7% of reception aged children and 34.2% of year 6 children are overweight or obese<sup>(xiii)</sup>.

**4.13** The Council understands that obesity is complex issue and this note aims to support a combined approach to addressing the issue by avoiding impacts on health and wellbeing as outlined in Local Plan Policies [SOC 5](#) and [DM 29](#). Studies have found that the food environment around schools can have a direct correlation with pupils' health within those schools<sup>(xiv)</sup>. The control of hot food takeaways within walking distance of schools is a tool used by a number of local authorities to manage the temptation of unhealthy food is avoided for school children.

**4.14** A review of the impact of hot food takeaways near schools in the UK on childhood obesity found there was good evidence of a higher instance of hot food takeaways in deprived areas and children who spend time in deprived neighbourhoods tend to eat more fast food and have a higher Body Mass Index<sup>(xv)</sup>.

xi <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/adult%20obesity#page/0/gid/1/pat/6/par/E12000002/ati/102/iid/93088/age/168/sex/4/cid/4/tbm/1>

xii <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/noncommunicable-diseases-childhood-overweight-and-obesity>

xiii <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/national-child-measurement-programme>

xiv Turbutt, C., Richardson, J. and Pettinger, C., 2019. The impact of hot food takeaways near schools in the UK on childhood obesity: a systematic review of the evidence. *Journal of Public Health*, 41(2), pp.231-239

xv [https://www.sustainweb.org/secure/Hot\\_food\\_takeaways.pdf](https://www.sustainweb.org/secure/Hot_food_takeaways.pdf)

## 5 Excess weight percentages in children

Please note since this guidance note was produced the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been updated. Please refer to paragraph 97 of the [NPPF December 2024](#) to view the update.

**5.1** The JSNA has led to the Council identifying a health inequality in Cheshire West and Chester, the levels of childhood obesity on average are below the national average, being much lower in certain areas of the borough. However, some wards have particularly high levels and those with figures higher than borough average have been identified. The list below includes data from the National Child Measurement Programme, showing ward-level excess weight percentages for children in Year 6, available here: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/local-health/data>.

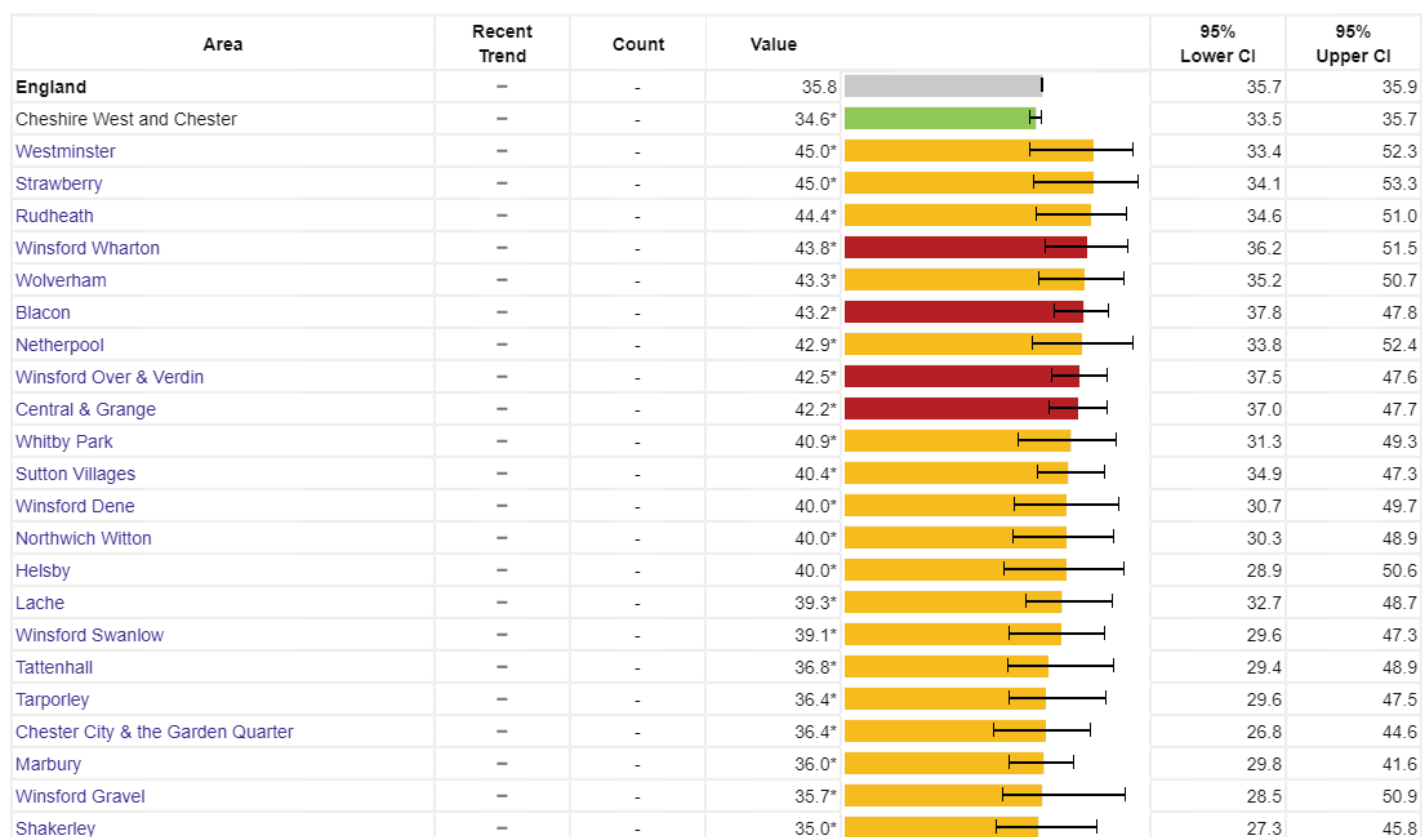
**5.2** The borough average for Cheshire West and Chester is 34.6%. The following list includes wards that are above 34.6% as shown in Figure 5.1:

- Westminster,
- Strawberry,
- Rudheath,
- Winsford Wharton,
- Wolverham,
- Blacon,
- Netherpool,
- Winsford Over & Verdin,
- Central & Grange,
- Whitby Park,
- Sutton Villages,
- Winsford Dene,
- Northwich Witton,
- Helsby,
- Lache,
- Winsford Swanlow,
- Tattenhall,
- Tarporley,
- Chester City & the Garden Quarter,
- Marbury,
- Winsford Gravel,
- Shakerley.

**5.3** Wards above the borough average are deemed areas of concern and secondary schools and colleges within these wards have been given 400m exclusion zones. 400m is considered a 5-minute walk and viewed as easily accessible for school pupils. The council is unlikely to support applications for hot food takeaways in line with Local Plan policies [SOC 5](#) and [DM 29](#) if within an exclusion zone.

Figure 5.1

Year 6: Prevalence of overweight (including obesity), 3-years data combined **New data** 2019/20 - 21/22 Proportion - %



**5.4** Secondary schools that fall within the selected wards are as follows:

- Blacon High School Specialist Sports College,
- Ellesmere Port Catholic High School,
- Helsby High School,
- Tarporley High School,
- The Winsford Academy,
- University of Chester Academy Northwich

**5.5** Secondary schools have been identified as a particular concern from both a lunchtime perspective (for those pupils able to leave the school site) and from a school finishing time perspective (access to hot food takeaway food).

**5.6** Colleges that fall within the selected wards are as follows:

- West Cheshire College South and West.

## 6 Cumulative health impacts

**6.1** Each planning application will be considered against several potential health impacts. Applications that are not within an exclusion zone but are in either in a ward with high rates of childhood excess weight, in an area with a concentration of hot food takeaways or high deprivation will be considered on a case by case basis, taking all health evidence into account. We will assess your application having regard to the following criteria and may request further information after submission.

- Proximity to schools
- % of the ward population made up by children and young people
- % of ward population in poor health
- Life expectancy for the ward
- Causes of death data for the ward
- Environmental data e.g. air quality if a drive-thru

**6.2** Applications will be assessed based on the location in reference to other hot food takeaway premises, for the purposes of this note a 'high concentration' can be defined as more than two existing units selling hot takeaway food within 400m of the unit frontage. Research indicates that increased access to unhealthier food retail outlets is associated with increased weight status in the general population, and increased obesity and unhealthy eating behaviours among children. The need to limit the cumulative impacts of a clustering of hot food takeaways is critical in pursuing healthy food environments. The Food Environment Assessment Tool includes a map of all hot food takeaways: <https://www.feat-tool.org.uk/> or as an alternative a site survey should be undertaken to identify the concentration of hot food takeaways.

**6.3** There is a strong correlation between deprivation and childhood obesity. The most deprived wards have a significantly higher proportion of children with excess weight than in the least deprived wards. Prevalence of obesity is more than double in reception age children living in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived areas<sup>(xvi)</sup>. The Multiple Deprivation Index measures relative deprivation in lower-layer super output areas and the neighbourhood area in which the planning application is located will be assessed against the MDI. A mapping tool that displays MDI can be found here: [Multiple Deprivation Index](#).

**6.4** It is important to also consider adult obesity data when proposing hot food takeaway premises. The percentage of adults classified as overweight or obese in 2019/2020 was higher in Cheshire West and Chester (69.1%) than the national average (62.8%) and the North West region average (65.9%). Data is available here: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/overweight>.

**6.5** As referenced above, there are currently 22 wards in the borough that are above 33.5% for children classified as overweight (including obesity) which is above the borough average. Data is available here: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/local-health/data>

xvi Hot Food Takeaways: Planning a route to healthier communities: Starting Well Statistics  
[https://inside.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/find\\_out\\_more/datasets\\_and\\_statistics/statistics/starting\\_well](https://inside.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/find_out_more/datasets_and_statistics/statistics/starting_well)





## Accessing Cheshire West and Chester Council information and services

Council information is also available in Audio, Braille, Large Print or other formats. If you would like a copy in a different format, in another language or require a BSL interpreter, please email us at **[equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)**

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Pokud byste požadovali informace v jiném jazyce nebo formátu, kontaktujte nás

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如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

Türkçe bilgi almak istiyorsanız, bize başvurabilirsiniz.

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