

TITLE OF REPORT: Healthy Weight Update

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this paper is to set out both the progress made, and next steps for plans for the Healthy Weight agenda in Gateshead.

Background

2. Obesity is described as one of the most serious public health challenges in the 21st Century. It is a complex problem caused by many factors including environmental, biological, social cultural and economic factors, in addition to individual behaviour.
3. Almost three in four adults in the UK will be overweight or obese by 2035 and over the next twenty years rising levels of obesity could lead to an additional 4.62 million cases of type 2 diabetes, 1.63 million cases of coronary heart disease and 670,000 new cases of cancer.
4. In terms of mental health, obesity is closely linked to depression, anxiety disorders, neurodegenerative diseases and sleep disorders.
5. A healthy weight needs assessment was produced by public health and key areas were presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board in July 2018. The paper identified both opportunities and recommendations.
6. The healthy weight profile for Gateshead highlights:
 - 69.0% of adults in Gateshead have excess weight (overweight and obese). This is significantly worse than the England and regional average. Almost two in every three adults in Gateshead has excess weight and around one in four are obese.
 - In Gateshead only 63.2% of adults report that they undertake the recommended 150+ minutes of physical activity each week.
 - Local data shows that 20% of women have a BMI of over 30 (obese) on antenatal booking (the caveat for the data is that not all women attending a booking appointment at Gateshead Health NHS Trust will be Gateshead residents).
 - In Gateshead obesity rates are highest for children from the most deprived areas. Children aged 5 and from the poorest income groups are twice as likely to be obese compared to their most well-off counterparts, and by the age of 11 they are three times as likely.

- Of those children who are obese at preschool age, research suggests that between 26% and 41% will go on to be obese in adulthood.
- Gateshead has the fifth highest rate of fast food outlets per 100 000 population in the North East (160.5 per 100,000) and is above the England value.
- NHS costs attributed to overweight and obesity in Gateshead are estimated to be £68.7 million per annum for 2015.

The Evidence Base

7. The evidence base on effective action to tackle obesity remains weak and skewed towards individual level downstream approaches (trying to manage the consequences of obesity rather than more upstream approaches, which attempts to solve the real problems underpinning obesity).
8. The evidence is very clear that policies aimed solely at individuals will be inadequate and will not be sufficient to reverse this trend. Significant effective action to prevent obesity which takes account of the social, economic, environmental, commercial and political determinants is required. Action should be taken at a population level.
9. Currently there are very few examples around the world of successfully reversing the trend of 'obesity' despite over a decade of intervention. The evidence base suggests that to tackle obesity effectively we need an approach that involves the whole system.
10. A local whole systems approach to obesity is a 'Health in All Policies' approach, which draws on local authorities' strengths, supports their leading priorities, and recognises that they can create their local approaches better and more effectively by engaging with their community and local assets.

Progress

11. The Director of Public Health Annual Report for Gateshead (2018), focused on obesity, highlighting for Gateshead how societal changes over recent decades have exacerbated our risk of obesity. The report recognises the complexity of the issue and that it is important that we move away from the idea that obesity is caused by 'lifestyle choices' and instead recognise that the true causes of obesity are often a result of environmental, social, political and economic pressures.
12. The report challenges a misplaced focus on individuals, which often increases stigma by placing attention on the behavioural decisions of those who are overweight and obese rather than on the context in which decisions are made.
13. A whole systems approach for Gateshead is entirely consistent with the Council's ambition to make Gateshead a place where everyone thrives and is underpinned by the following aspirations:
 - Ensure Gateshead is a place where everyone thrives.
 - In Gateshead everyone is able to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
 - Promote an environment that supports healthy weight and wellbeing as the norm.

- Supporting our communities and families to become healthier and more resilient, which includes addressing the wider determinants of health.
14. Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that the focus of its review in 2018-9 would be obesity across the life course. The review was carried out over a six month period and a final report prepared on behalf of the Committee sets out key findings and suggested recommendations from the evidence base provided by expert speakers. The recommendations supported those identified in the need's assessment and DPH report.
 15. From the needs assessment the following high-level recommendations were outlined as part of a whole system approach for action:
 - Develop a Local Healthy Weight Declaration.
 - Develop a long term and sustainable whole place approach identifying clearly priorities for local delivery.
 - Prioritise work to address health inequalities through proactive work to target groups at greater risk.
 - Ensure an appropriate balance between population-level measures and more targeted interventions and approaches.
 - Design of the built environment to promote walking and active transport
 - Build health into infrastructure through careful investment
 - Seek to reduce exposure to an obesogenic diet by focusing on the availability of energy dense foods and sugar-rich drinks, changes in procurement and innovative changes in advertising and promotion.
 - Encourage robust community led interventions to tackle obesity at a place level.

Whole Systems Work

16. Gateshead was selected as one of the local authorities to test out the whole system guide and set of resources produced by Public Health England to support local authorities implementing a whole systems approach to address obesity. The guide was published in Spring 2019 for local authorities to implement.
17. Gateshead pre-tested the resources adopting a whole system approach to facilitate delivery of co-ordinated actions involving partners across the system. The guide provides a practical 'how to' process, which has enabled Gateshead to start creating its own local whole systems approach, aligned to a 'Health in All Policies' approach.
18. The council has held 3 healthy weight workshops to date from March 2019, with a fourth workshop being held in October 2019.
19. The healthy weight workshops have included partners from the voluntary and community sector, Private Sector, Gateshead/Newcastle CCG, Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust, National Trust, Sport England, Tyne and Wear Sport, The Stroke Association, Public Health England and Northumbria University. Local authority representatives include, school meals, neighbourhood management, commissioning, 0-19 service, planning and transport, leisure, school sports partnership, poverty lead, early years leads to name a few.

20. The workshops have systematically worked through the whole systems guidance, as part of the 6-phase process. The workshop phases include the following stages and the partnership has progressed to stage 3 and 4.

- Phase 1 -Set up
- Phase 2- Building the local picture
- Phase 3 -Mapping the local system
- Phase 4-Action
- Phase 5-Managign the systems network
- Phase 6-Reflect and Refresh

21. In Gateshead we have used the guide to reflect and refresh what we have in place, consider the local drivers, the breadth of existing actions, to extend our stakeholder network and create a systems approach to reflect local needs and context. The next stage of the workshop is to bring stakeholders back together in October to identify areas to intervene in the system to affect change.

22. The Gateshead Healthy Weight Alliance has been formed to guide and oversee the strategic direction of the action plan and priorities identified from the workshops for Gateshead.

Healthy Weight Declaration

23. Gateshead are one of the first areas regionally to express an intention to sign up to the Healthy Weight Declaration, in partnership with Food Active. The declaration is focused on population level interventions which take steps to address the social, environmental, economic and legislative factors that affect people's ability to change their behaviour.

24. The declaration includes 14 standard commitments whereby Local Authorities pledge support to achieve action on improving policy and healthy weight outcomes in relation to specific areas of the council's work and with wider partners.

25. It is proposed that the partnership work of the strategic alliance and healthy weight workshops will be used to prioritise 6 local commitments for the declaration, relevant to local needs and aspirations of Gateshead. Early discussions from the workshops have highlighted areas such as:

- Increasing active travel and improving air quality
- Influencing the council food offer to promote a healthy weight
- Influencing planning and design for a healthy environment.

Further Progress

26. Gateshead was requested to present as part of the member led symposium at UK Congress on Obesity (UKCO) last month in Leeds. This was to share early learning from the collaboration between Gateshead Council, Newcastle University and Fuse. A PHD student based in the Council is looking at the impact of austerity on nutrition in the first 1000 days of life using an embedded researcher approach. The findings of the research will help to inform future work.

27. An application was submitted in early 2019 from partners to apply for trailblazer funding to tackle childhood obesity at a place-based level. Public health, Edberts House and Newcastle Gateshead CCG were the lead partners for the collaboration focusing on a system place-based approach. The bid was unsuccessful but will inform future work.
28. Initial work has started looking at restrictions on advertising and promotion of high salt, sugar and fat food and drink on the local transport system. This builds on the work currently being implemented on the London Transport System.
29. The 0-19 years 'Growing Health Team' (health visitors and school nursing services) provided by Harrogate NHS, has now a dedicated infant feeding and nutrition lead. This provides a key focus for breastfeeding, weaning and nutrition for the crucial early years period and also support the healthy weight agenda for school children.
30. Work with the 'Regional Local Maternity Systems Co-ordinator' following the Obesity in Pregnancy Self-Assessment Tool is focusing action on key areas of improvements for the healthy weight agenda in Gateshead.
31. Newcastle Gateshead CCG and Public Health have established a working group to review current services and approaches to healthy weight being delivered across the system and looking at areas for improvements.
32. Gateshead provided an extensive response on the consultation to end the sale of 'Energy drinks' supporting the ban and on 'calorie labelling for food and drink served outside the home'. We are awaiting a national response on the consultation to inform future policy.
33. Gateshead is supporting the regional daily mile programme, which contributes greatly to achieving the required 30 minutes of school-time activity recommended by the Chief Medical Officers. Approximately 30% of Gateshead schools are engaged with the programme and this has been closely aligned in a partnership approach with the school sport partnership.
34. Work progresses with planning colleagues and in partnership with Newcastle University to improve our understanding of the link between green infrastructure and health and wellbeing at a local level. This work will support the council to develop interventions that can improve health outcomes for residents.
35. Gateshead are part of a national project with Public Health England focused on planning and the food environment, to help inform and support planning teams to have a positive impact on the food environment.
36. Early consultation work has started with the Gateshead Young People's Assembly and Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust. The work is focused on the lived experiences of young people and the impact of the food environment on the food choices linked to health inequalities. The findings will help to shape some of the food environment work happening in Gateshead.

Next steps

37.To report back on the proposed priorities and action plan from the healthy weight whole system workshops and healthy weight alliance group in 6 months time.

38.To continue to collaborate with a range of partners and to focus the next stage on engagement with the community.

39.To report back on progress of the healthy weight declaration in 6 months time.

Recommendations

40.The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to consider and comment on progress made and next steps.

Contact: Alice Wiseman, Director of Public Health (0191) 4332777
alicewiseman@gateshead.gov.uk