

TITLE OF REPORT: Review of Children's Healthy Weight in Gateshead
- Six-month update November 2019

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SUMMARY

Obesity is a major risk to health across the life course in England: 1 in 5 children start school either overweight or obese: the proportion rises to 1 in 3 of primary school leavers. For adults, around 2 in 3 are an unhealthy weight. It is an issue where there are marked and enduring inequalities with the prevalence in children living in the most deprived areas, around twice that in the least deprived.

The Director of Public Health's Annual Report for Gateshead (2018), focused on obesity, highlighting 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.

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.

Background

Following consultation with councillors the Committee agreed its annual work programme for 2018/2019 and that as part of this programme it carried out a review of healthy weight in Gateshead. The review was carried out over a six-month period and the final report and recommendations were presented to the Committee in April 2019. The final report was also presented to Cabinet on 24 April 2019 by Councillor Oliphant.

Update on recommendations

1. The final report sets out ten recommendations which were agreed by the Committee. The following paragraphs outline progress to date against each recommendation.

Recommendation 1: A whole System Approach.

The Council is in an influential position to help lead positive change in how obesity is tackled. A whole system approach to obesity provides the process and methods to do this and demonstrates a genuine 'health and wellbeing in

all policies' approach. Gateshead Council will work with stakeholders and communities to develop an ambition for a healthy weight generation in Gateshead.

Proposed action- The first in a series of whole system healthy weight workshops, utilising tried, and tested material will be starting in March 2019.

2. **Update-** Gateshead was selected as one of the local authorities from March 2019 to pre-test 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. Gateshead feedback comments on the practical application of the guide and a finalised guide was published in Spring 2019 for local authorities and partners to implement.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whole-systems-approach-to-obesity>
3. The Council has led on the delivery of 4 healthy weight workshops to date from March 2019, to November 2019 led by Public Health.
4. The healthy weight workshops have included partners from the voluntary and community sector, Private Sector, Gateshead/Newcastle CCG, Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust, The National Trust, Sport England, Tyne and Wear Sport, The Stroke Association, NHS Harrogate Trust, Cancer Research UK, Public Health England and Northumbria University. Local authority representatives include, school meals, neighbourhood management, commissioning, planning and transport, leisure, school sports partnership, poverty lead, early years leads to name a few.
5. The workshops have systematically worked through the whole systems guidance, as part of the 6-phase process. The workshop includes the following stages and the partnership has progressed to stage 3 and 4.
 - a. Phase 1 -Set up
 - b. Phase 2- Building the local picture
 - c. Phase 3 -Mapping the local system
 - d. Phase 4-Action
 - e. Phase 5-Managing the systems network
 - f. Phase 6-Reflect and Refresh
6. In Gateshead we have used the guide to reflect what we have in place, consider the local drivers, extend our stakeholders, use the tools to identify local needs and wants. The next stage of the workshop in February is to continue to bring stakeholders back together to identify areas to intervene in the system to affect change with short term and longer terms actions identified.

Recommendation 2: Clear Leadership

The Council has the opportunity to be a lead organisation in this whole-system approach. The first step to this will be to develop a vision for a healthy weight generation through the strategic alliance group and engage with key system stakeholders to gain buy-in. This leadership role is crucial in developing a workable whole systems approach.

Proposed Action – Gateshead will have a shared vision and commitment to the Healthy weight agenda, with medium- and short-term actions that work towards the end vision: 20-year vision, 5-year strategy and a 1-year plan.

7. **Update.** An overview and update was provided to Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Board at the October 2019 board meeting. The Board reiterated its support of the vision of a healthy weight for all and has requested bi-annual updates on progress. 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:
 - a. Ensure Gateshead is a place where everyone thrives.
 - b. In Gateshead everyone is able to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
 - c. Promote an environment that supports healthy weight and wellbeing as the norm.
 - d. Supporting our communities and families to become healthier and more resilient, which includes addressing the wider determinants of health
8. As part of the whole systems working group, work is in the early stages but has started to inform the production of the shorter term and longer-term priorities for Gateshead. This will be updated as part of next progress report.

Recommendation 3: Strategic and Operational group.

Creation of a strategic steering group to consider the vision for a healthy weight generation for Gateshead and to decide priorities.

Proposed Action – Workshop events to consult with a wide range of stakeholders to inform delivery and the creation of a 'Healthy Weight strategic Alliance.'

9. **Update.** The Gateshead Healthy Weight Alliance has been formed to guide and oversee the strategic direction of the healthy weight agenda in Gateshead. The strategic group is in its early stages and is in the process of producing a clear plan of priorities. The membership of the Alliance includes the Council, community and voluntary sector, foundation trust and the CCG are represented. Membership will be reviewed as the group and work develops.

Recommendation 4: Health in all policies approach (HiAP)

Promotion of a health and wellbeing in all policies approach to ensure that the Council gives due consideration to the impact of its decisions on obesity.

Proposed Action – Develop a framework for taking this work forward and to support whole systems working.

10. **Update.** Framework yet to be developed by strategic healthy weight alliance group. Health in all policies (HiAP) approach is highlighted in all work with partners e.g. planning, education, health, community neighbourhood teams, in terms of actions and their impact on healthy weight e.g. housing developments.

Recommendation 5: Focus on inequalities

A focus on strategies to address the healthy weight agenda across the social gradient.

Proposed Action – to focus efforts on those facing greatest challenge alongside a focus on high risk groups e.g. learning disabilities, pre-pregnancy, pregnancy, infancy and early childhood are critical periods for interventions to reduce obesity and inequalities.

11. **Update.** Gateshead have been part of the regional work 'A weight off your mind' led by Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust. The work has led to the development of a plan for people with lived experience of mental health conditions and/or learning disabilities to support them maintain a healthy weight. Local action plans and advice and support have been devised and this group continue to meet to review the work
12. 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.
13. Working with the 'Regional Local Maternity Systems Co-ordinator' following the Obesity in Pregnancy Self-Assessment Tool. The plan has identified areas for action pre and postpartum for healthy weight in Gateshead. The Regional Local Maternity Systems Co-ordinator' sits on the Strategic Alliance Group and the actions will form part of the short- and longer-term plans once produced.
14. Work has undertaken by a QE hospital Paediatrician and health visitors to measure BMI in children 2 years old. The pilot has recorded children's weight status and engaged parents with young children and identified the barriers they face in tackling diet and weight issues with their children. This stage of measuring allows early identification of children who may need additional support.

Recommendation 6: Long Term Commitment

The need for long-term strategies spanning several generations and beyond traditional planning cycles. Longer term commitment is needed from all partners in Gateshead and lessons learnt from tackling smoking, is that it

takes longer than 5 years for the impact of public health work to come to fruition.

Proposed Action – The development of a joint: 20- year vision, 5-year strategy and a 1-year plan for Gateshead’s healthy weight ambitions.

15. **Update.** The development of short term and long-term plans have not been full completed and part of the roles of the operational and strategic alliance group. An update will be provided on the plans at the next progress update.

Recommendation 7: Healthy Weight Declaration

To establish a healthy weight declaration for Gateshead working with partners to understand the contribution of each partner and ensure commitment to action through a multi-agency partnership.

Proposed Action – Local declaration developed for Gateshead, in recognising the need to implement and promote policies which promote healthy weight.

16. **Update.** Gateshead are one of the first areas regionally 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.

17. 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. The Health and Wellbeing Board have received a paper outlining the healthy weight declaration commitments and have supported the commitment in principle. The next stage is to consult on the 6 local priorities with members, employees, partners and the community by January 2020.

18. The partnership work of the strategic alliance and healthy weight workshops are being used to prioritise 6 local commitments for the declaration, relevant to local needs and aspirations of Gateshead. Consultation with wider council staff will be carried out in January on the portal. Early discussions from the workshops have highlighted areas such as:
- a. Increasing active travel and improving air quality
 - b. Influencing the council food offer to promote a healthy weight
 - c. Influencing planning and design for a healthy environment.
 - d. Early intervention pre-conception for a healthy weight.

Recommendation 8: Community led interventions

Tackling obesity as part of a placed-based, approach driven by the community. Work with and enhance the assets that already exist within in the community so that interventions to tackle obesity are co-produced as part of a placed-based approach.

Proposed Action – Build on the 'Fit for the Future' work which is a good example of a community centred approach to address health inequalities and to promote healthy weight to children and families.

19. **Update.** 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.
20. Gateshead was requested to present as part of the member led symposium at UK Congress on Obesity (UKCO) in September 2019 Leeds. This was to share early learning from the collaboration between Gateshead Council, Newcastle University and Fuse. To inform our strategic approach we are working in collaboration with Newcastle University and an embedded researcher, who is focussing on austerity and nutrition. We are exploring the social determinants of food insecurity and its nutritional impact on women and their young children. The work is at an early stage but will help us to understand the impact of austerity on our community and especially vulnerable population groups in Gateshead.

Recommendation 9: Tackling food advertising/promotion (HFSS)

Support advocacy for policy changes at a national level by lobbying efforts to prevent and reduce obesity to encourage national policymakers to devise effective public health policy interventions across the system e.g. advertising and promotions.

Proposed Action – Lobbying for local government to be given more powers to impose restrictions to meet local priorities.

21. **Update.** 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. Gateshead public health are part of the regional sub group of public health leads taking this forward.
22. 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.

Recommendation 10:

Achieving a balance between population level measures and more targeted interventions.

Proposed Action – Gateshead is committed to a population approach which includes a focus on the design of the built environment to promote walking and active transport, building health into infrastructure through careful investment and seeking to reduce exposure to the obesogenic diet by focusing on energy density of foods and sugar-rich drinks. Gateshead is also committed to develop approaches to help

those who are already obese or considered to be at high risk of becoming obese, with a clear focus on children and young people.

23. **Update.** Since September 2019, Gateshead have been part of a national project with Public Health England focusing on Planning and the food environment as part of a population approach. The aim is to help inform and support Planning teams to have a positive impact on the food environment.
24. Gateshead is supporting the regional daily mile programme, which is a targeted approach 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 and their health and wellbeing offer to schools.
25. Work is progressing 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 in terms of green infrastructure. This work is due to be completed in February 2020.
26. Workplace interventions for staff have included working with the catering lead and vending providers to implement healthier alternatives. This work has resulted in only sugar free drinks being available in all council facilities. Work is ongoing with the vending provide in terms of healthier snacks based on the NHS pilot work in Leeds being available.

Next steps

1. The committee is asked to note and comment on the update of the healthy weight review 6 monthly update.
2. The committee is asked to receive a further update in six month's time when the recommendations will have been progressed further.

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