

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH
LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING **2015-16**

PREVENTING CHILDHOOD OBESITY



SHAPING THE ENVIRONMENT

Promote Physical Activity

Promote Healthy Eating



Healthy streets



Public transport



Cyclability



Road design



Green space

Community
Type, Location and
Access to healthy food



SUPPORTING HEALTHY CULTURE

Leadership • Healthy schools • Wider workforce
Healthy workplaces • Public sector premises

Organisation
Home, school, work and
other settings

Consumers
Availability, cost and promotion
of healthy options

PROMPTING INDIVIDUALS TO CHANGE

Health Campaigns
NHS Health Checks • Self-support

Information
Media & advertising

INTRODUCTION

BY THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH



Obesity is a threat to the health of residents and the continued affordability of health and social care services.

This generation of children and young people is more obese than any previous one and yet we must tackle the problem with limited and reducing resources.

Nonetheless, the Havering Health and Wellbeing Board has agreed a strategy consistent with the best available local and national evidence.

The recently published “Childhood Obesity: A plan for action” outlines the current Government’s approach to tackling obesity, by encouraging voluntary action from industry and emphasising the role of schools in supporting children to be active and eat healthily.

Our local strategy sets out how we can best complement and build on this by marshalling the total assets available to the local partnership to: -

- **shape the local environment to promote healthy eating and physical activity**
- **support a culture that presents healthy choices as the norm**
- **prompt individuals and their families to eat well and be more active**

... thereby reducing the risk that our children and young people become obese in the first place.

My annual report highlights some examples of the good work that is already happening across the borough relevant to these three themes and suggests further priorities for action.

I’d encourage everyone who is interested in the wellbeing of local children to read the full strategy and consider what you can do as a parent, grandparent, neighbour, teacher, health or social worker, market trader, town planner etc. to make Havering a healthier borough in which to grow up in.

Obesity is the public health challenge for the 21st century. It may well take a generation of sustained action before we see significant progress. But the sooner we start, the sooner our children and grandchildren will be protected.

Sue Milner, DPH

Acknowledgements

The Director of Public Health in every Local Authority is required to produce an independent annual report on the health of the population. My report this year focuses on childhood obesity.

I would like to thank Mark Ansell (Consultant in Public Health) and Claire Alp (Senior Public Health Specialist) for their help and support in producing this year’s report.

What is obesity and why is it important?

What is obesity?

Obesity is the excessive accumulation of fat that may impair health.

Why is obesity important?

Obese and overweight children are more likely to have physical and mental health problems and, as a result, have a third more sick days than those with a healthy body weight.

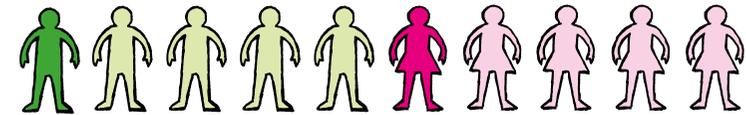
Obese children are between 2 and 10 times more likely to be obese in adulthood.

Obese adults are more likely to die prematurely, develop limiting long term illness and experience mental illness.

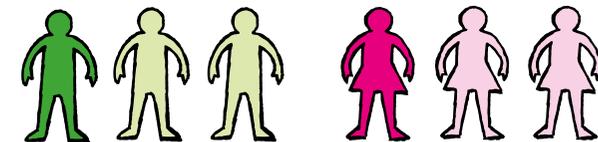
Nearly one tenth of the total burden of disease in the UK is due to excess weight.

The total cost to the UK economy is estimated to be £27bn per year.

How many of our children are obese?



1 in 5 children in Reception Year (age 4-5) are overweight or obese.



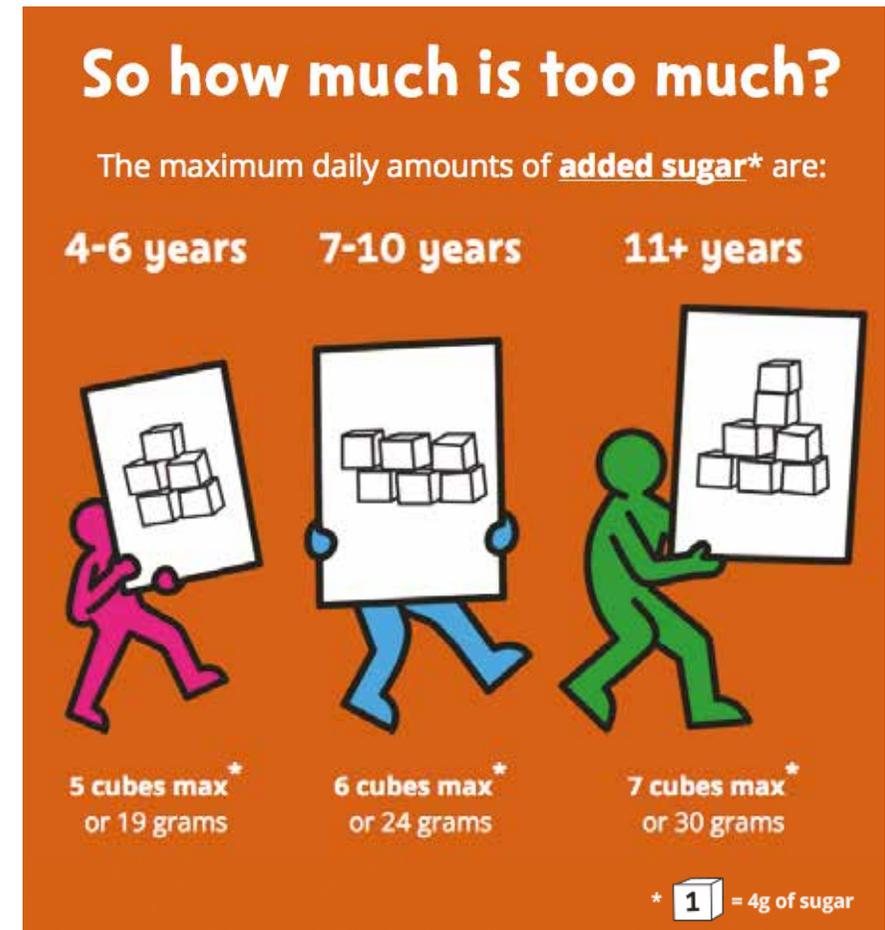
1 in 3 children in Year 6 (age 10 - 11) are overweight or obese.

- Levels of obesity double over the primary school period.
- Obesity is an issue everywhere and for everyone but some children are at greater risk including children with a limiting illness, children with a learning disability and children living in disadvantaged communities.

What is obesity and why is it important?

Why do so many of us and our children struggle to maintain a healthy weight?

- Obesity occurs when energy intake from food and drink is greater than energy expenditure through the body's metabolism and physical activity over a prolonged period, resulting in the gradual accumulation of excess body fat.
- Humans evolved in a world of relative food scarcity and hard physical work but now live in a world where energy-dense food and labour-saving technologies abound. As a result, the majority of us are now predisposed to gaining weight.
- Children who are active and eat well are more likely to maintain a healthy body weight and will benefit in many other ways besides.
- Under-fives should be active for three hours, spread throughout the day and 5–18 year olds should get at least 60 minutes activity per day, which should be a mix of moderate intensity (e.g. walking to school) and vigorous intensity aerobic activity (e.g. playing football). But only 1 in 10 children aged 2-4 and 1 in 5 children aged 5-15 years get the recommended level of activity.
- To achieve balance, free or added sugars should make up no more than 5% of energy intake, which equates to the maximum daily amounts in the picture.

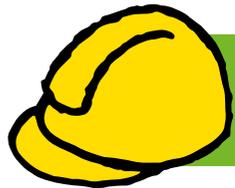


But 96% of children consume too much free sugar – the average young person consumes three times the recommended amount.

What is obesity and why is it important?

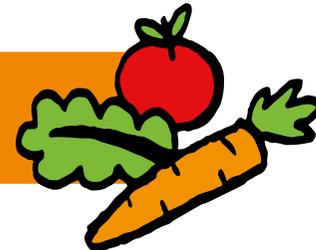
What can we do to reduce levels of obesity?

It's not enough to tell people to live more healthily and hope for the best.
We need to:-



shape the local environment to promote healthy eating and physical activity

support a culture that presents healthy choices as the norm

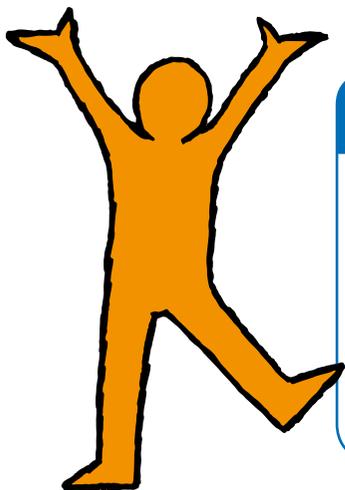


prompt individuals and their families to eat well and be more active

It makes sense to focus our efforts on our children because:-

- weight is difficult to lose once gained hence prevention in childhood is the best approach to tackling obesity across the population as a whole
- we take the attitudes and behaviours established in childhood into later life
- many of the interventions to prevent childhood obesity will benefit the community as whole

There is no single 'silver bullet' - but there are numerous opportunities to intervene.



Shaping the environment to lower the risk of obesity...

...by increasing levels of physical activity

Creating 'healthy streets'

For many young people, walking, whether for pleasure or travel purposes, represents the most likely sustainable form of physical activity. All of us, irrespective of age, are more likely to walk when commonly used amenities are relatively close by and the street scene is 'inviting'. The Council can therefore foster healthier streets by: -

- Undertaking structural improvements to the street scene, as in Hornchurch Town Centre
- Maintaining the current high standards of street cleaning and maintenance
- Using spatial planning to ensure new housing is well served by public transport and has a range of high quality amenities in walking distance
- Encouraging new enterprises to locate to local centres etc

Improving road design and the public transport offer

Actual and/or perceived safety influences decisions about whether individuals choose to walk or cycle or whether parents allow their children to do so. Good road design, including the use of 20mph limits in priority areas, coupled with cycle skills training, such as the Bikeability scheme offered in Havering schools, reduce the likelihood of accidents and their severity should they occur.



As part of an Accident Reduction Programme, a 20mph restriction zone and traffic calming measures have recently been put in place outside Brookside Infant and Junior Schools on Dagnam Park Drive.

A quarter of Londoners get their recommended daily physical activity as part of a longer commute by public transport. But Havering has the lowest percentage of commuting by public transport of any London borough. The Council and Transport for London have a number of priorities for improving public transport and a shift in the way parents choose to travel could normalise a more active choice of travel for their children too.

Shaping the environment to lower the risk of obesity...



Maintaining and improving access to high quality green space

Parks and green spaces provide safe and attractive spaces in which to walk, cycle and play. Ten of Havering's parks also contain outdoor gyms which are free to use. Access to good quality green space is associated with a range of positive health outcomes including lower levels of overweight and obesity. We need to preserve and further improve the large number of parks and open spaces that make Havering one of the greenest boroughs in the capital.



Providing access to high quality and affordable leisure services offer

Havering has excellent leisure services. Work has commenced on development of a new centre in Romford to include a swimming pool and an ice rink. The recent procurement exercise secured these services for the foreseeable future and generated additional benefits for the wider community.

Shaping the environment to lower the risk of obesity...

...by increasing levels of healthy eating

Central to tackling obesity is creating an environment where it is normal, easy and enjoyable to eat healthily.

To this end, action is needed to: -

- promote healthy choices to the consumer over unhealthy ones by managing the availability, cost and placement of healthy options at the point of sale
- effectively market healthy choices over unhealthy ones
- shape the type and location of food outlets within local communities

The major levers are within the gift of central government but local partners, such as school catering services, can amplify and complement national action in a variety of ways.



SugarSmart app

The availability, cost and promotion or placement of foods to the consumer

Public Health England (PHE) has stated that the evidence supports the use of mandatory financial levers to tackle the over consumption of free sugars. Subsequently, the then chancellor, George Osborne, announced a 'sugar tax' on soft drinks. This was confirmed in the recent Government plan, and a consultation on the intended approach is now underway. The plan also includes a sugar reduction programme that aims for industry to voluntarily reduce the sugar content of products children eat most by 20 per cent by 2020. Our strategy commits to looking at how we can promote and support these measures locally.

As a result of the 2016 **Change4Life SugarSmart** campaign, Havering Catering Services has sourced reduced sugar alternatives to popular items sold in secondary school canteens. By reformulating recipes and changing portion sizes, suppliers have reduced the sugar content by 30per cent in some products.

Despite this, single portions still contain around a quarter of the recommended daily amount of added sugar, so these efforts will be coupled with continued work to raise awareness and promote behaviour change. To this end, the catering team is bringing the **SugarSmart app** to life by displaying sugar cubes next to products, and encouraging pupils to use the app when purchasing other foods outside of school.

Shaping the environment to lower the risk of obesity...



Limiting fast-food outlets

Food businesses are an essential part of a vibrant, healthy and prosperous high street. However, a balance needs to be struck between commerce and health. Too many fast food outlets selling cheap, energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods, served in larger portion sizes are detrimental to the health of local communities. Analysis by PHE demonstrates that Havering has a relatively high concentration of fast food restaurants. PHE recommends that authorities restrict planning permission for new takeaways to protect sensitive areas or population groups e.g. within walking distance of schools.

Given that Havering already has a high number of fast food outlets, such an approach would need to be coupled with action on the part of schools to restrict pupils to school premises at lunchtime and provide pupils with the knowledge and motivation to make healthy choices so that they 'vote with their feet'.

More positively, the Council should actively seek to attract food outlets offering healthier options e.g. as part of the ongoing regeneration of Romford Town Centre & Market.

At St Edward's CE Primary School, as part of their Healthy Schools London silver award, the School Council surveyed the food on offer on their routes to school. They took photos of healthy and unhealthy options, then presented their findings in an assembly.

Supporting a culture that makes healthy choices easier

To complement changes to the physical environment, we must work to change attitudes such that the healthy choice is viewed as the norm by local residents.



Havering Adult College is working with the Public Health team to offer a new family healthy lifestyle course that will utilise and promote Change4Life branding and resources, thus helping to increase local recognition of the national campaign.

Supporting national health improvement campaigns

Effective campaigns have the aim of changing social norms such that the healthy choice becomes the usual choice for the majority. National bodies, primarily PHE, have developed a number of increasingly sophisticated and successful campaigns. Local agencies can amplify these messages and use them to promote local resources.

Implementing the 'making every contact count' approach

The Council and NHS should further amplify healthy living messages by implementing the 'making every contact count' approach in Havering whereby every contact between staff and resident is seen as an opportunity to promote health and wellbeing. MECC is equally applicable to council services e.g. social services or housing as it is the NHS. It would also complement the Health Champions model already being implemented locally under the 'My Health Matters' banner whereby local residents are recruited and trained to prompt family members, neighbours, work colleagues and clients to consider opportunities to make healthier choices.

The new suite of MECC resources launched by Health Education England includes training on influencing behaviour change and initiating difficult conversations about health and wellbeing, plus training for Health Visitors and School Nurses which enables them to identify weight issues in children early on.

Supporting a culture that makes healthy choices easier

Supporting the community and voluntary sector

Recognising and fostering the contribution of the community and voluntary sector to health and wellbeing is essential. Most obviously, supporting the contribution made by volunteers working within third sector organisations to provide a huge range of sports and active leisure opportunities for children in the borough.

This can be done at the macro level e.g. on the Local Plan which will shape housing development in the borough for the foreseeable future or the service specification for the leisure services procurement or at the micro level by teams or individual officers e.g. to ensure people are directed to the stairs rather than lifts and encounter fruit rather than confectionary when waiting to pay by the checkout.



Havering Council's Health and Sports Development team supports local clubs to offer opportunities for young people to get involved in sport. Coaches from the clubs run holiday programme activities, and are ideally placed to signpost participants to future sessions at the club's main base or at satellite clubs in local schools.

The annual Havering Sports Council Awards, supported by the Council, recognise and celebrate the huge contribution these clubs, coaches and volunteers make in inspiring and supporting Havering residents to be active.

An HIA of plans to re-procure the leisure service contract identified the opportunity to give the new provider a greater role in promoting and sustaining residents' participation in physical activities, as the capacity of the council to do so reduces as a result of budget cuts.

Potential providers were required to submit a Sports Development Plan and Community Health and Wellbeing Development Plan. Targets within these aim to ensure that all members of the community have the opportunity to use the facilities, through direct provision and outreach.

Integrating Health Impact Assessment into decision making

Partners also need to be aware of the risk of inadvertently undermining efforts to support healthy culture within the borough. One way of doing so is to integrate health impact assessment (HIA) into decision making. HIA is a process whereby significant decisions are assessed to identify potential health impacts so that any benefits can be maximised and harms mitigated.



Supporting a culture that makes healthy choices easier

Promoting a healthy culture in schools

Schools offer a unique opportunity to establish healthy attitudes and behaviours. Schools already receive a PE and Sport Premium from the Government and this will be doubled as a result of the introduction of the 'sugar tax'. A number of different facets of school life can be brought together to establish a healthy culture: -

- The school PE curriculum and extra-curricular sport opportunities help to ensure that children are active for significant periods and develop the knowledge and attitudes that underpin an active life in adulthood. Government suggests schools should deliver at least 30 minutes of physical activity every day through active breaktimes, PE, extra-curricular clubs and active lessons.



The Havering Sports Collective supports schools to deliver high quality physical education and activity. In addition to curriculum development, the Collective has supported primary schools to run Change4Life Sports Clubs which focus on encouraging less active children to become more active and provide 'Champion' roles for older children.

- The recent integration of cooking and nutrition into the national curriculum has been supported locally through delivery of training for primary school non-specialist food teachers.

- Havering Catering Service's school meal menus follow the Government food-based standards thereby ensuring that children can achieve dietary recommendations. Further work is needed to encourage greater uptake and help to ensure children consume the fruit and vegetables that are served.
- The Council's Smarter Travel team supports schools to develop school travel plans and achieve Transport for London STARS accreditation. Increasing active travel increases levels of physical activity for children and parents and reduces congestion around schools.
- The National Child Measurement Programme, carried out by our School Nursing Service, is an opportunity to raise awareness and prompt action by parents.
- The Healthy Schools London programme provides a framework enabling schools to review their contribution to the health of their pupils and how it can be improved. Committing to this programme helps school to demonstrate their commitment to the Ofsted requirement for promoting and supporting pupils' knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy. Sixty three of Havering's 80 schools have registered for this programme and we will continue to encourage them to progress through the awards. We hope the programme will take on even more meaning and value when the Government's plans for a new healthy rating scheme for primary schools is introduced in September 2017.

Supporting a culture that makes healthy choices easier

- The views of peers can be particularly important to children and young people and we should consider how we involve young people in improving their own health. Change4Life Champions in primary schools lead activities for younger children and the Havering Sports Collective has recently begun offering the Young Health Champions programme in secondary schools.

At Scargill Infant School, food grown by children in the school garden is served in the canteen. Teachers, catering staff, midday supervisors and children in the role of “mini middays” have worked together to successfully increase the amount of vegetables eaten at lunchtimes. This project earned the school their Healthy Schools London gold award and they gave a presentation to other schools at the annual pan-London celebration event.



Promoting a healthy culture in early years settings

A number of opportunities are also arising to promote health in the early years:

- The new government plan commits to relaunching Early Years Voluntary Guidelines for food and drink. There will be a national campaign in early 2017 campaign to raise awareness of these amongst EY practitioners and parents.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage framework will be updated to make specific reference to the UK Chief Medical Officer’s guidelines for physical activity.
- Plans are also underway at a pan-London level to develop a Healthy Early Years London programme, and once further details are available we will consider how we can promote and support this locally.

Prompting individuals to eat well and be more active

Giving children the best start in life

A range of services are provided to assist parents to give their child the best start in life. Some such as maternity services and health visiting are available to everyone. Others, such as children's centres or free child care, are focused on disadvantaged and / or vulnerable families. All should be the source of accurate bespoke advice to parents at this crucial time in their child's development.

- Midwives, health visitors and children's centre staff have a crucial role in identifying at risk children and offering effective support to their families.
- Maternal nutrition around the time of conception and during pregnancy can affect the physiology of the unborn child and increase the risk of childhood obesity.
- Pregnant women are advised that they only need consume 10 per cent more energy than average and then only in the last trimester of their pregnancy – and definitely not to 'eat for two'.
- Breastfed babies are less likely to become obese; but a quarter of babies born in Havering are not breastfed at all, and 6 out of 10 are bottle fed by 6-8 weeks.
- Delaying weaning until at least six months also reduces the likelihood of obesity.
- Providing selected parents with the knowledge and skills necessary to cook healthily may also help.
- In "Childhood Obesity: A Plan for Action", the Government recommits to the Healthy Start scheme which provides families on low incomes with vouchers for fruit, vegetables, milk and vitamins.



Voluntary sector support for breastfeeding in Havering is very strong. Successful funding applications by the National Childbirth Trust has enabled a group of eleven volunteers to be trained as peer supporters.

The Council's Early Help Service staff have also been trained and accredited as Breastfeeding Supporters.

Together, volunteers and staff provide invaluable support and information for mothers at four Infant Feeding Cafés each week, held at children's centres and other community venues throughout the borough.



We are looking into how we can both encourage more local retailers to accept Healthy Start Vouchers, for example using opportunities presented by the regeneration of Romford Market for traders to accept them, and increase uptake

by eligible residents, by promoting the vouchers across more health and community settings.



Prompting individuals to eat well and be more active

Parents should consider the quality of the food provided by nurseries and childminders and the Council should work with care providers to assist them to identify and comply with appropriate food and nutrient-based standards.

Promoting self help

Health promotion campaigns have progressed beyond a simple call to action to offer on-going encouragement to the individual to initiate and maintain healthier behaviours in the form of smart phone apps. A bewildering number are available, many of them with little evidence base. Local residents are encouraged to use those recommended on the **NHS Choices tools library**.

The Havering Council website provides information to residents on achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

This includes how to check if you are a healthy weight, advice on eating healthily and being active, and where to find support to lose weight.

www.havering.gov.uk/Achievingahealthyweight

Weight management services

Thus far, all of the opportunities discussed have focused on the environment or settings with the potential to the benefit large groups children if not the whole population.

This is very deliberate. In certain circumstances, weight management services may assist an individual to reduce their risk of ill health or disease progression.

The screenshot shows the Havering Council website. The main content area is titled "Achieving a Healthy Weight" and includes the following text:

Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight benefit to our physical and mental health.

Start (exercise, food and drink choices, how much money we have, the weather, our friends, and all sorts of other factors) obviously has much to do with how much we exercise.

Finding the right balance between how much, how often and what we eat, and finding activities we enjoy and can do regularly is important. Find out how you and your family can:

- Check if you're a healthy weight
- Eat more healthily
- Be more active
- Find support to lose weight

Havering's Prevention of Obesity Strategy aims to make it easier for residents to eat healthily and be more active. The approach taken in this strategy is summarised below, and the full Prevention of Obesity Strategy can be found here.

The infographic "Preventing Obesity" and "Shaping the environment" includes the following sections:

- Supporting Health Culture:** Includes "Promoting Physical Activity", "Promoting Healthy Eating", and "Promoting Mental Health".
- Promoting Individuals to Change:** Includes "Promoting Physical Activity", "Promoting Healthy Eating", and "Promoting Mental Health".

Below the infographic, there is a section titled "How do I know if I'm a healthy weight?" which includes a link to "Check your BMI" and a note about children's height and weight measurements.

However, they are not a practical or affordable means of reducing the prevalence of obesity in the population as a whole. Therefore whereas the Council and Clinical Commission Group will need to put in place effective care pathways for children whose obesity is such that it is the cause of significant ill health in childhood; weight management services do not form a significant part of our obesity prevention strategy.