

CHILD HEALTHY WEIGHT- UPDATE

Relevant Board Member(s)	Councillor Jane Palmer
Organisation	London Borough of Hillingdon
Report author	Kevin Byrne, Health Integration and Voluntary Sector Partnerships
Papers with report	Appendix 1: Child Healthy Weight action plan

1. HEADLINE INFORMATION

Summary	The report provides the Board with an update on actions in the Child Healthy Weight Partnership Action Plan.
Contribution to plans and strategies	The report delivers on a key element of the Hillingdon Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the NWL Sustainability and Transformation plan.
Financial Cost	No financial cost arising directly from action plan. Costs for proposed project to promote healthy eating and physical exercise estimated at £6k for initial stage.
Ward(s) affected	All

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Health and Wellbeing Board notes the progress against the earlier plan and comments on proposals for taking forward actions to support children's healthy weight across partners and in the light of the current pandemic.

3. INFORMATION

Supporting information

3.1. The Hillingdon Child Healthy Weight action plan was developed at the request of the Board to map activities that promote child healthy weight and to seek cross-partner support to work together to impact on the large number of children and young people who are overweight or obese. A task and finish group was established to co-ordinate discussions and identify ways in which activity could be developed.

3.2. The action plan as at March 2020 is at Appendix 1. The Covid-19 pandemic has directly impacted on partners' ability to deliver projects as some staff were redeployed and facilities and schools were closed. While several activities were able to recommence over the Summer, the second lockdown from 5th November once again curtailed activity including at sports clubs and leisure centres.

3.3. The pandemic provides an additional incentive for children and families to seek to

achieve a healthy weight. In July 2020, the government published *Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives*. The report acknowledged that there is now “consistent evidence that people who are overweight or living with obesity who contract coronavirus (COVID-19) are more likely to be admitted to hospital, to an intensive care unit and, sadly, to die from COVID-19 compared to those of a healthy body weight status”. It also seems likely that the lockdown period will have impacted on young people and restricted their access to leisure and exercise, for example in terms of school and community sport.

3.4. Actions from the plan and updates are covered below.

National Child Measurement Programme

3.5. National Childhood Measurement Programme (NCMP) data collection for 2019/20 was suspended in March 2020 due to lockdown and schools closing, so the 2019/20 data is based on measurement of around 50% of children rather than the usual over 95%. The process of measuring children at both reception and year six under the NCMP has recommenced as schools have returned.

3.6. Data for 2018/19 showed that 77.5% of children in Reception year were of healthy weight. For Year 6 the figure was 59.3%. The partial data for 2019/20 should be interpreted with caution, but indicates that 76% of children in Reception Year were of healthy weight, as were 61.6% of children in Year 6.

3.7. Data for individual schools across Hillingdon (2018/19) shows that the proportions of children measured as overweight, obese or severely obese ranges from 36.4% to 8.7% in Reception Year, and from 56.7% to 7.7% in Year 6. In 41 out of 54 schools at Year 6, more than one in three children age 10-11 are overweight, obese or severely obese.

3.8. This means that in Hillingdon, we still have broadly one in five children at reception age who are overweight or obese and this increases to two in five at year 6 and this can vary considerably between schools. In addition, it is likely that the situation will have deteriorated over the lockdown period although we do not have the data yet to prove that.

My Choice

3.9. The intervention that follows NCMP is a weight management programme offered to families of children identified as overweight or obese. This was formerly the ‘MEND’ programme (Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, Do It) but the licensing arrangement for MEND has finished and has been replaced by a locally developed weight management programme entitled ‘My Choice’ which went live at the beginning of 2020. This is a free lifestyle and behaviour change 10-12 week programme for children who have been identified through the NCMP. The programme runs with children in key stage 1 (5-8 years) and key stage 2 (8-12 years). The programmes have 168 spaces annually across the borough. There is a waiting list for KS2. In addition, at present schools are taking steps to minimise risks and are reluctant to support extra-curricular activities so My Choice has not been able to run.

Colham Manor ‘SMILE’ project

- 3.10. By February 2020 officers had developed a pilot programme working with schools to promote healthy eating and physical activity in primary schools. Funding for the programme had been agreed by the Leader of the Council. The programme was designed by expert practitioners at Colham Manor primary school in Hillingdon. The idea was to enable children and parents to learn basic cooking skills. In each session, participants would prepare a healthy meal from scratch. They would discuss why the ingredients have been chosen and their cost.
- 3.11. The project process would increase participants' knowledge about foods that are high in sugar, salt and fat, provide information on how unhealthy choices impact on physical health - obesity, diabetes, dental health - and to understand the relationship between food and physical activity. Once the food is ready, participants sit down to eat the food they have prepared for themselves.
- 3.12. Following a pilot session at Colham Manor school, all Primary schools were to be invited to become trained to deliver the project themselves. Participating schools would receive an initial needs assessment and discussion about the project. Colham Manor has considerable previous experience in delivering similar projects and would be able to address any of the commonly perceived barriers that might arise, such as how people are invited to join the project, how staff and volunteers can deliver the project, the space and equipment available. The results of previous projects have shown measurable improvements in diet, wellbeing and levels of physical activity.
- 3.13. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the project was unable to start as planned. Work is continuing to assess whether the project can be run with pupils by themselves, as parents cannot be invited into school premises at this time.

Healthy Start Scheme

- 3.14. The 'Healthy Start' scheme offers vouchers for vitamin supplements, milk and fresh fruit and vegetables to women who are pregnant or have children under 4 and are in receipt of qualifying benefits. Prior to the pandemic the scheme was due to be relaunched in Hillingdon to increase take-up, with training for front-line staff in a range of agencies across the Borough. This has however been postponed until April 2021. The Government has also announced its intention to increase the value of vouchers for food and vegetables from April 2021.

Free School Meals

- 3.15. The offer of food assistance was made to Hillingdon residents for the October half-term break, where they are currently eligible for free school meals.
- 3.16. Circa 6,700 children benefitted from the Hillingdon offer. An e-voucher for a major supermarket was issued for each child in eligible households (£15 for the week, per child).
- 3.17. It has been announced recently that Hillingdon along with many other councils (County and Unitary) will receive grant funding to administer a Covid-19 Winter Grant Scheme until end of March 2021 to mainly help families who need food assistance, help

pay utility bills and to address other forms of financial hardship they are experiencing. The details of how this scheme will work are to be finalised but will need to be in place for December.

Next Steps

3.18. The Child Health Weight Action Plan has largely been stalled by the Covid –19 crisis and services that promote physical activity and healthy eating, especially through schools, have at best been able to offer a skeleton service, through on-line and virtual contacts. The commitment to services remains but future roll out will need to depend on assessment of risk and be delivered in accordance with guidelines on social distancing and lockdown.

3.19. The 0-19 contract, along with other key public health contracts is currently under review and in the process of being re-tendered. The following key elements relevant to promoting healthy weight in children are potentially part of this process:

- The National Child Measurement Programme
- My Choice programme
- Children’s and Early Years Centres programme
- Child Healthy weight programme with Schools -the “SMILE” project
- Healthy Start programme

The opportunities to join up services, to think innovatively about new ways of delivery, perhaps centred on the family and based more on outcomes will be explored fully as part of this process.

3.20. In addition, the task and finish group will reconvene, to hear from partners as to how the actions contained in the plan can be taken forward, safely under new guidelines.

Financial Implications

The ‘SMILE’ project has previously been agreed by the Leader of the Council. The initial pilot programme is anticipated to cost approximately £5.8k. Should the pilot be successful, it is then proposed to commission Colham Manor School to roll out the programme to 6 schools. This would come at a total cost of approximately £16.2k.

4. EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendation?

The purpose of the Child Healthy Weight Plan is to reduce the levels of obesity and overweight children in Hillingdon.

Policy Overview Committee comments

None at this stage.

5. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Hillingdon Council Corporate Finance comments

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial implications above, noting that there are no direct financial costs incurred from this report, with further costs anticipated coming from future projects.

Hillingdon Council Legal comments

The Borough Solicitor has confirmed that there are no specific legal issues arising from this report.