

**FOOD  
ACTIVE**

LOCAL AUTHORITY  
DECLARATION ON

**healthy  
weight**

**FOOD ACTIVE  
LOCAL AUTHORITY DECLARATION  
ON HEALTHY WEIGHT  
SUPPORT PACK**

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**SECOND EDITION (UPDATED)  
SUMMER 2020**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Why consider a Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight?

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**Unhealthy weight is a significant public health issue which can have a significant impact on our physical, psychological and emotional health and wellbeing. Obesity can reduce life expectancy on average by three years, with severe obesity shown to shorten lives by eight-10 years. It can increase the risk of poor health and hospital stays, and individuals affected are less likely to be in employment.**

Obesity is a complex problem. Factors that significantly influence obesity include genetics, behaviour, culture and the environment. The environment in which we live is considered to be obesogenic; unhealthy food and drink choices are readily available and affordable, and there are insufficient opportunities for physical activity, leading to sedentary lifestyles which do not support a healthy weight.

Yet, despite the widespread recognition of the health, social and economic costs of unhealthy weight and efforts to promote healthier lifestyles, unhealthy weight persists with data from 2020 showing that 61.3% of adults in England are classed as overweight or obese.

In recent years however, as the government has returned responsibility for public health to local authorities, this has offered a unique opportunity to consider the wider social determinants of health and population measures which can have a significant impact on the well-being of local communities.

Local political leadership, public engagement and cross-system working with departments such as housing, economic and environmental regeneration, planning, education, transport, and children and young people's services can present real opportunities to take an innovative approach to addressing unhealthy weight.

The aim of the Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight (hereafter HWD) is to achieve a local authority commitment to promote healthy weight and improve the health and well-being of the local population; and to recognise and support local authorities to exercise their responsibility in developing and implementing policies which promote healthy weight.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### How this support pack can help you

**This pack has been designed to provide local authorities with a step-by-step guide to adopting the HWD. We recognise that not all councils are the same, some may be unitary, some may be upper-tier and others may be district. In addition, councils may not all have the same procedures, hence there will be variations in how the HWD is adopted. There are, however, significant and helpful examples of learning that have been collated and can be applied across any given local authority.**

Within this pack we have included a pathway for the adoption process, suggestions for local priorities, along with a number of case studies which provide experiences from the perspective of colleagues who have driven the HWD from within local government. You will also find links to the evidence base behind the 16 commitments included in the HWD, FAQs, a template press release and sources of additional information prepared by Food Active to share best practice, and to support adoption and monitoring of the HWD.

This document is a second updated edition of the original support pack developed by Food Active. The document has been revised to take into account greater shared learning, as a response to further commissioning and support for the HWD beyond the North West and as part of a review and re-refresh of the HWD commitments.

Regions including Yorkshire and Humber, the South West, and a number of local authorities in the North East of England are now taking this work forward. The shared learning and thus updates to the support pack are part of an iterative process, further versions will be produced as more authorities sign up and support Food Active's HWD.



**Above:** Chief Executive of Kirklees Council, Jacqui Gedman, supports Kirklees HWD, March 2019

## Introduction from the Lead Director of Food Active; Matthew Ashton, Director of Public Health, Liverpool City Council

When Food Active first devised the HWD we consulted extensively with a range of key informers.

In August 2014 we held a very well attended consultation event in Manchester drawing on the example of Action on Smoking and Health’s Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control as a starting point to consider local authority approaches to addressing healthy weight. We then held workshops through the summer of 2015 with four authorities to discuss the feasibility of adopting a Declaration on Healthy Weight.

Blackpool Council were the first to adopt the HWD in January 2016, with over 20 authorities following suit in the subsequent years. The timeline and process to adopt the HWD is described in this Support Pack, with practical examples and learning - with each local authority (and partner) that takes similar action our learning grows and we are able to share experiences.

Subsequently, I am delighted to be able to introduce the revised HWD commitments, recently launched following consultation with our Local Authority colleagues. In addition, the ‘Whole Systems Approach to Obesity and HWD: a joint narrative’ co-produced by Public Health England and Food Active, outlines how the HWD and Whole Systems Approach to Obesity can work in synergy

There is no single or correct path as you will see, and different authorities will determine their approach according to their circumstances and settings. Unitary and metropolitan authorities are likely to be very different from two-tier councils for example, as urban may be from rural.

The key unifying feature is the local leadership shown and the desire for councils to support their local communities in developing and delivering policies to support healthier environments.

As you progress from planning and adoption to driving action and monitoring impact you will come across challenges and opportunities – some expected but some may come as a surprise. Hearing about your experience helps us to share learning across the network, to co-develop support materials and to feed into future updates of the HWD. So please do keep us in the loop.

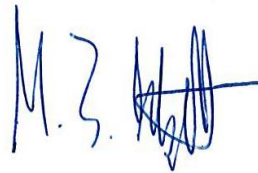



## Introduction to Food Active from Matthew Philpott; Executive Director, Health Equalities Group

Food Active is a healthy weight programme delivered by the Health Equalities Group, and commissioned by local authority public health teams, NHS organisations, and Public Health England teams at both regional and national level.

Set up in 2013 by the North West Directors of Public Health, the 'North West Obesity Task Force' was officially launched as Food Active in 2014. Delivered by public health charity, Health Equalities Group, the programme focusses on advocacy, targeted interventions, research and strategic partnerships to drive forward policy calls. Food Active supports local authorities across the region both on an individual level but also in taking a collaborative approach to promoting healthy weight

Interest in adopting Food Active's Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight has grown exponentially since 2017, and we are now commissioned by many public health teams from outside the North West of England, as local leadership is increasingly recognised as playing a key role in developing healthier places and spaces.



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## HISTORY OF FOOD ACTIVE

**Food Active was established in 2013 following the launch of the government white paper ‘Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives’, in response to high levels of unhealthy weight in the North West. Originally funded by all North West Directors of Public Health in support of a number of evidence-based interventions, Food Active takes a population-based approach to promoting healthy weight.**

Food Active now works across a much larger footprint, beyond that of the North West and focusses on advocacy, policy change, research and targeted campaigns as core elements of the work programme.

Food Active is also a member of the Obesity Health Alliance; a coalition of over 40 organisations who have joined together to reduce the number of people with obesity.

The coalition focuses on policy-making to tackle the social, economic and cultural factors that contribute to obesity and the inequalities in health as a result ( see appendices or the Obesity Health Alliance website for further information and our joint position statement on obesity [www.obesityhealthalliance.org.uk](http://www.obesityhealthalliance.org.uk)). You can also find out more about Food Active and the work we do at: [www.foodactive.org.uk](http://www.foodactive.org.uk)



*Above: Food Active Launch Event, 2013*

## BACKGROUND TO THE HWD

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**Food Active was originally established to take on a stepped approach in collectively advocating for policy change at a national level in order to accelerate progress in reducing obesity. This does not detract from the importance of continuing to develop and share good practise to facilitate policy change at the local level.**

The HWD presents the opportunity for local government to lead local action in tackling obesity and promoting the health and well-being of communities. It is a statement, individually owned by each adoptive authority. It encapsulates a vision to promote healthy weight to improve the health and well-being of the local population. The HWD is a strategic commitment made across all council departments to reduce unhealthy weight in local communities, protect the health and wellbeing of staff and citizens and to make an economic impact on health and social care and the local economy.

The HWD is based on a similar successful and well-regarded model previously developed in tobacco control by Action on Smoking and Health (the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control). The HWD was developed by Food Active following a lengthy period of engagement and consultation via a Regional Expert Stakeholder Group. Membership of the group included North West Directors of Public Health and public health leads; epidemiologists and public health academics from North West universities; third sector and other food and physical activity partner organisations.

The HWD includes 16 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.

Within the HWD there is also the opportunity for local authorities to add local commitments relevant to their needs and aspirations. These local priorities are usually determined through consultation which may include the Health and Wellbeing Board, CCG etc.

Benefits of adopting the HWD are numerous and include:

- Keeping healthy weight a high priority on local government agendas
- Enabling cross-departmental working & partnerships
- Facilitating system leadership
- Maintaining accountability: Local Authorities exercising their responsibility in promoting healthy weight



Since its launch in August 2015 the HWD continues to gain recognition as a useful tool for local authorities to adopt a systems approach to promoting healthy weight. Increasing numbers of local authorities across England continue to adopt the HWD, with 23 councils having adopted at the time of publication. Ranging from authorities in the North West, Yorkshire & Humber and to the South West of the country, these authorities include unitary, two-tier and district authorities, all with unique experiences of adoption. In addition NHS, Education, Sports, VCS and Private sectors have engaged with their local authority partners in delivering on their healthy weight commitments.

The HWD has also been included as best practice in two case study reports, including Local Government Association ‘Tackling Childhood Obesity’ Report and the ‘Childhood Obesity Plan Chapter 2’.

## HWD Resource Hub

As Food Active is a programme that receives no central funding or grant aid, it is essential that we are able to recover the costs that reflect use of intellectual property and support in adopting the HWD – if we did not do this we simply wouldn’t be able to continue our work. We therefore offer a set of basic, advanced and collective commissioning costs and aligned benefits to assist prospective commissioners in understanding the different ways they can buy into a Local Government Declaration for their own area. Costs are available on request.

The HWD Resource Hub is an online portal which hosts a wide range of supporting resources for those embarking on the HWD. The hub is updated on a regular basis with new resources and case studies: <http://www.foodactive.org.uk/the-healthy-weight-declaration-resource-hub/>



**Above:** Blackpool Council adopting the HWD in 2016 – the first local authority to do so.

## THE CASE FOR ADDRESSING POOR DIET

**Diet-related ill health** in the UK is estimated to lead to approximately 70,000 premature deaths annually, which represents around 12 per cent of the total number of deaths<sup>1</sup>. It is estimated that obesity alone is responsible for more than 30,000 deaths each year<sup>2</sup>. Evidence shows that poor diet has the highest impact on the NHS budget, costing around £6 billion per year, a figure which is greater than alcohol consumption, smoking and physical inactivity<sup>3</sup>.

An unhealthy diet is strongly associated and causally linked with a number of chronic, complex conditions such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, some cancers and type II diabetes.

**The prevalence of unhealthy weight** is concerning; more than one in five children start school with overweight or obesity, and more than a third of children leave primary school with excess weight<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, our future generations are experiencing an unhealthy weight at a younger age and the impact of this, is also experienced for longer. Over two thirds of adults in England are affected by unhealthy weight (67% men and 60% of women)<sup>5</sup>. There is regional variation in levels across the country; levels of excess weight in adults are highest in the North East and the West Midlands with lowest rates in the South East of England<sup>5</sup>.

Obesity and inequality are also inextricably linked, amongst other factors income and social deprivation have an impact on the likelihood of becoming obese. There is a strong relationship between deprivation and childhood obesity, NCMP data shows that obesity prevalence in the most deprived 10% of children is approximately twice that of the least deprived 10%<sup>4</sup>.



*Above: World Obesity Federation Stigma Free Image Bank*

**Poor oral health** also impacts on children and families' wellbeing. It is costly to treat and can be an indicator of wider health and social care issues such as poor nutrition and obesity. In England almost a quarter (24.7%) of 5-year olds have tooth decay<sup>6</sup>. Regional variation indicates that the North West and Yorkshire and Humber experience greater prevalence of tooth decay in children than other parts of the country.

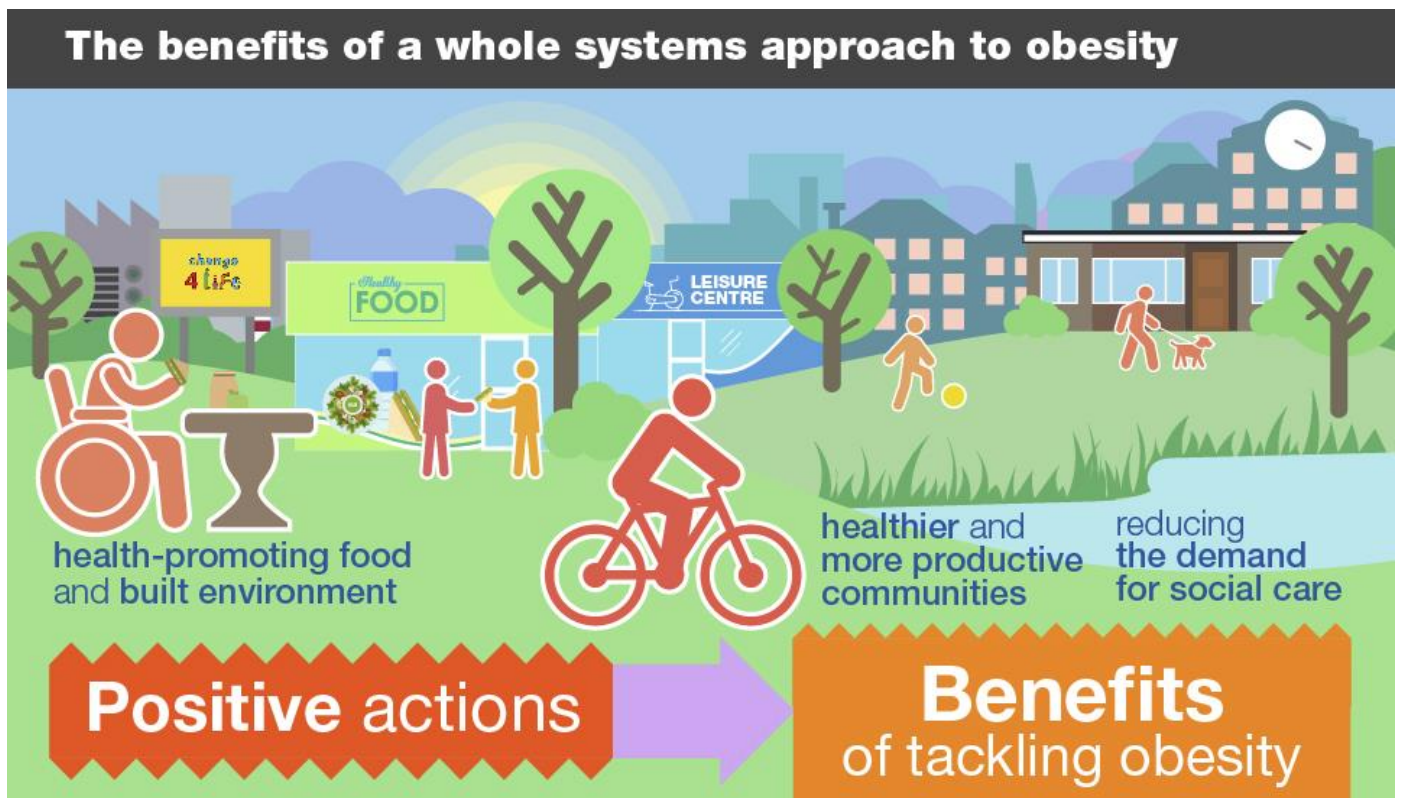
**Dietary patterns in the UK** indicate that many children and adults are aware of the importance of consuming a healthy diet and are concerned about the amount of unhealthy content in food and drink products. However, in contrast, the majority of children and adults do not meet dietary guidance, for example 5-a-day, where in the North West only 51.2% percent of adults meet the 5-a-day recommendations compared with the England average of 54.6%<sup>7</sup>. This demonstrates the need to consider the range of factors beyond an individual's knowledge and attitudes that impact on their dietary behaviour.

**People’s diets are influenced by the food and drink products available in their surrounding environment.** Unhealthy food and drink is easily accessible, affordable and often eaten outside the home. Those living in socially deprived areas often have less access to healthy foods, and increased access to unhealthy foods such as takeaways and fast food outlets.

Children and young people particularly are exposed to a range of food and drink marketing tactics that work in combination to influence demand for their products. Mass media advertising is known to have a direct impact on children and young people’s dietary choices and an indirect effect on their dietary preferences, consumption and behaviour. There are various other marketing communication tactics beyond mass media advertising, including attractive packaging, celebrity endorsement, linkage with fictional characters, sponsorship and sales promotions.

Often companies aim to influence policy makers through stakeholder marketing, typically in the form of corporate social responsibility. This has the purpose of strengthening a company’s brand and enhancing consumer trust. Stakeholder marketing also helps fend off statutory regulation, providing a platform for companies to influence the public health agenda through the development of public-private partnerships.

**Targeted action** is required at all levels to promote healthier eating and to make it easier for people to make better choices. Nationally, the UK government is supporting a number of measures to address obesity and promote healthy weight including a soft drinks industry levy, reformulation to remove 20% of sugar in products, making healthy options available in the public sector, making school food healthier, clearer food labelling, supporting nutrition and physical activity in the early years and more.



*Above: Health Matters: Whole System Approach to Obesity, Public Health England (2019)*



**Local Government has a responsibility;** since the transition of public health from the NHS into local authorities, councils are uniquely positioned to support a system-wide approach to promoting healthy weight. The functions which councils are directly responsible for can have a significant impact on the health of the communities they serve and their employees. However, making progress on improving healthy weight outcomes goes well beyond the remit of public health.

A local authority level commitment, which encompasses planning, public health, environmental health, education, leisure and recreation, has the scope to impact significantly on the residents of a council area. Examples of collaborative working across directorates and with external stakeholders can lead to progress in areas such as; planning to consider recreational space, active travel, the food environment and supplementary planning to address proliferation of takeaways, procurement contracts for provision of food and drink and access to free drinking water across local authority controlled sites. If the causes of obesity are multi-factorial a whole-systems approach is key to improving the health of our populations.

A Local Government Declaration on Healthy Weight not only presents councils with an opportunity to work more collaboratively, it also provides a means of coordinating strategies, policies, programmes and activity related to healthy weight and sets out a vision and commitment to improving outcomes within a locality.

**Whole Systems Approach to Obesity;** as previously stated the causes of obesity are complex and exist in the places where we live, work and play. A growing body of evidence suggests that whole systems approaches (WSA) could help tackle complex problems like obesity. Public Health England (PHE), the Local Government Association (LGA), the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH), Leeds Beckett University and a number of local authorities have worked in partnership to develop a Whole Systems Approach to Obesity<sup>8</sup> to support practitioners at a local level to adapt and work in a way that enables all stakeholders to be engaged in the healthy weight agenda.



*Above: Health Matters: Whole System Approach to Obesity, Public Health England (2019)<sup>2</sup>.*

Although developed at different times, the WSA and HWD programmes can compliment each other in terms of supporting local areas to address obesity and promote healthy weight through a long-term, cross-sector, health in all policies approach. The HWD can either be used by local authorities as a standalone process to address healthy weight, or in tandem with the WSA. A joint Public Health England/Food Active narrative has been developed to describe how the approaches can be used together.

**For a full list of references see appendices.**

## WHAT WILL WE BE SIGNING UP TO?

The original fourteen commitments within the HWD were determined following extensive consultation with the expert stakeholder group and are supported by an evidence base. Food Active in consultation with stakeholders, has facilitated a review of the HWD. This recent review has been undertaken to meet a number of objectives and based on the request of commissioners and stakeholders, actively implementing the HWD. In particular it was felt that new evidence associated with healthy weight should be reflected in the commitments, whilst enabling authorities to consider how the HWD can impact not only on healthy weight outcomes but support converging agendas.

The review has taken into consideration ongoing feedback reflecting on successes, challenges, barriers to adoption, evaluating impact and in addition, to consider whether the HWD commitments were still considered 'fit for purpose'. The outcome of the consultation, current policy context and relevant evidence base are reflected in the new draft of the HWD commitments and updated evidence brief. (See appendices).

The commitments are designed to be bold but achievable and take account of national healthy weight policy. A small number of local authorities may not adopt all the sixteen standard commitments, as for some it may not be within the realm to achieve progress within particular areas. This offers some flexibility when authorities are considering adoption and making the case for support.

As the public health profile, demographics, workforce, plans, strategies and priorities will vary from one local authority to another, the HWD offers the opportunity for councils to make further local commitments to supplement the standard pledges if they wish.

The sixteen standard commitments are detailed below, and example of local commitments are presented overleaf.



## THE 16 COMMITMENTS

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### Strategic/system leadership

1. Implement the Local Authority HWD as part of a long-term, 'systems-wide approach' to obesity;
2. Advocate plans that promote a preventative approach to encouraging a healthier weight with local partners, identified as part of a 'place-based system' (e.g. Integrated Care System);
3. Support action at national level to help local authorities promote healthy weight and reduce health inequalities in our communities (this includes preventing weight stigma and weight bias);
4. Invest in the health literacy of local citizens to make informed healthier choices; ensuring clear and comprehensive healthy eating and physical activity messages are consistent with government guidelines;
5. Local authorities who have completed adoption of the HWD are encouraged to review and strengthen the initial action plans they have developed by consulting Public Health England's, Whole Systems Approach to Obesity, including its tools, techniques and materials;

### Commercial determinants

6. Engage with the local food and drink sector (retailers, manufacturers, caterers, out of home settings) where appropriate to consider responsible retailing such as, offering and promoting healthier food and drink options, and reformulating and reducing the portion sizes of high fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) products;
7. Consider how commercial partnerships with the food and drink industry may impact on the messages communicated around healthy weight to our local communities. Such funding may be offered to support research, discretionary services (such as sport and recreation and tourism events) and town centre promotions;
8. Protect our children from inappropriate marketing by the food and drink industry such as advertising and marketing in close proximity to schools; 'giveaways' and promotions within schools; at events on local authority controlled sites;



## Health Promoting Infrastructures/Environments

9. Consider supplementary guidance for hot food takeaways, specifically in areas around schools, parks and where access to healthier alternatives are limited;
10. Review how strategies, plans and infrastructures for regeneration and town planning positively impact on physical activity, active travel, the food environment and food security (consider an agreed process for local plan development between public health and planning authorities);
11. Where Climate Emergency Declarations are in place, consider how the HWD can support carbon reduction plans and strategies, address land use policy, transport policy, circular economy waste policies, food procurement, air quality etc;

## Organisational Change/Cultural Shift

12. Review contracts and provision at public events, in all public buildings, facilities and 'via' providers to make healthier foods and drinks more available, convenient and affordable and limit access to high-calorie, low-nutrient foods and drinks (this should be applied to public institutions & scrutiny given to any new contracts for food & drink provision, where possible);
13. Increase public access to fresh drinking water on local authority controlled sites; (keeping single use plastics to a minimum) and encouraging re-useable bottle refills;
14. Develop an organisational approach to enable and promote active travel for staff, patients & visitors, whilst providing staff with opportunities to be physically active where possible (e.g. promoting stair use, standing desks, cycle to work/school schemes);
15. Promote the health and well-being of local authority staff by creating a culture and ethos that promotes understanding of healthy weight, supporting staff to eat well and move more;

## Monitoring and Evaluation

16. Monitor the progress of our action plan against the commitments, report on and publish the results annually.

## LOCAL COMMITMENTS

The commitments you choose to include here, if any, will be individual to the needs of your population. Here you can be much more specific about action you wish to take as a council. You may wish to consider here how the HWD links to other local strategies, plans, pledges and ambitions. Supplementary local commitments have included:

### Children and young people

- Improving the quality of packed lunches by developing local agreement with schools to implement guidance in line with school food plans
- Working with schools to achieve ‘walk to school’ recommendations as part of School Food Plans and increase physical activity for children and young people
- Promote the uptake of breastfeeding as providing the best nutrition for babies and reducing childhood obesity
- Support Early Years settings to enable a structured physical activity offer and healthy food policy
- Support the introduction of school food policies including lunchbox policies



### Food Poverty

- Working with community organisations and stakeholders in order to increase effectiveness and approaches to identify, advise, refer and support those at risk of food poverty and adverse nutritional status
- Develop a Food Poverty Network to reduce food poverty and tackle malnutrition in all settings

### Access to Healthy and Sustainable Food

- Develop a Food Charter for the Borough to promote healthy and sustainable food in a local economy
- To achieve Sustainable Food Places status

## Workplace

- Supporting workplaces to increase engagement with staff around physical activity, healthy weight and healthy eating
- Promoting access to healthier food and drinks in canteens and vending machines, and advocating to reduce access to unhealthy food and drinks
- Promote workplace health with local employers and voluntary sector organisations, via rollout of the Workplace Wellbeing Charter.

## Partnership working

- Develop a healthy weight forum to engage a broad spectrum of partners in tackling excess weight across the borough
- Considering weighted/financial support for 'healthier' retail (e.g. greengrocers, co-operatives etc.) in deprived areas
- To be a designated Sugar Smart Town

## Campaigns

- Undertake a social marketing campaign with young adults to promote healthy weight.



**Above:** Year 9 pupils in Salford pledge to 'Give Up Loving Pop'



## Out of home offer

- Work with take away restaurants to make the food they sell healthier.
- Working with commercial outlets within all public sector premises to develop a food and drink policy.

## Physical Activity

- Support the introduction of 'Mile a Day' and 'Couch to 5k' in primary and secondary schools respectively
- Promote Active Travel and use of Rights of Way across the Borough to increase physical activity, for social and employment opportunities and minimise air pollution
- Support 'Street Play' initiatives through exploring the implementation of periodic temporary street closure orders and other innovative sites for play

## THE STEPS TO ADOPTING THE HWD

As a number of local authorities have been through the process of successfully passing the HWD, through sharing their respective learning, we have compiled a series of steps. Although the steps presented below are numbered, they are not necessarily chronological. However, each step is key, and from experience we know that they need to take place at some point in the adoption process.

From building support, to passing the HWD through full council, the process can take between six to twelve months depending on the cycle of council meetings and timings of political events within the calendar. The list of stakeholders engaged at each stage is not definitive, however provides an indication of those officers and members that will help in guiding and supporting the process.

PHASE ONE: Scoping and building support	Stakeholders	Timeframes
<p><b>STEP 1: Help frame the problem.</b> Make sure you provide a clear evidence base using local data.</p> <p>Make a compelling case for why action is required in your area. Use the HWD as a tool to meet local priorities as identified in your health and wellbeing or obesity strategies.</p> <p><i>See Blackpool’s case study on framing the issue.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of Public Health</li> <li>• Public Health Intelligence</li> <li>• Wider Public Health Team</li> <li>• Chair of the Health and Well-being (HWB) Board</li> <li>• CCG</li> </ul>	<p>1 – 3 months from the start date of the process.</p>
<p><b>STEP 2: Work with your elected members.</b> Ensure they identify with the issues and appreciate how the council is able to support their local communities through the HWD. Identify a champion to help the HWD through the democratic process.</p> <p>(Note: step 2 and step 3 might take the format of an event, meeting or series of meetings. You may wish to consider peer support from another local authority officer/member who has successfully adopted the HWD)</p> <p><i>See Devon and Lancashire’s case studies on identifying opportunities and a HWD champion.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Leader</li> <li>• Lead Member for Health and Well-being</li> <li>• Other elected members</li> <li>• LA HWD (HWD) Champion</li> </ul>	<p>Dependent on the cycle of council meetings: 1- 3 months from completion of step 1.</p>

PHASE TWO: Implementation of the HWD	Stakeholders	Timeframes
<p><b>STEP 3: Make sure all sections of the council are involved</b>, not only public health. Everyone has a part to play. Work with departments to diagnose and implement agreement on key gaps.</p> <p>Use your champion to garner support from all local authority departments. Health and wellbeing is cross-cutting. Leisure services, planning, transport and environmental health are often keen to support.</p> <p><i>See Cheshire West and Chester’s case study on how to work across departments and partners</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LA HWD Champion</li> <li>• Chief Officer for each department</li> <li>• DPH</li> <li>• Lead Member for Health and Well-being</li> <li>• Chair of HWB Board</li> <li>• Council Officers</li> </ul>	<p>1 to 3 months in total. There may be overlap between step 2 and step 3.</p>
<p><b>STEP 4: Establishing local priorities</b>, work with the Health and Wellbeing Board and a Healthy Weight Steering Group (if you have one).</p> <p>Refer to your local strategies and identify how the HWD can help you to meet these. It may also be useful to consider working with NHS bodies in determining local priorities. For example, when considering those programmes/services that are jointly commissioned, you may wish to build support from your local CCG.</p> <p><i>See Leeds’s case study on how to determine local commitments</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LA HWD Champion</li> <li>• Health and Well-being board</li> <li>• Healthy Weight Strategy steering group or other relevant group</li> <li>• CCG</li> </ul>	<p>1-2 months.</p>

PHASE THREE: Communications	Stakeholders	Timeframes
<p><b>STEP 5: Sign up and celebrate!</b> Share your commitment with the media and establish ownership. Develop communications plans to maximise internal and external communications around HWD.</p> <p><i>See Blackburn with Darwen case study on effective communications.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LA Comms Team</li> <li>• LA HWD Champion</li> <li>• Council Leader</li> <li>• DPH, Lead Member HWB</li> <li>• Elected Members</li> </ul>	<p>1-2 months.</p>



PHASE FOUR: Keeping the HWD Alive	Stakeholders	Timeframes
<p><b>STEP 6: Make sure you maintain the momentum</b> once the HWD is signed and make people accountable for their actions. Review progress and link across to strategy and implementation plan for initial implementation period e.g. 12 month plan. Continue to identify and work with new stakeholders in developing actions against the commitments from within and outside the council.</p> <p>Consider external stakeholder engagement and support using tools such as the HWD Partner Pledge &amp; Schools HWD.</p> <p><i>See Blackpool's case study on reviewing progress and maintaining engagement from stakeholders.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HWD Stakeholder group</li> <li>• LA Champion</li> <li>• DPH</li> <li>• Chief Officers</li> <li>• Health and Well-being board</li> <li>• CCG</li> <li>• Town Centre Management</li> <li>• Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Police, Fire Service, third sector organisations</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing: regular communications and monitoring will aid in maintaining momentum and reviewing action.</p>

PHASE FIVE: Evaluating impact	Stakeholders	Timeframes
<p><b>STEP 7: Monitor and evaluate the HWD.</b> By developing implementation plans, linking the HWD to healthy weight strategies the HWD Monitoring tool is available to evaluate progress against the commitments and identify future planning.</p> <p>Complete the annual HWD Audit &amp; Validation Tool to demonstrate impact.</p> <p><i>See section on monitoring and evaluation.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HWD Stakeholder group</li> <li>• LA HWD Champion</li> <li>• DPH</li> <li>• Lead Member for HWB</li> <li>• CCG</li> <li>• Health and Well-being board</li> <li>• Council Officers</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing: from the start date of the process in step 1.</p>



## SENIOR LEADERSHIP AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

It is widely accepted that healthy weight is everyone’s responsibility, and requires concerted effort from within the council and externally to bring about change. Support for and endorsement of the HWD from full council is required in agreeing sign off, this can take significant engagement and time. It should be acknowledged that senior public health officers and the wider public health team are the golden thread that enables the facilitation of this process.

Two key areas of learning from the adoption process are the importance of senior leadership and identification of a champion within the Local Authority to raise the issue of healthy weight as a priority and challenge and hold the council to account. This has worked particularly well with the support of a lead member, and it has helped to garner more widespread support across directorates where the Local Authority HWD has been passed through full council and successfully embedded within the councils plans and strategies.

### Internal Stakeholders

Stakeholder engagement is key in raising awareness of the HWD amongst a wide variety of council departments and personnel. These may be departments or teams who may not have previously or traditionally considered healthy weight as an issue that they may have influence over.

Stakeholder engagement, through a range of medium, is key in opening up dialogue to consider new approaches to addressing healthy weight providing officers with the opportunity to contribute to solutions.

Keeping the wide range of stakeholders involved in reviewing progress against the commitments in the HWD and engaging wider recognition and support from outside the council is also important in maintaining momentum.



*Above: The HWD presented at a Yorkshire and Humber public health leads meeting, Summer 2019*

**External stakeholders**

There are a small number of Local Authorities who have engaged with their CCG's to build support for the HWD, for example Blackburn with Darwen CCG have signed up to the Councils HWD. There are also two examples of NHS Trusts, who working with their respective councils, have adopted their own HWDs; Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust.

Food Active is developing a specific NHS HWD, this is initially a pilot for a number of South West authorities, currently underway. It is anticipated, once evaluated, Food Active can share the learning from the pilot with the ambition that the NHS HWD, will be available for use within any locality in early 2021.

We also recognise that many NHS and wider public sector, charity sector and even private sector organisations may wish to support the principles of the Local Authority HWD, and the leadership shown by Authorities in adoption of the HWD.

We have therefore developed a supplementary 'Partner Pledge' for organisations working alongside councils who wish to support commitments within a local HWD, thereby building a groundswell of support across a local area. Co-developed with partner organisations and local authority colleagues, the partner pledge comprises of eight core commitments which can be supplemented by organisational commitments. The partner pledge supports a consultative approach across an organisation and is supplemented by a detailed support pack.

Further to the Partner Pledge, we are in the process of developing a HWD which is specific to school and educational settings, this is being developed in partnerships with the Healthy Schools programme delivered by Leeds City Council and will be launched in late summer 2020.

For further information regarding the 'Partner Pledge', the NHS HWD or the Schools HWD, please contact Food Active.



*Above: Cheshire West and Chester Council's Eat Well Be Active group sign the HWD Partner Pledge, January 2020*

## LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

Presented below are a number of case studies that provide more detailed experiences of how local authorities have navigated the process of adopting the Local Authority HWD on Healthy Weight. From looking through the examples, it is possible to identify the steps referred to in the previous table and some of the key priorities around leadership, engagement and communication. Each case study attempts to present some unique learning in relation to a specific consideration.

The case studies currently reflect the experiences of local authorities predominantly in the North West, with the exception of Devon and Leeds representing the South West and Yorkshire and Humber regions respectively. As the HWD continues to expand in these regions as well as the North East, this document will be updated to provide nationwide experiences.

In addition to the case studies presented below; Food Active has also developed other supporting documents these include; a range of 'Perspective Pieces' which present evidence from local authority departments (other than Public Health) and other public sector organisations (concerned with; activity, walking, cycling, sports, economic regeneration, local transport and fire and rescue services) on good practice in terms of tackling overweight and obesity. The focus of the 'Perspective Pieces Report' is to identify and learn, on an ongoing basis, about plans and actions relating to the promotion of healthy weight, share good practice and address the importance of healthy weight in all policies. For further information on the Perspective Pieces please see the appendices.

Food Active's '[HWD Impact and Influence Case Study Report](#)', provides additional insight into the impact and influence the HWD has had within different councils, each with their own political structures, priorities, barriers and opportunities.

The HWD has also be referenced in the World Cancer Research Fund International's NOURHSING Policy Framework. This is an extensive overview of implemented policy actions from around the world to promote healthy diets and reduce obesity. The HWD was featured as part of the 'H' framework, which represents policies that 'harness the food supply chains and actions across sectors to ensure coherence with health'. For further information see appendices.



*Above: HWD Impact and Influence Report*



## LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

### Blackburn with Darwen: How Communications can Provide Support and Impetus in the Adoption Process and Maintain Momentum

**Blackburn with Darwen Council share how they have used effective communication channels and messages to raise awareness of the HWD and demonstrate their commitment to tackling unhealthy weight.**

#### Background

Blackburn with Darwen's joint Declaration on Healthy Weight was signed in July 2017 by both Council and the CCG, and this was followed by the NHS Trust adopting their own HWD. Work is continually evolving to support the commitments set within it and in 2019 an evaluation was commissioned to share progress and learning. There is acknowledgement that there is much to do, however this presents the opportunity to positively impact on healthy weight outcomes. Progress to meet the commitments requires support from other council departments and CCG colleagues to ensure healthy weight features in all policies and communication.

#### Learning

Since adoption to current date, there have been a number of press releases across both print and social media to highlight the signing off the HWD. Sharing this within media channels of both partners and the 'Eat Well, Move More, Shape Up' Strategy\* enables awareness to be raised about the commitment to tackling unhealthy weight in the borough. Strong leadership from the Council and the CCG and members of the Health and Well-being Board remains the lynchpin to success in the coming years with ongoing strategic support crucial to the progress on healthy weight in Blackburn with Darwen. The leadership on this agenda has been essential in driving progress across a number of programmes, including the Pennine Lancashire Childhood Obesity Trailblazer.

#### Future Aspirations

Three years into the HWD, there is a refresh planned in with the new HW local commitments. Priorities for the coming year include a focus on working across departments in the Council to identify healthy weight champions. These Champions will be critical in ensuring a whole systems approach to tackling unhealthy weight and will be part of the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. A further focus will be on developing a fundamental skills programme across the BwD in Early Years and KS1 children to embed the essentials for long term physical activity participation. The HWD will also provide a focus for the Healthier Place Healthier Future Childhood Obesity Trailblazer programme developments. There will also be a recommendation that the CCG moves to sign their own NHS Declaration in early 2021.



*Above: Blackburn with Darwen and the CCG sign the HWD in July 2017.*

Changing both a workplace and societal culture shift will require support and 'buy in' from staff across organisations and will take some time to become the norm. Communication and identification of good practice in the organisations and the benefits of this will be vital to success.

### Additional Information

- Local press <https://theshuttle.org.uk/healthy-weight-declaration-signed-in-blackburn-with-darwen/>
- CCG website <http://www.blackburnwithdarwenccg.nhs.uk/local-authority-declaration-healthy-weight/>
- Breastfeeding Friendly Borough [http://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/15657440.Borough\\_aims\\_to\\_be\\_breast\\_feeding\\_friendly/](http://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/15657440.Borough_aims_to_be_breast_feeding_friendly/)

- Council website

<http://www.blackburn.gov.uk/Pages/Eat-Well-Shape-Up-Move-More-Strategy.aspx>

- Food poverty <https://theshuttle.org.uk/food-power-programme-aims-to-tackle-food-poverty-in-blackburn-with-darwen/>

### Contact

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*\*'Eat Well, Move More, Shape Up' is Blackburn with Darwen's strategy to encourage positive lifestyle changes and promote health and well-being within the borough.*



**Above:** Blackburn with Darwen holds a Healthy Weight Summit at Ewood Park to mark two years since adopting the HWD in March 2019.

## LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

### Blackpool: The Journey to a Local Authority Declaration on Health Weight: Two Years On

This case study reflects on how Blackpool made a strong case, in building support internally for adopting the HWD. It also demonstrates how a range of ‘healthy weight summits’ in Blackpool have supported monitoring and maintaining momentum in relation to progress.

#### Background

Following support from Food Active, the council team first presented the concept of a HWD to the portfolio holder for public health in August 2015 alongside a review of the local healthy weight strategy. Childhood obesity was featuring frequently in the media, by focusing on this issue, poor child dental health and the impact on workload of health and well-being partners, support for the HWD grew. Framing the messages in straightforward terms was key; the number of adult residents who are overweight or obese in Blackpool out of a population of 142,000, is around 84,000 people, this figure is very stark.

Following initial discussion and with the support of the portfolio holder for public health, subsequent presentations and involvement of the Health and Well-being Board led to the engagement of Blackpool’s HWD champion, Councillor Cain. A paper was presented to the authority’s Corporate Leadership Team and meetings facilitated with key Directors (including Director of Place), and service heads from Procurement, Planning, Transport, and Operational/Leisure Services. A process of consultation with the Healthy Weight Steering Group and senior managers from across all directorates was established to determine the local areas for action. In January 2016, only five months after the first discussions the Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight was formally presented and signed in a full council meeting.

#### Learning

A series of Healthy Weight Summits have been held which have focused on engaging and securing commitment from a range of partners. The initial focus was on internal partners on the Health and Well-being Board, subsequently this has extended to local businesses and major employers, schools, and the councils arms-length bodies. Blackpool’s recent summit focused on celebrating success, sharing good practice with partners and learning about the progress organisations have made with their own HWDs.

*“There is a clear recognition that we can’t do it by ourselves. It needs a concerted effort across the sector”.*

**Cllr Graham Cain, Cabinet Secretary – Resilient Communities, Blackpool Council**



**Above:** Coaches at Blackpool Football Club Community Trust deliver GULP to year 4, 5 and 6’s in the borough



The Department for Work and Pensions has worked with the Council since its first Healthy Weight Summit and have been able to share their learning and the work they had undertaken over the past 12 months at a recent event. Commenting on being involved in the event they said:

*“Thank you for allowing us to do it! It’s been really good for us, we didn’t realise just how much work we had done! We are all now joined together and working as one which gives us all more opportunities and that happened because of the work you have been doing at Blackpool Council, it’s great to feel a part of the local community. You have helped give us the support, expertise and inspiration. We have really enjoyed working with you all, embraced the speakers and all events and look forward to carrying on working with you in the future”.*

**Susan Sheldon, HEO Disability Services, Department for Work and Pensions**

PR, campaigns and communications have assisted in raising the profile of the council’s commitment to supporting the HWD. There has been much local interest around the #GULPchallenge, Blackpool’s campaign encouraging teens to ‘give up loving pop’. GULP has been a cornerstone providing high profile activity, receiving considerable media coverage, including a filmed piece on national BBC News. Blackpool’s work to develop a HWD has also featured as a case study in the Local Government Association publication on child obesity.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Public Health team have been focused on providing a full response to supporting the community at this very difficult time. In particular the team led the work round the development of the Community Hubs which was responsible for delivering food parcels to the vulnerable. The food parcels were developed with the Councils catering team and the parcels include fruit and vegetables to help people

prepare healthy meals. Additionally, physical activity information sheets were included within the food parcels to encourage people to continue to be active during the lock down. The council was concerned about the children who were on Free School Meals, and therefore worked with the schools to establish a food parcel delivery service. In total 22 schools took part in the scheme ensuring families had sufficient food whilst their children were not able to go to school.

### **Future Aspirations**

Although there were some anxieties about potential impacts on the economy and revenues, there was a clear acceptance that supporting healthier weight in Blackpool was the right thing to do. Cllr Cain, Chair of Blackpool’s Health and Well-being board, plays a key role in driving and maintaining momentum, willing to challenge and ensuring the issue of healthy weight is kept on the agenda at every opportunity. Blackpool Council has a specific priority to ‘build resilience’; in terms of where this agenda sits and through Cllr Cain’s role as an elected member, he is in a unique position to not only encourage people to lead healthier lifestyles, but also to support officers in the delivery of their work relating to this issue.

As we move in to the second phase of the pandemic and move to the new normal, the public health team will move to pick up the work of the Whole systems approach. It will be considering the new evidence and the impacts of the lock down on the residents to understand what the next steps will be to develop the work and continue to build on the progress made.

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**See Appendixes for further information on the Blackpool Evaluation Report.**

## LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

### Cheshire West and Chester Council: How to engage a range of partners in delivering the Declaration

**This case study describes how Cheshire West and Chester Council's Eat Well Be Active Partnership group are collectively delivering on the Healthy Weight Declaration.**

#### Background

Cheshire West and Chester Council officially adopted the HWD on 4 February 2019. The HWD was driven by the Cabinet Member responsible for health and wellbeing through the Council's Eat Well Be Active (EWBA) group. EWBA is a partnership group for west Cheshire, established in 2015 that aims to encourage greater levels of healthy eating and physical activity across the borough. The group is made up of representatives from the Council, NHS partners, Education providers and a range of Voluntary and Community organisations and Service Providers from across the borough.

Following the adoption of the HWD, Cheshire West and Chester Council worked closely with Food Active to develop the HWD Partner Pledge through workshops and consultation with the EWBA group. The Partner Pledge was then launched at an event on Thursday 9 January 2020 with nine partners from across the borough signing up. The Partner Pledge contains a set of commitments which organisations pledge to work towards to impact on the health and wellbeing of their staff, clients and the wider community. The pledge aims to support the actions of the Council's Declaration which was adopted the previous year. Members of the EWBA group who have already pledged their support include Active Cheshire, Brio Leisure, Chester School Sport Partnership, Edsential, Ellesmere Port School Sports Partnership, Healthbox, The Mersey Forest, The Welcome Network and Vale Royal School Sport Partnership.

#### Learning

Taking a partnership approach to the HWD has meant that it has been straight-forward to engage further partners in the healthy weight agenda. It has also raised the profile of the HWD across the borough, ensured that partners from different sectors and beyond public health are working together to support the Council's HWD. A collective, system-wide approach will be key to supporting healthier weight across west Cheshire.

Engagement with partners, establishing and maintaining relationships has been crucial. EWBA meetings are scheduled every two months and venues are rotated to ensure that all members have an opportunity to host a meeting.

#### Future Aspirations

- Work with more partners across the borough to sign up to the Partner Pledge
- Hold photo call at EWBA meetings to recognise new partners on board
- Work with EWBA partners to encourage schools to sign up to the Partner Pledge
- HWD Partner Pledge update at September 2020 Health and Wellbeing Board meeting
- Organisational pledges to be incorporated into EWBA workplan and progress reported

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## LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

### Devon County Council

**Devon County Council became the first local authority in the South West to adopt the HWD, signing in October 2019. This case study looks at how the HWD has helped to forge new cross-departmental relationships to help work on the healthy weight agenda.**

#### Background

Devon County Council held an event in November 2018 where we invited a range of wider stakeholders across Devon and promoted the HWD and Whole Systems Approaches- this helped connect organisations together and initiated momentum. We are proud to have become the 1st Local Authority in the South West to sign the HWD on 7th October 2019, as part of a region-wide roll out of the HWD, funded by Public Health England South West. Our top 3 priorities are to make water freely available, engage with the food industry of Devon and help prevent inappropriate advertising and marketing of foods and drink to children and work with schools.

#### Learning

The activity over the past 18 months has helped Public Health forge relationships with Trading Standards where we conducted a mystery shopping exercise to test the adherence of the voluntary ban of energy drink sales to u16's. In working with our Economy partners, we have gained access to 2 awards schemes whereby we are looking to explore the potential for including awards linked to product reformulation, assess and share good practice related to product reformulation. The insights work we did, meant Public Health worked alongside Libraries, Children Centres and Oral Health Education to use our Social Media platforms to promote National Smiles Month and Pyjamarama.

Waste management colleagues have devised guidance on healthy and low waste packed lunches. Internally in Public Health we have adopted a SUGAR SMART office challenge for 2019 whereby colleagues make voluntary donations to charity and we share SUGAR SMART recipes. A Health and Wellbeing event followed the signing of the HWD and this helped the workforce identify community support services that aid behaviour change and promotion of active travel.



*Above: Devon Public Health host a healthy weight summit, November 2018*

The insights work has certainly helped consider the impact of food and drink on weight, oral health, behaviour and mood. Our academic partners at the University of Exeter are looking to support networks across Wider Devon to share good practice and identify strategic priorities.

The biggest challenge was in navigating a route through the Council. The process initially gained the support of the Co-PHEP Leadership Group and consent was given to approach elected members for their support by inviting interested individuals to volunteer as Champions. We were really pleased to get the support of 5 champions.

On reflection this would have been strengthened by a briefing to all elected members to help them to understand the aims of the HWD. That said the elected members we have been excellent in identifying additional connections to make and opportunities for action.

**Next steps and aspirations for the future**

- Raising staff awareness and seeking workforce and departmental aspirations for change.

- Work with Trading Standards and Economy to explore opportunities of promoting the Buy with Confidence scheme to Food Businesses in Devon.
- Identify and encourage good practice relating to product reformulation across the food industry in Devon.
- Promote the Partner Pledge to food businesses and organisations who are demonstrating good practice and ethos related to food sustainability, healthier product ranges, age appropriate portion sizes, waste management and wider health and wellbeing benefits (i.e. oral health).

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*Above: Devon County Council officially adopt the HWD in October 2019, at a celebration event.*



## LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

### Lancashire County Council: A Perspective from a Two Tier Authority – Building a Case for Support Across the County

Lancashire’s case study discusses the importance of identifying a champion engaged in the healthy weight agenda to demonstrate leadership. Lancashire also discuss the relevance of identifying opportunities to link with other cross cutting strategies in building support and how the HWD acts as a lever to bring about action to address healthy weight priorities.

#### Background

Lancashire County Council followed on from Blackpool Council's lead in taking forward a HWD. The difference being that Blackpool is a neighbouring unitary authority rather than the two tier structure of Lancashire.

Much of the evidence for building the case for local adoption of the HWD, was already available. These were; a local JSNA on obesity, a county wide health behaviours survey, and of course the stakeholder engagement report for ‘Active Lives Healthy Weight’ (Lancashire’s commission for a universal offer for managing excess weight and increasing activity). Supported by the experiences of Blackpool, where there was concern from local councillors about oral health rather than childhood obesity per se; the burden of poor dental health in Lancashire was also included in the rationale.

#### Learning

In building support, the majority of engagement and communication was through individual conversations, it was opportune as community activities relating to this agenda, across Lancashire, had already attracted some interest from Council membership. A Councillor representing community interest in food and physical activity was identified as Champion to take the HWD forward. At this time local elections were due to take place this gave the impetus for approval of the HWD, which was feasible since there were no explicit or direct pecuniary implications from the policy.

It was also taken up in a time of challenging budgetary constraints.

At this time discussion was also taking place with Food for Life representatives to consider a food strategy for Lancashire, building on the work with the school meals service that had already been achieved (a Soil Association Silver, Food for Life award), and how best to engage our District Councils.

Since the adoption of the HWD, Lancashire County Council considered what it has achieved and reviewed the articles under the HWD internally with departments and staff.



*Above: Lancashire County Council adopt the HWD*

Consultation revealed that the commitments remained valid and that it will set the trust of work going forward across Lancashire County Council, albeit that some issues were considered more of a priority than others. Acknowledging the role of whole systems approaches in tackling obesity means that a wider engagement strategy is required and particularly in relation to the decommissioning of our behavioural weight management programme Active Lives Healthy Weight. Discussions have been held internally and with partners as to how that will look going forward.

**Future Aspirations**

Lancashire County Council is working closely with and supporting the work of Pennine Lancashire’s ‘Healthier Place Healthier Future’ childhood obesity trailblazer programme. Pendle Council signed in late 2019 with the other four districts in East Lancashire following suit in 2020. In addition, Lancaster City Council are currently in the process of discussing the merits of adoption of the HWD. As mentioned previously, the County Council is moving its healthy weight services focus from a

behavioural based programme to supporting a whole-systems approach through working more closely with our partner districts at a neighbourhood level. We will be supporting early years and school-based work within settings in addressing the wider and more complex issues relating to building healthier weight friendly places. This will be through a combination of activity with our Children Family and wellbeing services and schools through the Food For Life award schemes. There will be a targeted approach to children's teeth acknowledging common risk factors for both obesity and poor oral health. The role of nutrition and food security in building immune function and healthy bodies is important. Prevention then is a significant priority given the prominence of COVID19 as a health threat. A greater emphasis will be given to addressing these concerns in the coming months.

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**Above:** Lancashire County Council’s ‘Love To Ride’ Scheme in operation.



## LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

### Leeds City Council

**This case study shares perspectives from a large unitary authority in Yorkshire and Humber – the first local authority in the region to adopt the HWD, Leeds City Council this case study focusses on work to improve the food environment.**

#### Background

Leeds City Council was the first authority to adopt the HWD in the Yorkshire and Humber region, as part of a region-wide roll out of the HWD funded by the Association for Directors of Public Health in Yorkshire and Humber. The HWD was first discussed in July 2017 followed by a programme of work including an audit of the Council's current activity to support the 14 commitments, a consultation event with staff to agree six local priorities and meetings with a range of stakeholders.

This work culminated in the adoption of the HWD in September 2018 and then a launch event in February 2019 in which Cllr Rebecca Charlwood, Executive Member for Adults and Health and Ian Cameron, Director of Public Health formally signed the HWD.

#### Learning

Influencing the food environment is one of the six HWD priorities chosen for Leeds. Delivering action to implement this priority involves a range of Council Teams including Catering, Civic Enterprise, Human Resources, Procurement and Leisure Services. The HWD helped to increase the importance of this priority for the Council and develop Public Health's working relationship with Council Teams. The HWD is well recognised as a key Council initiative which should be considered across all Council Business.

This has shifted the emphasis from Public Health advocating for change to a willingness to work together on a Council Initiative adopted by Executive Board.

Our first objective for this priority was to review the Council's vending contract to enable healthy food choices with the opportunity to influence the planned vending re-procurement. Whilst Leeds City Council recognises that Local Authorities can have a significant role to play in improving the food and drinks offered to staff and visitors, balancing different agendas from stakeholders can be challenging.

Using the HWD to bring stakeholders to the table and having an open dialogue about the considerations for change led to the agreement to undertake research to explore improving the quality of snacks and review how any changes impact on the profits generated. This work included involvement from the vending provider who shared experience from other areas and was very open to making changes. The research undertaken has helped to inform the re-procurement of the Council's vending which now includes health promotion standards based on the Governments Buying Standards for food from July 2019.



**Above:** Deborah Lowe, Advanced Public Health Specialist presents Leeds’s experience in adopting the HWD at the #FoodActive2020 Conference, November 2019.

**Future aspirations**

The next steps for this priority include the development of Food Procurement Guidelines to influence the Council’s food and drink purchasing and the products sold in café outlets within Council premises. This work will also help evidence our action to support the HWD commitments.

More broadly our work is focused on raising the profile of the HWD amongst Council Staff which we are currently progressing via a staff survey.

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## FAQs

### Obesity is a complex problem. Will a local authority declaration make a difference?

There is no one size fits all solution to obesity, it is going to take action at many different levels before we have any significant progress. However local authorities have an important role to play. They control planning, public and environmental health, leisure and recreation and regeneration and this HWD is a vehicle to take the sort of whole-systems approach needed to tackle this complex issue. The HWD can have an impact across local authority departments, making sure the council works as one to achieve maximum impact, and ideally will by working with other local partners, have an impact far beyond council controlled areas.

### What about the economic impact of the HWD?

The role of the local authority is to work for the wellbeing of the population, this responsibility does not only sit with public health, it needs to be considered across all departments. The local authority and other public sector bodies need to balance the long term costs to the health and care services against the short term costs of turning down sponsorship or vending deals. Sponsorship and advertising, vending or others may be a source of income locally and for the local authority but supporting healthier food is the right thing to do.

“We’ve recognised that a community that’s unwell and reliant on lots of services is a drain on resources and a drain on the economy, so really to have a healthy, resilient population will help us with our other objective of regenerating Blackpool”. Dr Arif Rajpura, Director of Public Health, Blackpool.



*Above: Healthy food and drink served up at a primary school in Knowsley as part of their commitment to healthier food in public owned establishments.*

### Where can I get data to support the HWD?

You will need to make a compelling case why action is needed at a council level. Much of the information can be found in the supporting documents we have prepared, including the toolkit, the evidence base and the evaluation. You will need to evidence local data which can be found in recent public health reports, public health outcomes online and/ or healthy weight strategies. When preparing your case, think about all of the departments who can influence healthy weight, both directly and indirectly.



**Who needs to be involved in the process of adopting the HWD?**

There are many healthy weight stakeholders in each local area who will have an interest in the HWD and what signing up to it might mean for the local council. It is useful if they have a good understanding of the content and purpose of the HWD so they can support the process. Local stakeholders might include:

- Director of Public Health
- Lead Member for Health
- Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board
- Clinical leads
- Consultants in Public Health/Health Improvement Leads
- Clinical Commissioning Groups
- GPs, dietitians

**What happens once the HWD has been passed?**

It is important to keep momentum going. Keep an action log so that you can refer to progress made. Set up a stakeholder group to decide upon and push forward next steps.

Consider a follow-up event to engage with council colleagues and other organisations in the locality.

**Our authority already has a Healthy Weight/Food Strategy, will there be duplication of work if we adopt the HWD?**

There is an appreciation that some councils will already be working to meet the actions/priorities set out within individual healthy weight plans, food or physical activity strategies. The HWD can be used to coordinate all activity linked to these agendas and provide an umbrella and a focus. By signing up to the HWD, a council is able to demonstrate strategic leadership on this agenda and develop methods of engaging wider stakeholders and hold the relevant partners within the council to account. The HWD should also act as a lever to engage external partners such as NHS bodies, third sector organisations and private providers to consider their role in supporting healthy weight plans and strategies.



**Above:** Bristol City Council and Partners sign up to the HWD, February 2020.



## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

As a number of local authorities have now adopted the Local Authority HWD on Healthy weight and are making progress to embed their commitments within council workplans and strategies, Food Active is currently considering how those authorities can monitor, evaluate and review the impact that the HWD has had to date.

So far, from sharing good practice, we have learnt that the HWD aims to enable local authorities to:

- **highlight problems caused by unhealthy weight (local issues/concerns/priorities)**
- **review their policies and how they impact on healthy weight**
- **provide an umbrella and focus for a number of healthy weight, food and nutrition strategies**
- **open up dialogue across a wide range of council departments to acknowledge the councils commitment to reducing unhealthy weight**
- **take leadership but also challenge partner organisations (to consider their own accountability) in addressing unhealthy weight**
- **consider existing and new ways of working to reduce unhealthy weight in local communities and across the workforce**

A 'HWD Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit' has been developed and aims to support authorities to:

1. **Develop appropriate action plans (linking to existing healthy weight/food strategies)**
2. **Review and evaluate progress against commitments in the HWD**
3. **Identify and share best practice**

The toolkit also offers a method of collating qualitative information that might demonstrate how changes in processes, communication, stakeholder engagement etc significantly impact on progress. This approach helps to review efficacy of the HWD as an impetus or mechanism to improve healthy weight outcomes This element of the tool also aims to:

- Enable shared learning and acknowledges that longer term objectives are part of a stepwise process
- Be utilised as learning within a Local Authority but also to share with other authorities as best practice



*Above: HWD Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit*

The monitoring and evaluation tool is complementary to this support pack; offering resources for a range of Local Authorities dependent on where they might be in the adoption process whether this be considering adopting the HWD, building support, developing subsequent action plans or monitoring of progress. Ideally the tool should be utilised as part of a 'live process' and ongoing cycle of review and action planning.

**HWD Audit & Validation Tool:**

In response to ongoing consultation with stakeholders and commissioners and the recent review of the HWD, a light-touch 'audit tool' has also been developed to assist with process

monitoring. Feedback from stakeholders has suggested that the Monitoring & Evaluation Toolkit is particularly useful in the earlier stages of adoption, implementation and action planning. However, there was request for a simple and flexible method of audit and validation that could help authorities demonstrate or signal where progress has been made against the HWD commitments, and to assist in validation for internal stakeholders. This has subsequently been developed and is recommended as an annual audit process against all commitments that have been adopted.

For further information please contact Food Active.



**Above:** Liverpool City Council and Partners adopt the Local Government Declaration on Healthy Weight and Partner Pledge, November 2018

## HOW FOOD ACTIVE CAN HELP YOU

The Health Equalities Group has over 13 years' experience of working in tobacco control in the North West and we regularly draw on this in the design and delivery of our healthy weight campaign, Food Active. Working with our public health and academic partners, Food Active has been responsible for the development of the Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight to support local government to exercise their responsibility in developing and implementing policies which promote healthy weight.

In support of this there are a number of documents and papers referred to throughout this support pack to assist Local Authorities in engaging their members, officers and communities around the issue of healthy weight.

In addition we offer mechanisms by which to engage the public on health matters such as the successful sugary drink campaign 'Give Up Loving Pop': [www.giveuplovingpop.org.uk](http://www.giveuplovingpop.org.uk). Launched in 2015, the campaign aims to raise awareness of the harms of consuming too many sugary drinks in children, young people and families. As part of our comprehensive programme of work on sugar and unhealthy weight, the early years campaign 'Kind to Teeth' was also launched in 2018. The campaign aims to support Local Authorities to raise awareness, within communities, of the health impact of sugary drinks consumption in babies and children aged 0-4 years and to increase parent's and carer's knowledge of suitable drinks in the early years. We have also developed a suite of resources to support schools around a whole-school food approach along with resources for those living in food insecurity.

Food Active have also produced a number of resources to support Local Authorities and partners in meeting their healthy weight commitments, many of which have been referenced throughout this support pack, of particular value and interest include a suite of Position Statements available on a range of topics including:

- Children living in food poverty
- The benefits of drinking water
- Outdoor advertising of less healthy food and drink
- Takeaways and healthy weight
- Active travel and healthy weight
- Healthier vending
- Energy drinks
- Health harms of high street giveaways
- Food as a safeguarding issue
- Healthy weight in the early years
- Healthy weight in pregnancy
- Healthy weight in preconception
- Sugar sweetened beverages
- Junk food marketing to children
- Childhood obesity

If you would like further support regarding any of the above or healthy weight and the following; lobbying and advocacy, agenda setting, policy guidance, public facing campaigns, educational resources/briefing documents please contact the Food Active Team. See our contact details on the last page of this pack.



**Above:** Food Active's Kind to Teeth Campaign

## APPENDICIES

### Appendix 1: Whole Systems Approach to Obesity and the HWD: a joint narrative

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# FOOD ACTIVE

#### Public Health England’s whole systems approach to obesity and Food Active’s HWD: understanding how the approaches can work together

Public Health England (PHE) and Food Active (FA) are both supporting local areas to work across the local system to reduce levels of overweight and obesity and to promote healthy weight through their own respective programmes: the whole systems approach (WSA) to obesity and the local authority HWD (HWD). To stimulate connectivity and provide clear and practical support at a local level, PHE and FA have developed this joint narrative, which explains how the approaches can be used together. As we learn more from local areas we will look for other opportunities to develop this further.

#### Bringing the two approaches together

The “[whole systems approach to obesity](#)” is very much a process, as opposed to a pre-existing framework of commitments. This is deliberate so that it is universal and inclusive, which means connectivity with programmes like the HWD should prove of mutual value.

Since launching the HWD in 2015, it has been acknowledged that local authorities (LAs) who have adopted the HWD can strengthen the impact of the 14 commitments on the health of the local population by considering them within a WSA. A new commitment advocating systems working has therefore been added to an updated set of 16 standard commitments, which continue to be supported by those that have been locally identified.

#### Using whole systems process and resources

The HWD is based on a series of commitments which support LAs in utilising a number of levers within the local system to address obesity, providing a good starting point to apply the WSA to obesity process and tools. These support LAs to understand the specific drivers of obesity in their local area, and to identify, prioritise and align actions as part of their local place based healthy weight strategy. When considering and working towards a WSA, additional [support and resources](#) include the following:

- the action mapping tool can help identify gaps in current actions in relation to the wider determinants of health;



- the workshop material and systems mapping tools can enable wider stakeholder engagement outside the local authority, including communities and support wider ownership and buy-in of the approach;
- the action planning phase can support the identification of a wider set of actions that influence different levels of the system; supporting and building on the HWD commitments;
- the activities described in phase 6 of the process can support stakeholders to continuously monitor and adapt their local approach, reflecting changes in the local and wider systems, and to maintain momentum. This can support the HWD commitment to ‘monitor the progress of our plan against our commitments and publish the results’ alongside the light touch audit tool and full-scale monitoring and evaluation tool.

Further examples of how the two approaches can be brought together to strengthen local strategies to reduce overweight and obesity and promote healthy weight are detailed below.

### **Engaging partners**

Both approaches recognise the potential of all partners across the local system, both internally across LA departments (planning, education, leisure and transport) and externally (food and drink sector, NHS organisations, academic institutions and communities) to contribute to reducing obesity and promoting a healthy weight and contain materials to support LAs to achieve this engagement.

Within the WSA, the HWD can be used as an identity, communications and an advocacy tool to generate buy-in and strategic commitments for the healthy weight agenda from elected members and across LA departments. It also has additional commitments to support the engagement of partners across the wider system through a partner pledge, an NHS HWD and a schools HWD.

The WSA contains resources to support both the identification of departments, local organisations and specific individuals currently engaged in supporting work around obesity and those that are missing (network analysis tool). The WSA also includes links and resources to help make a convincing case to secure their buy-in (data recommendations, tailored briefings, workshop plans).

### **Identifying and aligning actions**

The WSA supports LAs to undertake action planning to help local areas identify, prioritise, agree and align actions with stakeholders across the local system. Ensuring actions reflect the local context, building ownership and enabling stakeholders to see their place in the system and the role they can have in changing it.

The HWD commitments can provide a great starting point for LAs undertaking action planning as part of their WSA. The WSA action planning process can help LAs consider the HWD commitments within the local system as well as identify additional local actions/commitments.

As this narrative demonstrates, the WSA and HWD programmes complement each other and LAs already implementing one programme can use the other to help build on and strengthen their local approaches to reducing overweight and obesity and promoting a healthy weight.

## APPENDICIES

### Appendix 2: Template press release

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XX has become the latest council to sign a declaration to promote healthy weight across the borough through improved food and drink provision

Councillors voted in favour of a Local Government Declaration on healthy weight at the Full Council/Cabinet meeting held XXX.

The Council's declaration shows a commitment to reducing overweight and obesity in XX by helping residents to make better choices. Overweight and obesity in XX is currently at a staggering level (enter stats).

Developed by North West based Food Active, the declaration was first adopted by Blackpool Council in 2016 where it has been shown to have made a positive impact on policy at local authority level. Dozens of local authorities have now adopted, and the Declaration continues to gain recognition as a useful tool in helping councils to promote healthy weight across

Council leader XXX, along with Public Health Director XXX, met with representatives from Food Active to put the Council's commitment down in writing by signing a declaration that will be proudly placed in the Council building.

Cllr XXX, Cabinet Member for XXX, said: "Obesity is a huge problem for us in XXX. XX% of children in the borough are overweight or obese by the time they start secondary school (complete using National Child Measurement Programme borough level data).

"It is important to have such a commitment to healthy weight at a council level, to work with all departments to ensure healthy weight is included in all policies. I'm really pleased that this council has taken this positive step.

"Our work will focus on ... (complete with actions the council is committing to under the declaration)

Robin Ireland, Research Director at Food Active and the lead for this project, said: "Congratulations to XXX Council for taking this stand.

"We all know how difficult it is to make the right choices when we are surrounded by unhealthy food, the wrong advertising messages and when sugary drinks are cheaper than water. I am delighted that XX Council is doing everything they can to help their residents, workers and pupils eat healthier.

"I hope other councils will follow XX's example".

For more details on the Local Government Declaration on Healthy Weight visit:  
<http://www.foodactive.org.uk/projects/local-authority-declaration/>

## APPENDICIES

### Appendix 3: Links to useful information

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#### Publications and Briefing Papers

1. Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight Briefing Paper: Healthy Weight Why Local Authority Action is Needed. Nicola Calder. Food Active. Summer 2020.
2. Blackpool Local Authority on Healthy Weight Evaluation Report. Robin Ireland. Food Active. June 2017. Available to download at: <http://www.foodactive.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Food-Active-Blackpool-Report.pdf>
3. Perspective Pieces Report: Promoting healthy weight across all area's. Food Active. March 2018. Available to download at: <http://www.foodactive.org.uk/perspective-pieces-report-promoting-healthy-weight-across-all-policy-areas/>
4. Food Active: Local Government HWD Impact and Influences Report. Alex Holt & Beth Bradshaw. Food Active. November 2019. Available to download at: <http://www.foodactive.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/HWD-Impact-and-Influence-Report-November-2019-FINAL.pdf>
5. Healthy Weight Healthy Futures. Local Government Action to Tackle Childhood Obesity. Case Studies. Local Government Association. February 2016. Available to download: <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/childhood-obesity-has-bee-c95.pdf>
6. Obesity Health Alliance Joint Position Paper on Obesity. December 2017. Available to download at: <http://obesityhealthalliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Policy-Position-Statement-Dec-2017-final.pdf>
7. Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food initiative. Visit: <https://www.sustainweb.org/londonfoodlink/declaration/>
8. World Cancer Research Fund International NOURHSING Policy Framework. February 2018. Available to download at: [https://wcrf.org/sites/default/files/7\\_Harness%20Supply%20Chain\\_Feb2018\\_FINAL.pdf](https://wcrf.org/sites/default/files/7_Harness%20Supply%20Chain_Feb2018_FINAL.pdf)
9. Promoting Healthy Weight in Children, Young People and Families. Public Health England.2018. Available to download at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/750679/promoting\\_healthy\\_weight\\_in\\_children\\_young\\_people\\_and\\_families\\_resource.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/750679/promoting_healthy_weight_in_children_young_people_and_families_resource.pdf)

## APPENDICIES

### Appendix 3: Links to useful information

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10. Whole Systems Approach to Obesity. Local Government Association. November 2019. Available to download at:  
[https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/1.100\\_Whole\\_systems\\_approach\\_to\\_obesity\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/1.100_Whole_systems_approach_to_obesity_WEB.pdf)
11. Whole Systems Approach to Obesity. Public Health England. July 2019. Available to download at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whole-systems-approach-to-obesity>
12. Stigma Free Image Bank. World Obesity Federation. Available at:  
<https://www.worldobesity.org/resources/image-bank>
13. Food Active Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight Hub. Available at:  
<http://www.foodactive.org.uk/the-healthy-weight-declaration-resource-hub/>
14. Food Active & Public Health England Joint Narrative on Whole Systems Approaches to Obesity
15. Food Active Weight Stigma Guidance: [http://www.foodactive.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Weight-Stigma-Briefing\\_Food-Active\\_July-2020.pdf](http://www.foodactive.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Weight-Stigma-Briefing_Food-Active_July-2020.pdf)

#### Blogs and Media Coverage

- <http://www.foodactive.org.uk/bristol-city-council-adopts-the-healthy-weight-declaration-with-partner-pledges-signed-by-five-local-nhs-organisations/>
- <http://www.foodactive.org.uk/cheshire-west-and-chester-councils-eat-well-be-active-group-officially-launch-food-actives-healthy-weight-declaration-partner-pledge/>
- <http://www.foodactive.org.uk/city-of-york-council-becomes-the-latest-council-to-adopt-the-healthy-weight-declaration/>
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- <http://www.foodactive.org.uk/devon-county-council-become-the-first-local-authority-in-the-south-west-to-adopt-the-healthy-weight-declaration/>
- <http://www.foodactive.org.uk/the-healthy-weight-declaration-sharing-the-learning-kirklees-council/>
- <http://www.foodactive.org.uk/the-healthy-weight-declaration-sharing-the-learning-devon-county-council/>
- <http://www.foodactive.org.uk/the-healthy-weight-declaration-sharing-the-learning-leeds-city-council/>



## APPENDICIES

### Appendix 4: References

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2. Public Health England: Health Matters: Whole systems approach to obesity. July 2019. Available at: <https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2019/07/25/health-matters-whole-systems-approach-to-obesity/>
3. The economic burden of ill health due to diet, physical inactivity, smoking, alcohol and obesity in the UK: an update to 2006–07 NHS costs Peter Scarborough<sup>1</sup>, Prachi Bhatnagar<sup>1</sup>, Kremlin K. Wickramasinghe<sup>1</sup>, Steve Allender<sup>1,2</sup>,
4. Charlie Foster<sup>1</sup>, Mike Rayner<sup>1</sup>. Journal of Public Health | Vol. 33, No. 4, pp. 527 –535 | doi:10.1093/pubmed/fdr033 | Advance Access Publication 11 May 2011.
5. Public Health England. Adult Obesity Patterns and Trends. (2020). Accessed on 29/05/20 Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-obesity-patterns-and-trends>
6. Public Health England. Child Obesity Patterns and Trends. (2020). Accessed on 29/05/20. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-obesity-patterns-and-trends>
7. Public Health England. Child Oral Health. Applying All Our Health. Accessed on 29/05/2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-oral-health-applying-all-our-health/child-oral-health-applying-all-our-health>
8. Public Health England. Whole Systems Approach to Obesity. July 2019. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whole-systems-approach-to-obesity>
9. Public Health England. Public Health Outcomes Framework. Accessed on 29/05/2020. Available at: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework/data#page/3/gid/1000042/pat/15/par/E92000001/ati/6/are/E12000004/iid/93077/age/164/sex/4/cid/4/page-options/ovw-do-0 car-ao-0 eng-vo-0 eng-do-0 car-do-0>

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**FOOD  
ACTIVE**

**HEALTH  
EQUALITIES  
GROUP**



**LOCAL AUTHORITY  
DECLARATION ON**

**healthy  
weight**