

# Phase 4 of a whole systems approach to obesity

## **Background**

Phase 4 of the 6-phase whole systems approach to obesity enabled Halton Borough Council to collectively prioritise actions to address obesity with its system of local stakeholders and develop a workable action plan through stakeholder workshops.

Phase 4 of the 6-phase whole systems approach to obesity entails:

- preparing for the second workshop with stakeholders as part of the whole systems approach to obesity
- delivering the workshop and carrying out action planning
- developing a draft whole systems action plan
- refining the shared vision

## **What was involved**

The first step of phase 4 for Halton Borough Council was to refine the council's system map, which was prepared in an earlier workshop as part of phase 3 and visually represents how the local causes of obesity are linked. This refinement was done through participatory activities at the programme's second stakeholder workshop.

During this workshop, new actions to address obesity were also proposed. These were added to the existing actions mapped in phase 2 and overlaid on to the system map.

Primary stakeholders included:

- Halton clinical commissioning group
- local councillors
- Halton Stadium
- school meals
- transport
- children's centres
- community centres
- environmental health
- Halton Housing
- Halton Lea Shopping Centre
- Halton People Into Jobs
- Department of Work and Pensions
- sports and leisure
- lead for Children and Young People

Following the workshop, the core working team, who managed the approach,

considered whether further actions were required to bridge any gaps in the proposed approach.

They then developed a draft whole systems action plan, which included actions from a range of different stakeholders such as:

- introduce improved work health initiatives
- develop, implement and deliver a Making Every Contact Count training programme
- create more accessible cycling and walking route to promote active transport
- work with communities, local communities safety team and transport to alter the perception of safety
- raise awareness of what is available around the built environment agenda, for example linking health and planning

## **Working well**

Through the collective work of stakeholders, Halton Borough Council was able to put together an action plan that reflected a much broader range of actions than previously. These actions also go beyond public health and therefore support a whole systems approach.

The council had several principal take-home messages from this phase. Firstly, it's important to ensure there is a dedicated core working group to pull the action plan together. This involves:

- administering and delivering workshops and presentations
- writing up each stage
- developing the action plan
- feedback processes

Secondly, the programme should not lose momentum. One way of avoiding this during phase 4 is to book in all workshops at once and set specific deadlines for actions.

Thirdly, the council learnt to be prepared to work with a smaller group than anticipated, as it takes time to engage stakeholders from all parts of the local system.

## **Next steps**

For Halton Borough Council, the next steps will be to align its action plan with the whole systems approach to obesity in the Halton strategy and complete the action plan. This will require ongoing communication across the network as well as monitoring and evaluating actions individually and collectively in phase 6.

For further information, contact Lisa Taylor, Divisional Manager Health and Wellbeing, Halton Borough Council.