

Tackling childhood obesity: £1.5 million funding for local projects

Five local councils will be awarded £100,000 a year over a 3-year period. The funding will help them to test and refine their ideas for addressing childhood obesity and health inequalities. The councils are:

- Bradford
- Blackburn with Darwen
- Nottinghamshire
- Lewisham
- Birmingham

The Department of Health and Social Care, the Local Government Association and Public Health England (PHE) are supporting the councils to trial new programmes in their areas, which could help shape future national policy.

Planned programmes include a scheme by Birmingham City Council to offer health, food, nutrition and physical-activity focused apprenticeships for 15 to 19 year olds in deprived areas, where obesity rates are highest.

The council will also create a local metric, the 'Birmingham Basket', to capture local consumer habits. This will help inform policies and measure impact.

Bradford will partner with local mosques to support South Asian children – who are at a greater risk of obesity – by providing places and fun ways to exercise, alongside healthier food.

Blackburn and Darwen council will work with local restaurants and takeaways to improve menus and incentivise healthier options. This scheme will look at ways to work with outlets to adopt healthier options, for example through free waste removal, subsidised advertising on council-owned estates and a potential health food hub.

These programmes will help the government to consider further steps that could be taken to enable local action on childhood obesity.

The work is part of [the Trailblazer programme](#) and the [second chapter of the government's childhood obesity plan](#), which was launched last year.

Public Health Minister Seema Kennedy said:

Every child deserves the best start in life – communities need to come together to play their part in helping the next generation to be healthy and active. Prevention is at the heart of our NHS Long Term Plan, but a one-size-fits-all approach does not work in public health.

These pilots are rightly rooted in the needs of the communities they serve and I look forward to seeing what benefits this grassroots approach has on our nation's obesity problem.

Alison Tedstone, Chief Nutritionist at PHE, said:

While obesity has no quick fix, these trailblazers are forging innovative solutions that clearly prioritise children and their long-term health.

From expert local knowledge, to local authority intervention, community support and government action, we all have crucial roles to play in combating obesity.