

Phase 1 of a whole systems approach to obesity

Background

In Suffolk, childhood obesity is a growing concern with National Childhood Measurement Programme data indicating that rates are continuing to rise.

Suffolk County Council decided that addressing this was a priority but recognised there was only so much progress they could make with just public health interventions. Therefore, they implemented the whole systems approach to obesity programme, with the aim of involving a range of teams and organisations in their local area that have a role to play in tackling childhood obesity and its knock-on effects.

Phase 1 of the 6-phase whole systems approach to obesity entails:

- engaging with senior leaders to obtain their support
- setting up a core working team to undertake the day-to-day operations and coordinate the approach
- establishing resources to support the process
- securing the accountability, advice and support of a group of senior stakeholders offering a broad range of expertise to ensure the approach has sufficient challenge, governance and resource

What was involved

The first step taken by Suffolk County Council's Public Health Team was approaching politicians and senior leaders from across the system to help release the resources required for this work to be prioritised. This was important in enabling staff to support the approach as part of their day-to-day work and embedding it into their objectives.

After support was secured, a series of events were held with stakeholders committed to reducing childhood obesity, including:

- Health and Wellbeing Board
- NHS and clinical commissioning groups (CCG)
- voluntary and community sector organisations
- district and borough councils
- local businesses
- education and schools
- children and young people's services

As the whole systems approach involves people outside of the public health field, this phase was also crucial in establishing the same level of understanding about childhood obesity.

To help achieve this, the council created a campaign addressing any stigma

and stereotypes about obesity, as well as presentations to the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Suffolk County Council chief executive and directors, CCG leaders, hospitals and the voluntary sector.

This ensured that everyone had a basic knowledge about how the different areas of work linked together and the role they played in this.

The core working group started as a small group with representation from schools, healthy child services and sustainable transport. Over time, the group has grown and become more of a network, so the council are now reviewing membership and will set up a more developed network.

Working well

Initial engagement helped senior leaders understand the purpose and benefits of a whole systems approach, as well as the impact it could have locally and how their organisations played a role. Furthermore, holding face-to-face meetings with members from the Health and Wellbeing Board, building on the evidence and priorities, and providing briefings and regular updates was important for gaining their support.

Stakeholder events, presentations about the approach for senior leaders, and the campaign to address obesity-related stigma were all also beneficial in securing support and the required resources.

Feedback from partners indicated that some of the stakeholder events and workshops were too academic. Therefore, it is important that these events make it clear that there is a link between the whole systems approach to obesity and partners' day-to-day jobs and the communities they are working with. Making this connection clear in the first workshop is critical for securing support over the subsequent phases.

The good working relationships developed during this phase have also helped other projects. For example, the councils 'Eat Out Eat Well' award now includes a breastfeeding-friendly criterion because of new breastfeeding contacts made through the whole systems approach.

Next steps

Suffolk County Council will continue engaging partners and increasing momentum for the work, as well as adding national directives such as the NHS Long Term Plan and Childhood Obesity Plan into their planning.

The council are also aiming to secure resource that would allow someone to take this on as a full-time role, as this work is currently based on individual capacity. Having a dedicated person working on progressing this programme means that the work will not get deprioritised and that there is 1 specific person with constant commitment, capacity and enthusiasm who partners can liaise with.

For further information, contact Nicki Cooper, Senior Health Improvement Commissioner at Suffolk County Council. Nicki.Cooper@suffolk.gov.uk

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.

New drive to continue boosting standards in schools

A raft of new measures to help struggling schools, tackle underperformance and ensure standards continue to rise have been unveiled by Education Secretary Gavin Williamson.

Outstanding schools will no longer be exempt from routine Ofsted inspection so parents can be confident their children's schools are continuing to deliver the best education.

Some 'outstanding' schools have not been inspected for a decade and this programme will ensure that parents have up to date information about the quality of education their children are receiving, and that standards remain high.

Alongside this, more funding will be made available to help top performing academies across the country to expand to support other schools and help them deliver the best possible education.

A new specialist academy trust will also be set up specifically to take on and turn round the most challenging schools struggling with long term underperformance.

The trust will be piloted in the North of England and offer direct support from school leaders with a proven track record in improving education.

For schools that have consistently been rated requires improvement by Ofsted, we will launch a new programme of leadership support by giving hundreds of them more help from experienced school leaders and evidence-based support programmes and working with Ofsted so that it can provide more detailed analysis on areas for improvement.

The announcement today (1 September) comes days after the Prime Minister delivered the biggest ever cash funding boost of £14 billion over three years for education and set out the government's ambition to close the opportunity gap and ensure every child, regardless of where they come from, has access to a great education. The funding package for 5-16 schools includes £2.6 billion for 2020/21, £4.8 billion for 21/22, and £7.1 billion for 22/23 compared to 19/20. This will bring the schools budget to £52.2bn in 22/23.

This comes as 61 new free schools open their doors for the new school year, providing more school places and building on the success of free schools across the country. Ofsted's latest information shows that 84% of all free schools with inspection reports published by the end of June are rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. This includes predecessor ratings for free schools that have since been re-brokered.

The Prime Minister made clear that his government will continue to build on rising school standards, level up education spending, and to give schools the powers they need to deal with bad behaviour and bullying.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Every parent wants to know their child is getting a great education and I will leave no stone unturned in my drive to deliver that. Education standards in this country have been transformed since 2010, and I am determined to make sure those schools that are leading the way are sharing their expertise and lifting up others so every child, no matter where they are from has the best possible start in life.

This government has delivered on its promise to deliver a huge cash boost for the education system and now we will continue our relentless focus on standards by backing teachers, school leaders and the sector as a whole to do what they do best and deliver the best for our children.

Plans set out today will include:

- Reintroducing regular Ofsted inspections for outstanding schools by removing rules which exempted top-rated schools from routine inspection, so that parents have up to date information about their child's school and can be confident that schools rated outstanding really are providing the highest standards
- Increasing the level of support available to some of the most challenging requires improvement schools – those that have not been good in over a decade in multiple inspections – by giving hundreds of them more help from experienced school leaders and evidence-based support programmes and working with Ofsted so that it can provide more detailed analysis on areas for improvement
- Piloting a new academy trust in the north, specifically established to take on the most challenging schools, where there is no other local academy trust with sufficient capacity available, offering support from directors with a proven track record of turning around underperforming schools
- Building on an existing £17m fund to support our strongest academy trusts to expand into areas of weak capacity and where improvement is most needed – furthering the success of the academies programme since 2010 as a powerful vehicle for driving school improvement

- Expand the School Resource Management programme to ensure the extra funding provided to schools is focussed on delivering better outcomes for pupils, reduces wasteful expenditure and improves efficiency
- Work with Ofsted to ensure all reports also include a rating for financial management and oversight within the school, academy, college or trust in order to ensure best practice is shared across the sector

Today's announcement will accelerate efforts to improve underperforming schools, furthering recent plans to strengthen the leadership of up to 2,400 schools nationwide and building on policies that have seen hundreds of thousands of children benefit from an education in good or outstanding sponsored academies that were, typically, previously council-run schools.

Plans include piloting a specialist trust run by school leaders with a proven track record of turning around underperforming schools to raise standards and put them back onto a sound financial footing. This new trust will be expected to take on the most challenging schools, by offering a route into a strong academy trust that allows school improvement to begin immediately.

Since 2012, schools rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted have been exempt from routine inspection, freeing them up to continue to focus on providing an excellent education for pupils without unnecessary intervention.

This commitment remains, but many schools need up to date information about their performance and parents deserve greater assurance that the education in these schools remains the highest quality. The department will consult on how best to do this, and subject to parliamentary approval, bring these schools back into a regular inspection cycle.

This package of measures to turn around underperforming schools today follows the announcement of £14bn for primary and secondary schools in England between now and 2022/23 – delivering on the Prime Minister's pledge to increase school funding to give all young people the same opportunities to succeed regardless of where they live or go to school.

Minister for the Middle East and North Africa completes tour of the Gulf

Dr Murrison met with the Yemeni President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi and Yemeni Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammed Abdullah al-Hadhrami, where he stressed the UK's full commitment to the UN-led political process and to supporting the tireless efforts of UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths.

He also highlighted the role of UK aid's £200 million commitment to the UN humanitarian response this year, which is helping to feed one million Yemenis every month, treat 30,000 children for malnutrition, and provide one million people in Yemen with improved water supply and basic sanitation.

During his trip, the Minister also met with senior regional political figures including the UAE Minister of State for International Cooperation, Reem al Hashimy; the Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Adel al Jubeir; and Omani Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sayyid al Badr, with whom he discussed the international response to the crisis in Yemen.

The minister also held talks on important bilateral issues on which the UK works closely with the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Oman, including Saudi Vision 2030 security, defence and human rights.

The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa Dr Andrew Murrison said:

I was very pleased to have had the opportunity to meet with the Yemeni president and deputy foreign minister along with other partners in the region to discuss our shared commitment to bringing the conflict in Yemen to a peaceful conclusion.

During my programme, I took the opportunity reiterate the UK's commitment to deliver food, medicines and other essential aid to those who are in dire need.

We are resolute in our support for the work of UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths. A political solution is the only way to bring this dreadful conflict to an end and we call for all parties to come to the negotiating table.

Notes:

- In the UAE, Dr Murrison observed the construction progress of the UK pavilion at the Expo 2020 site.
- In Saudi Arabia, the minister hosted a roundtable discussion with young Saudis on Saudi modernisation, and welcomed the new ruling that allowed women to travel unaccompanied and without permission from their guardian.
- In Oman, Dr Murrison also held talks on the UK and Oman's joint aims to promote mutual prosperity and economic development, and pressing issues on the minds of British businesses.

'Get Ready for Brexit' campaign

Launched

Today we are launching our new public information campaign, 'Get Ready for Brexit', which will run across television, social media, billboards and other platforms.

Government research shows that only 50% of the population think it's likely the UK will leave the EU on 31 October, 42% of small-to-medium sized businesses are unsure of how they can get ready and just 31% of the British public have looked for information on how to prepare for Brexit.

The campaign will tackle this head on by setting out what all members of the public and business owners might need to do, if anything, to get ready to leave the EU on 31 October.

Audiences including UK citizens intending to travel to Europe and all exporters to the EU will be targeted, alongside groups requiring particular information such as the equine industry and legal professions. Some of the key actions audiences need to take include:

- Acquiring an Economic Operator Registration and Identification number to export to the EU. Businesses that are VAT registered will automatically issued an EORI number, but micro businesses still need to register themselves.
- Obtaining the correct documents to transport goods at the border.
- Applying for the vital support packages available for businesses, such as grants.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove said:

Ensuring an orderly Brexit is not only a matter of national importance, but a shared responsibility.

This campaign will encourage the country to come together to Get Ready for Brexit on 31 October.

Advertising accompanied with targeted road shows and events will drive people to GOV.UK, which has a new checker tool so audiences can identify what they need to do to get ready for Brexit quickly.

There will be how to videos and step by step guides – so whether you are a small business owner, haulier or EU citizen residing in the UK – the actions you need to take to prepare will be clear and simple.