

# Healthy Weight Update for the Health and Wellbeing Board

## 22 September 2020

### 1. Background

Following the Health and Wellbeing Board's (HWB) decision to include healthy lifestyles as one of the seven priorities, it was decided to focus initially on healthy weight. This builds on the 'tackling obesity' priority in the earlier Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Obesity is caused by a complex interaction of factors including economic, social, environmental and psychological influences. These include: exposure to 'obesogenic' environments; poverty; social norms around eating and physical activity; and living with a disability, a mental health problem, chronic stress or a history of trauma. For some time, the national and local approach has focused on health promotion approaches. These aim to persuade people exposed to these factors to change their behaviour. However, there is strong evidence to suggest that these will not work. Instead steps must be taken to tackle the 'root causes' of obesity to make healthier choices the easier choices. This approach takes tackling obesity beyond the responsibility of the individual.

There is already a considerable amount of obesity prevention activity underway in Gloucestershire including commissioned interventions and community-led activities. (A snapshot of current healthy weight activities and services is given in Appendix 1). However, despite ten years of local effort (and in line with the national picture) there has been no reduction in obesity levels and obesity-related inequalities are increasing. There is now also emerging evidence that obesity increases the severity of Covid-19 symptoms. So, there is a need to work differently and evidence shows that whole systems working can be effective. This takes an iterative place-based approach to understanding and addressing specific social, economic and environmental root causes.

### 2. Strategic direction

In September 2019 a draft statement of strategic intent was presented to the HWB. This was agreed and adopted by the Board. It can be found on the link: <https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/s55548/GHWB%20Healthy%20Weight%20Position%20Statement.pdf>

The HWB agreed to the following vision and ambition for the healthy weight priority:

We want everyone in Gloucestershire to enjoy the benefits of a healthy weight.

- The local ambition is to achieve a significant, sustained reduction in the level of obesity and a significant reduction in the inequalities gap by 2030.

- In line with the national ambition we want to halve the prevalence of childhood obesity over the next ten years.
- Health inequalities will be the critical thread and our success will be gauged by measuring how well those who are most affected by obesity-related health inequalities are doing.

Gloucestershire County Council was one of four Local Authorities participating in the national 'whole systems obesity' programme (2017-19), working with national and international experts to develop tools to support Local Authorities to implement this approach. The approach set out in the Healthy Weight Statement of Strategic Intent builds on this learning. It was developed by the local healthy weight working group and has been informed by critical review of published evidence, engagement with national and international experts and with local stakeholders, communities and families. It scopes out in broad terms how we propose to build on existing good practice to move towards a more systematic approach to obesity prevention and identifies key priorities for action over the next 2-3 years.

### **3. Governance**

The work to deliver the healthy weight objective is driven by the Healthy Weight working group. This multi-agency group is led by Public Health. As a result of Covid-19 the group has not met for some time. It is anticipated that this group will be reconvened later this year. The Healthy Weight Working Group feeds into the Prevention and Self-Care Board. It was decided that the Prevention and Self-Care Board would merge with the Enabling Active Communities Group. Prior to Covid-19, early discussions were underway to work through how the groups could be merged and yet retain the successful elements of groups.

There is also an obvious synergy with the physical activity HWB priority. The GCC lead for Healthy Weight sits on the steering group for the We Can Move whole systems approach to increasing levels of physical activity in the county.

### **4. Funding**

The healthy weight services outlined in Appendix 1 are all funded from either Gloucestershire County Council's (GCC) Public Health budget or by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). GCC are currently exploring options to continue funding the children's weight management service when the existing funding stream ends in March 2021.

The Health Weight Statement of Strategic Intent outlines what work can be achieved within the current resources available. This includes existing prevention and weight management work. However, if we are to achieve the goal of implementing a whole systems approach to obesity and tackle the root causes that lead to people being overweight and obese then additional funding will be required. Further work is needed to determine the exact resource needed but this has been estimated to be in the region of £100,000 to £125,000 a year.

Implementing a whole systems approach at scale requires dedicated capacity to build and support systems capacity and networks in 'intervention communities' (a 'train the trainer' type approach). Trained local 'catalysts' are supported to bring different parts of their local system together to co-create locally tailored action plans based on a clear understanding of specific local causes and assets. Central to this approach is engaging more widely than our traditional partnerships, in order to involve all those who have the ability to influence the local causes of obesity.

Ongoing contact with the system is needed to understand what is working, what isn't and how the system is changing, so that local action can be adapted to accordingly. Though this way of working requires some upfront investment it ultimately delivers efficiencies through joining up existing assets and embedding healthy weight into policies and programmes, rather commissioning new interventions. Such an approach could initially be tested in one or two districts depending on the level of resource available.

## **5. Measuring progress and addressing health inequalities**

There is currently no agreed approach to monitoring whole systems delivery and we are part of a regional working group led by Public Health England and Bristol University to develop an evaluation and monitoring framework for local areas to use.

Meanwhile the following indicators will be used to monitor local outcomes and capture the learning.

- Obesity prevalence among 4-5 year olds and 10-11 year olds
- Gap in prevalence between 10-11 year old children living in deprivation decile 1 and 10
- Pupil Wellbeing Survey (PWS) indicators (diet and physical activity)
- Numbers of accredited healthy settings e.g. workplaces and evidence of impact
- Numbers of adults and children accessing weight management services (total and by age group, gender, ethnicity and deprivation) and outcomes (weight loss, health improvement)
- Qualitative data - stakeholder and community feedback and case studies to understand what is working well and how the system is adapting so the local response can adapt accordingly.

## **6. Next steps**

The evidence strongly suggests that a whole system approach is the best way to tackle obesity and help our population achieve and maintain a healthy weight. The activity outlined in Appendix 1 and the Statement of Strategic Intent will make some inroads but it remains a programme management approach. If we want to deliver change at scale and reduce obesity levels sustainably within our county then this will require a different way of working. The Healthy Weight Working Group needs to

reconvene and take this work forward. The main task will be sourcing the funding needed to provide the additional resource to do this.

## **7. Recommendations**

1. To note the progress to date and the delay caused by covid-19
2. To note the need for additional funding

## **Appendix 1: Existing healthy weight activity and opportunities for alignment**

This section provides a snapshot of some of the activities already contributing to the healthy weight agenda as well as opportunities to strengthen our overall approach through effective alignment with other strategic priorities. [It is not intended to be comprehensive or to reflect all of the work that's being delivered by partner organisations and communities].

Preventive action to reduce obesity at population level:

- Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning Framework (GHLL): Gloucestershire's well-established healthy schools programme includes explicit action to support healthy eating and physical activity in schools including delivery of The Daily Mile
- We Can Move: Gloucestershire Active Partnership's programme to get 30,000 inactive people active. This model combines systems thinking, behaviour change methodology and social movement building and is an opportunity to transfer learning as well as directly supporting healthy weight
- Health and Planning Framework: In development. Brings together health and planning to enable planners to make best use of existing levers to improve food and physical activity environments
- Gloucestershire Food Strategy: Scoping phase. Potential to include ambition for Gloucestershire to become a Sustainable Food County
- Gloucestershire Air Quality and Health Strategy: Includes action to encourage and enable active travel and public transport use.
- Gloucestershire Healthy Workplace Accreditation Scheme: In development. Supporting employees to support staff health and wellbeing including healthy eating, physical activity and weight management support. Linking with ICS workforce health and wellbeing agenda.
- Gloucestershire Better Births Programme: Explicit action on prevention includes the new 'First 1001 Days Programme', which offers healthy lifestyles support for women in vulnerable circumstances to manage their weight during and after pregnancy and to reduce the risk of their child developing obesity in the early years
- Gloucestershire Oral Health Plan: Action on reducing sugar to be developed
- NHS Long Term Plan: Local response in development.
- Food and families project: A place-based, whole systems test and learn project, working with Podsmead community to co-create interventions to address local barriers to eating healthy food including improved access and food skills
- Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Health and Wellbeing Strategy: including action to support the health and wellbeing of patients, staff and the wider community. Includes a specific project (in development) to support staff to

maintain a healthier weight, based on the findings of qualitative research undertaken with nurses across Trust sites to explore barriers and facilitators

- 'Inclusive Growth' plans: In development. Action on skills and adult education; employment and worklessness; poverty, income and debt, have the potential to lift families out of poverty, thereby reducing their risk of developing obesity. Includes links to the Local Industrial Strategy

#### Weight management support for people already affected by obesity

- Targeted weight management referral options for adults: Services are in place including tier 2, 3 and 4 services (adults) and this provision is included in G-Care across clinical pathways (current eligibility criteria are below NICE thresholds for tier 2 [BMI 27.5] and above NICE thresholds for tier 3 and tier 4 [BMI 40+])
- The National Diabetes Prevention Programme: in place across the county offering alternative weight management support for people with non-diabetic hypoglycaemia
- Weight management support for pregnant women: The countywide Healthy Lifestyles Service has invested in a midwife to develop systems and pathways to improve access to weight management support during pregnancy and post-natal
- Weight management services for children with obesity: GCC and the CCG are working with children and families to developing a pathway of weight management support including community-based support and a specialist service for children with severe obesity. This will go live later in the year.
- NHS Long Term Plan: Local response in development. Includes explicit activity around delivery of weight management support to adults and children.