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| Meeting Name: | Health and Wellbeing Board |
| Date: | 14 November 2024 |
| Report title: | Healthy Weight in Southwark |
| Ward(s) or groups affected: | All |
| Classification: | Open |
| Reason for lateness (if applicable): | Not applicable |
| From: | Sangeeta Leahy Director of Public Health, Southwark Council |

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. The Health and Wellbeing Board notes the healthy weight profile for the child and adult population in Southwark (paras 3 – 8), the progress made in implementation of the Southwark Healthy Weight Strategy (paras 13 -17) and the potential areas for further development (para 23).
2. That the Health and Wellbeing Board provide feedback on the areas for further development (para 23) and opportunities for innovative approaches and collaboration, particularly in relation to the systems approaches required and partnership implications for:
 - Streamlining sign posting to all national and local support services for adults living with obesity, strengthening the range of interventions and increasing awareness of available services to support healthy weight among the general population.
 - Enhancing the systems focus on people who are inactive. Work with other HWB partners to support people who are physically inactive to be active.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. Obesity continues to be a significant public health challenge world over. The term 'obese' describes a person who has excess body fat. [Body Mass Index \(BMI\)](#) is a measure of whether one is a healthy weight for their height. For most adults, having a BMI of 18.5 to 24.9 is considered to be a healthy weight. A BMI of 25 to 29.9 (23 to 27.4 for Asian, Chinese, Middle Eastern, Black African or African-Caribbean family background) is considered to be overweight, and a BMI over 30 (27.5 or above for Asian, Chinese, Middle Eastern, Black African or African-Caribbean family background) is considered to be obese.
4. Childhood obesity is increasing across the UK. [The Office for Health](#)

[Improvement and Disparities \(OHID\)](#) data shows that in 2022/23, 21.3% of 4- to 5-year-olds in England were overweight or living with obesity and 36.6% of 10 to 11 year olds were overweight or living with obesity. In addition, 64% of adults aged 18 years and over in England were estimated to be overweight or living with obesity.

5. Whereas the prevalence of overweight and obesity in Southwark has been relatively stable in recent years, it has remained high and this has a significant impact on our residents' health and wellbeing, our economy and our community as a whole.
6. In 2022/23, 21.7% of Reception children in Southwark were classed as having excess weight (overweight or obese), this rose to 42% for children in Year 6. Similarly, 56.5% of adults were classed as overweight or obese. Marked inequalities persist with areas of high deprivation and people from Black ethnic backgrounds having higher rates of obesity.
7. Obesity is closely associated with the development of several life-limiting chronic health conditions including Type 2 Diabetes, Hypertension, Cardiovascular disease, and poor mental health. The latest [Health Survey for England](#) shows that nationally, 35% of adults with obesity reported a limiting longstanding illness compared with 20% of those who were not overweight nor obese.
8. Levels of physical activity among adults in Southwark are generally higher than the regional and national averages, with 72.6% of adults reporting to be meeting national physical activity goals. The available local primary care data, though insufficient across different ethnic groups, suggests that the levels of physical activity are considerably lower (47.2) amongst Black adult residents aged over 45 years compared to White British (79.9%) and other White (81.1%) adults in Southwark. Work is taking place to strengthen local data collection and analyses by age, ethnicity, social gradient and geography.
9. The landmark 2007 Foresight report [Tackling Obesities: Future Choices](#) highlighted the complex multifaceted system of determinants of obesity as well as the role of the obesogenic environment (range of social, cultural and infrastructural conditions that influence an individual's ability to adopt a healthy lifestyle). The report called for a Whole Systems Approach to tackling obesity, which emphasizes that actions are needed at multiple levels, with various stakeholders working together and reinforcing each other to reshape what people eat and drink and the activity they do. Alignment with other major policy issues is vital in maximising the engagement of a broad range of stakeholders.
10. The government [childhood obesity plan](#) launched in 2016 outlined the actions that the government would take towards its goal of halving childhood obesity and reducing the gap in obesity between children from the most and least deprived areas by 2030. The plan set out a number of actions primarily focused on reducing sugar consumption and increasing physical activity among children. There has also been work on advertising, with restrictions in place around advertising products high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS), especially on

supermarket shelves. On 1 October 2025, further restrictions on advertising identifiable unhealthy food and drink on TV and online will come into force UK-wide: a 9pm TV watershed and a 24-hour restriction on paid for advertising online.

11. The Mayor of London's commitment to addressing child obesity in the capital led to the formation of the London Child Obesity Taskforce in 2018, whose vision was that every child in London grows up in a community and an environment that supports their health and weight. Their recommended ideas and actions were set out in '[Every Child A Healthy Weight – Ten Ambitions for London](#)' aimed at transforming aspects of the daily lives of children and their parents through changes in resources availability, the environment, and care and emotional support. In January 2022, London's Child Obesity Taskforce transitioned into the Mayor's Advisory Group on Child Healthy Weight (MAGCHW) to provide the Mayor of London with expert advice on action needed to support the health and weight of London's children post COVID-19 and this was set out in their 2022 publication '[Every Child a Healthy Weight - Still a Critical Priority for London.](#)'
12. A 2022 [review](#) undertaken by the National Institute for Health Research identified 143 NIHR-funded studies on obesity that are relevant to local authorities. An array of interventions, settings, and study types were considered. The review highlighted the following evidence-based actions that local authorities, working with their local partners, can take to reduce obesity in their communities: Influencing what people buy and eat, encouraging healthy schools, expanding access to public sports and leisure services, promoting active workplaces, providing weight-management programmes, designing built and natural environments, enabling active travel and public transport, preventing obesity in children and families and embracing system-wide approaches.
13. The approach to tackling obesity in Southwark is laid out in the [Southwark Healthy Weight Strategy \(2022-27\)](#), a partnership between Southwark Council, the South East London ICB (Southwark) and VCS. The strategy adopts a whole systems approach, working with partners across the borough's healthy weight network to deliver effective prevention and treatment services that aim to reduce inequalities and improve health.
14. Inequalities within obesity rates in Southwark have informed the identification of the 5 population groups prioritised in this strategy: Maternity and early years, Children and young people, Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, People experiencing food insecurity, Men aged 45 years and above. A set of bold ambitions and related planned actions have been developed for each priority group and are reviewed annually. The strategy is currently in year 3.
15. There are already many examples of good practice in promoting healthy weight in Southwark which can be divided into: 1) place-based and 2) people-focused interventions.
16. The place-based interventions include: the [Southwark School Meals](#)

[Transformation Programme \(SMTP\)](#), School Superzones, Good Food Retail Project, advertising policy for foods high in fat, sugar and salt, Hot Food Takeaway exclusion zones. Some of the year 3 action plan priorities for these interventions include:

- Work with a fast food outlet to improve offer to secondary school children in a Superzone
- Deliver one VCS/business led application for Thriving Highstreets 2024 which supports healthier food environments, supporting Superzones
- Align healthy weight priorities with the wider Southwark SMTP

17. The people-focused interventions include targeted adult weight management programmes, *Alive N Kicking* (child weight management programme) in schools, offering Healthy Start and Alexander Rose voucher schemes to vulnerable families, as well as offering healthy weight training to a variety of healthcare and non-healthcare professionals. We are also working to support individuals to be more physically active through our free swim and gym offer, bike hire schemes, walking groups, as well as offering incentives for active travel through the BetterPoints Southwark app. Active travel is key priority for the Mayor of London, the [Southwark Plan](#) and [Streets for People](#). Year 3 action plan priorities for these interventions include:

- Additional promotion of healthy weight training to professionals in maternity settings
- Extend Alive N Kicking to more school settings
- Enhancing the weight management provision for targeted groups such as Latin American, Men aged over 45 years (especially from Black ethnic backgrounds) and Black-majority Faith groups
- Pilot the use of the BetterPoints Southwark app for a wider range of public health interventions to support a whole person approach
- Increase uptake and access to Healthy Start and Rose Vouchers.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

18. Although there is much work taking place in Southwark to support physical activity, these opportunities are more likely to be taken up by people who are already active. In Southwark, a scoping exercise undertaken by the public health team indicates that the groups of people least likely to be active include: adults aged over 45 years, Black African and Caribbean residents and Council tenants, and people at transition stages i.e. children leaving home, retirement, becoming a carer, being diagnosed with a condition.

19. There are generally a complex set of drivers and barriers that encourage or discourage an active life whether locally or nationally, and these relate to people's environment, daily routines, physical ability, as well as cultural influences. These drivers and barriers are a particularly important consideration when focusing on those groups most likely to be mostly inactive. The [Active Lives Adult Survey report \(2024\)](#) showed that these groups include: unemployed people (45% inactive), disabled people (41%), those aged 75+ (45%), Asian females (37%) and transgendered people (34%).

20. In 2023, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published a sport strategy, [Get Active: a strategy for the future of sport and physical activity](#) which sets out how the government will work with the sport and physical activity sector to achieve the aims of building a healthier nation through tackling high levels of inactivity by ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to be active. The 3 core priorities of this strategy are:
- Being unapologetically ambitious in making the nation more active, whether in government or in the sport sector.
 - Making sport and physical activity more inclusive and welcoming for all so that everyone can have confidence that there is a place for them in sport.
 - Moving towards a more sustainable sector that is more financially resilient and robust.
21. In April 2024, the Association of Directors of Public Health, made [recommendations](#) to the National Physical Activity Taskforce on how the Department for Culture, Media and Sport can work jointly with Directors of Public Health (DsPH) and local authorities to help people to be more active. They recommend a demographic and life course-based approach as well as resourcing leisure centers among others. Any sustainable programme of work among identified priority groups must involve co-production, co-design and (most importantly) co-delivery. The use of grants, community champions and a willingness to think (or at least let communities think) outside the box can deliver sustainable improvements that are fully owned by the people that benefit from them.
22. According to the [NHS](#), living with obesity can increase one's risk of developing many potentially serious health conditions, including: type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, several cancers, sleep apnoea, liver disease and so on. It has been noted that the SEL Tier 2 weight management programme has seen an increase in people presenting with multiple morbidities. This has created a challenge in the management of these patients hence the need for the development of clearly defined patient-centered referral pathway for use by clinicians.
23. Considering the evidence base summarized above and the current work, potential areas for further development may include:
- Adult obesity and common long-term conditions often co-exist. There is need for the development of a patient-centred referral pathway for use by clinicians in the management of these people.
 - Focus on people who are inactive. Work with other HWB partners to support people who are physically inactive to be active, including support for women and birthing parents during the preconception, pregnancy and postnatal periods, considering culturally appropriate services where necessary.
 - Refresh the Healthy Schools/Healthy Early Years programme in Southwark, including rolling out the Alive N Kicking programme in more schools and ensuring that the Public Health offer for schools is widely promoted across the borough.

- Promote the BetterPoints Southwark app widely and use the data collected to clarify which groups engage with active travel and how it addresses health inequalities.
- Streamline sign posting to all national and local support services available for adults living with obesity, as well as increasing awareness of available services to support healthy weight among the general population.
- Increasing capacity in tier 3 weight management support for Children and Young People in Southwark and across SEL.
- Further work on the most suitable delivery model for weight loss drugs in SEL, ensuring appropriate wrap-around care.

Policy framework implications

24. The [South East London \(SEL\) Integrated Care System](#) has a focus on protecting health and wellbeing and supporting people to stay healthy. Southwark Council, as outlined in the [Council Delivery Plan](#), is committed to a healthy environment for its residents, supporting families and investing in our communities. In addition, the SEL Vital 5 programme focuses on reducing obesity and harmful drinking, stopping smoking, controlling blood pressure, and identifying and improving poor mental health which will help in preventing ill health, promoting good health, as well as improving detection, management and treatment of existing conditions.
25. Healthy employment and good health for working age adults' is one of the five drive areas in [Southwark's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#). An aim within the strategy is to 'enable people to lead healthy lifestyles building on the already strong work on the Vital 5 and promote and maximise access to leisure and physical activity.
26. The Southwark Vision for 2030 sets the council priorities and commitments to the people of Southwark until 2030
 - Three Principles: Empowering people, Reducing Inequalities, Investing in Prevention
 - Six Goals: Decent Home For All, Good Start In Life, Safer Southwark, Strong and Fair Economy, Staying Well, Healthy Environment
27. The council has now taken back control of the leisure services and there are plans to reshape the Free Swim and Gym programme to make it more targeted and impactful. This is directly linked to the council's commitment to a 'Fairer future for all', in particular 'breaking down barriers that prevent people from thriving in Southwark, so that whatever your background you can live a healthier life.'
28. Southwark Council [Transport Strategy](#) sets out a bold vision and a firm commitment to improve our residents' quality of life and take action on climate change, by changing how we all travel and use streets in our borough. In particular, the strategy supports healthy travel options like walking, cycling or wheeling.

29. The [Southwark Sustainable Food Strategy](#) envisions a sustainable food system in Southwark to improve health and wellbeing for our population, to reduce inequalities and to protect the planet.
30. The Southwark and Lambeth School Nursing service delivers the National Child Measurement Programme in schools, one of the statutory requirements for the local authority and a priority of the Healthy Weight Strategy. The school nursing service supports the delivery of advice and support on a range of topics, including healthy lifestyles.
31. The healthy weight strategy contributes to Southwark Stands Together (SST) recommendations, in particular: commission and co-produce health services and interventions with Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities including working with key partners to ensure health services and initiatives are culturally appropriate and accessible for Black, Asian and minority ethnic residents.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

32. Tackling obesity across the system requires close working with communities to ensure activities are tailored towards those individuals, groups and communities most at risk.
33. The [evidence](#) suggests that any approaches that local authorities take to tackle obesity must resonate with their local communities and the challenges they face. Moreover, in any given local authority, the approach taken may differ from one neighbourhood to another.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

34. People in deprived areas often face significant barriers to accessing affordable, healthy food and to taking regular exercise. These wider determinants hinder maintaining a healthy weight and can cause variation in people's ability to follow weight management advice and recommendations.
35. It is a council priority to tackle health inequalities and improve health and wellbeing across the life course, focusing on prevention and early intervention. This includes reducing the prevalence of excess weight and commissioning accessible and targeted services. The Healthy Weight Strategy contributes to these aims.
36. Healthy weight interventions across Southwark strive to tackle inequalities through targeting of populations that have the poorest outcomes, with a focus on the most disadvantaged neighborhoods and communities in Southwark. The Healthy weight Strategy adopts a whole systems approach, working with partners to address inequalities.

Health impact statement

37. Overweight and obesity are linked to a wide range of diseases, most commonly: type 2 diabetes, hypertension, some cancers, heart disease, stroke and liver disease, and can also be associated with poor psychological and emotional health, and poor sleep. Overweight children are more likely to become overweight as adults. This could lead to long-term conditions such as type 2 diabetes.
38. Physical activity decreases the risk of premature death and lowers the risk of some common long-term conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Such conditions reduce people's quality of life and also put a financial burden on the NHS.
39. The Healthy Weight Strategy considers the direct and indirect influences on obesity in the borough i.e., health and its wider determinants.

Further guidance

40. Not applicable

Climate change implications

41. Promotion of physical activity, especially active travel through walking, cycling and wheeling has a positive impact on the environment due to lower emissions. Southwark has many primary schools in close proximity to one another and we actively encourage children to travel to school on foot, by bicycle or on public transport.
42. Consumption of more climate-friendly diets (plant-based) and reduction in red meat consumption not only have health benefits, but also lead to reduced carbon emissions.

Resource implications

43. According to the [Department of Health and Social Care](#), it is estimated that the NHS spends £6 billion per-year on obesity-related health care. This figure is expected to rise to over £9.7 billion each year by 2050; the total [NHS budget](#) was £168.8 billion for 2023/24.

Consultation

44. The healthy weight strategy and action plan was produced through comprehensive workshops and conversations with residents, NHS colleagues and partners, The Healthy Weight Network, The Southwark Food Action Alliance, Council colleagues, including from Transport, Early Help, Planning and Leisure, local organisations and charities, including Guy's and St Thomas' Trust, Impact on Urban Health and Bite Back 2030. The Healthy Weight Task Force meets every six weeks to ensure that the action plan is on track.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Head of Procurement

45. Not sought

Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance

46. Not sought

Strategic Director of Resources

47. Not sought

Other officers

48. Not sought

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

| Background Papers | Held At | Contact |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Southwark Healthy Weight Strategy Healthy weight strategy refresh 2022-2027 overview 25.10.22 (15).pdf | Public Health Division, Children and Adults Department Rebecca Harkes, 020 7525 | Sheila Katureebe 020 7525 5514 |
| ADPH summary report to National Physical Activity Taskforce | The Association of Directors of Public Health (UK) Hamilton House 1 Temple Avenue London EC4Y 0HA | policy@adph.org.uk Sheila Katureebe 020 7525 5514 |
| How can local authorities reduce obesity? Insights from NIHR research How can local authorities reduce obesity? - NIHR Evidence | National Institute for Health and Care Research | Sheila Katureebe 020 7525 5514 |

APPENDICES

| No. | Title |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Appendix 1 | Healthy Weight in Southwark (Power Point presentation) |

AUDIT TRAIL

This section must be included in all reports.

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Lead Officer | Sangeeta Leahy, Director of Public Health | |
| Report Author | Sheila Katureebe, Policy and Programme Officer (Healthy Weight and Physical Activity) | |
| Version | Final | |
| Dated | 01/11/2024 | |
| Key Decision? | No | |
| CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER | | |
| Officer Title | Comments Sought | Comments Included |
| Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance | No | No |
| Strategic Director of Resources | No | No |
| List other officers here | n/a | n/a |
| Cabinet Member | No | No |
| Date final report sent to Constitutional Team | 1 November 2024 | |