

Draft INTERIM REPORT

Review of childhood obesity and sports provision for secondary and primary children

1. Introduction and background

1.1 This is an interim report on the review of childhood obesity and sports provision for secondary and primary children. The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee decided to conduct a review on 12 July 2010. The aim is to make recommendations to the Cabinet for improvements to the education of children on healthy eating and the dangers of obesity, and to examine whether sports provision is adequate

1.2 The committee set out to address these questions :

- What programmes of study are followed by primary and secondary pupils on nutrition, cooking, healthy lifestyles? Are they adequate?
- How are pupils consulted with regard to sport and exercise? Is there sufficient variety and accessibility for different interests?
- What facilities are available to young people and their parents if they acknowledge there is a weight problem and want help?
- Are we making best use of London Olympics?

1.2 The sub-committee chose this subject because Southwark has very high levels of childhood obesity. The Childhood Measurement Programme measure Reception Year and Year 6 pupils. We have had nationally the most obese Year 6 pupils for the past 3 years and, despite a small reduction, and we are likely to have the highest percentage again for 09/10.

1.3 The committee chose to look at sports provision because of its link with childhood obesity and because during the last administrative year the education representatives had raised concerns that many children in Southwark were not doing the 2 hours recommended exercise in schools.

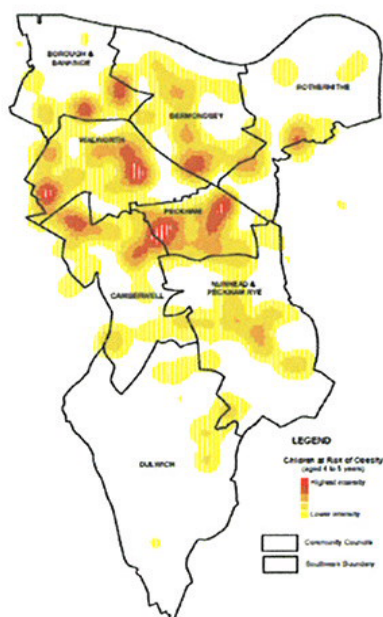
2 Evidence considered so far

Population prevalence

- 2.1 The committee has received evidence on the rates of childhood obesity and its prevalence amongst different segments of the local population. This is a national problem; 32.6 % of children in England are overweight or obese by year 6 and 38.9 % of Southwark's children are either overweight or obese by year 6. (Prevalence of underweight, healthy weight, overweight and obese children, with associated 95% confidence intervals, by PCT and SHA, England, 2008/09)
- 2.2 The national Health Survey for England suggests that the prevalence of childhood obesity is increasing in Southwark across all ages. Local measurements of Reception Year (4 – 5 years old) and Year 6 children (10 – 11 years old) confirm this: for the last 3 years (06/07, 07/08, 08/09) Southwark has had the highest obesity rates for Year 6 and the second highest for Year R for the last 2 years (07/08, 08/09). The latest childhood obesity measurements (09/10) indicate 25.7% (Year 6) and 14.8% (Year R) of pupils are obese.
- 2.3 Data sets were presented that indicated that as children move from reception to year 6 the percentage of overweight and obese children increases.
- 2.4 Nationally certain ethnic populations are more at risk; obesity is most prevalent in Black or Black British children; 25.3% at year 6. Asian, mixed and other groups are also more at risk with rates between 21 and 22 % at year 6. White children have a rate of 17 % and Chinese children are least at risk with rates of 16%. (Prevalence of underweight, healthy weight, overweight and obese children, with associated 95% confidence intervals, by ethnic category, England, 2008/09)

- 2.5 Obesity is related to socio economic deprivation. Data sets by community council area were presented and it was noted that there is a link between obesity and social deprivation. Particular hot spots were identified:

Year 6 (10 – 11yrs)



- 2.6 Boys in Southwark are more at risk than girls; at year 6 38 % of girls are overweight or obese where as 43 % of boys are overweight or obese.

Childhood obesity and healthy weight

- 2.7 Officers presented information on NICE guidance and Foresight report on what works for childhood obesity; both agree that the approaches must include environment, schools, workplaces and families with an emphasis on a multi faceted, holistic approach. The 'obesogenic' environment must be addressed i.e. opportunities for physical activity encouraged (e.g. walking to school as part of the school transport plan; access to green space) and the proliferation of unhealthy fast food outlets tackled.
- 2.8 Southwark has a Healthy Weight Strategy. This has four main strands; early intervention, shifting the curve (i.e. prevention at a population level); weight management and targeting populations at great risk of obesity. This is a multi agency plan which sets out the key areas of work. The priorities involve a range of settings and different professionals and communities. The strategy is informed by national guidance, best practice and evidence of what works. For

interventions to be effective, they have to be multi-component (i.e. inputs to include nutrition, physical activity and mental health).

Strategy Plan Priorities 10/11

Strand 1

Early Years prevention

- Maternal health
- Baby Friendly Status / La Leche training / peer support
- Training for early years staff
- Children's centres:
 - Healthy eating policies
 - Physical activity policies

Strand 2

Shifting the curve

- Physical environment
- Whole school approach to promoting Free School Meals
- Working with parents and families
- Physical activity for the most inactive
- Led walks
- Training for community leaders
- Southwark Food Strategy

Strategy Plan Priorities 10/11

Strand 3

Targeting 'at risk'

- Training for at risk BME communities
- Training for providers of LD services
- Health checks for high risk groups
- Training for Primary care on brief interventions

Strand 4

Weight management

- Intervention for families
- Weight management options for adults
- Training for frontline professionals

Sport and physical activity

2.9 The NICE recommendations for increasing physical activity emphasise the need to improve the physical environment to encourage physical activity and promoting evidence based behavior change. NICE has produced a detailed review of the evidence supporting the promotion of physical activity for children and young people¹. The key recommendations relate to:

- Promoting the benefits of physical activity and encouraging participation at national and local levels
- Ensuring high-level strategic policy planning for children and young people supports the physical activity agenda
- Consultation with, and the active involvement of, children and young people
- The planning and provision of spaces, facilities and opportunities
- The need for a skilled workforce
- Promoting physically active and sustainable travel

2.10 Southwark has a Physical Activity Strategy. Overall the strategy seeks to increase sport and physical activity participation. Put simply, enabling more people to be more active, more often. It has 7 strategic themes:

- Using physical activity for both the prevention and management of ill-health
- Maximizing the use of planning policy in providing for sport and physical activity
- Providing a network of appropriate places and spaces for sport and physical activity
- Improving access and choice for the whole population
- Building and maintaining an effective multi-agency delivery system for sport and physical activity
- Maximizing the use of London 2012 to promote physical activity

2.11 Southwark Leisure and Well Being Team are continuing to provide a host of programmes, through Southwark Community Games and SCG Superstar Challenge Programme, Sport Unlimited and a Young People with Disabilities programme. The funding for the School Sports Coordination is coming to an

¹ [PH17 Promoting physical activity for children and young people: guidance](#) Jan 2009

end at the end of March 2011. Officers reported that the current economic climate is raising a host of questions regarding on going provision and discussions are underway regarding budget pressures and further delivery.

- 2.12 Leisure centers are currently undergoing major refurbishment: there is investment spread across all the council owned facilities.
- 2.13 Officer's highlighted three locally effective interventions. MEND (Mind, Exercise, Do it) was part of a national trial and had been effective at decreasing children's BMI (Body Mass Index) and reducing waist circumference. The 'Superstars Challenge' had been similarly effective. Lastly the Bacons School Partnership has seen a year on year increase in physical activity.
- 2.14 Public health, in partnership with the leisure and wellbeing team, successfully delivered the MEND programme (family based weight management intervention) for almost 4 years using lottery funding, which has now ended. The programme evaluated well. Without ongoing funding from external sources the challenge is to now to embed what worked well within on-going programmes such as the Southwark Community Games (SCG), Superstars Challenge obesity programme and the School Sports Partnership's Family Wellbeing programme.
- 2.15 'Southwark Superstars Challenge' is a pilot project. So far six schools with the highest obesity rates have been recruited to the programme. The programme introduces intensive physical activity in yr 5 (age 9-10). The 10 week programme runs three times a week for 45 - 50 minutes of physical activity and 10 minutes of nutrition education. At the start and end of the programme children do fitness test and have their measurements taken. School staff and heads have been very enthusiastic about the programme so impact to date has been highly successful.
- 2.16 Bacons College has a physical education and school sports partnership team. In seven years the partnership ensured schools have progressed from 23% of our their young people participating in two hours physical education and school sport a week to over 90%. They have developed a Health and wellbeing being programme that integrates some of the learning from MEND and promotes health 'literacy'. The programme's emphasis is on working with schools to increase the coaching skills of teachers in PE and introducing the Health and Eellbeing programme in sustainable way. The funding for the School Sports Coordination is coming to an end in March 2011, however the partnership has secured some funding for the next year.

Targeted work

- 2.17 Officers reported that their is a strong association between obesity and ethnicity. There has been targeted work with communities. There has been a community based intervention for families with children aged 4-7years targeting at risk BME groups. In late 2009 the National Change4Life team worked with Southwark and Lambeth PCTs to deliver two campaign launch events, one for community leaders and another for staff working with West

African groups. Public Health delivered a two-day training session on healthy weight for the Somali Refugee Council in November 2009.

- 2.18 Online obesity care pathways for adults and children are being promoted to GPs, practice nurses, school nurses, health visitors and child development workers. Pathways ensure up-to-date clinical guidance is embedded as well as local opportunities and contacts for interventions and self help.
- 2.19 The Council is currently also working with community members (community volunteers) in Peckham and Faraday who will facilitate the gathering of information from their peers on local social issues as well as possible solutions. One area that they may potentially explore in this pilot could be around child healthy eating/weight as data shows that this is a prevalent issue in this area particularly around the BME groups. The exact focus is yet to be decided by the community through their discussions.

Schools and free school meals

- 2.20 The Healthy Schools Partnership has been working in all schools to develop policy and practice on a range of PSHE related activities, including healthy eating and physical activity. In order to achieve Healthy School status, schools have to provide evidence against a set of National Standards. Currently 86% of schools in Southwark have achieved Healthy School status with a further 25% of schools working on enhanced status. The central funding for the Healthy Schools Programme is also finishing at the end of March. Current discussions are taking place with schools to develop a locally agreed enhancement model to ensure further work on health and education is taking place and is being evaluated for behavioral impact on our children and young people. This shall be launched in the spring term.
- 2.21 Healthy Schools is supporting the development of a whole school approach to sustainable food. 18% of schools are participating in the Million Meals campaign to increase uptake of school meals (13 primary and 4 secondary).
- 2.22 Free training and 1:1 support sessions for school cooks are provided with involvement of a food consultant (funded until March 31st). Guidance is currently available for school governors on selecting nutrient analysis software to ensure school lunch menus are compliant with food and nutrient based standards.
- 2.23 It was noted that Southwark's recent commitment to free school meals will be part of a whole school approach to reducing childhood obesity. The 'whole school approach' emphasizes engaging with pupils, teachers and parents, embedding healthy eating in the curriculum, encouraging healthy behaviour in and out of school and linking transports plans with the physical environment and the food strategy.

Physical Environment

- 2.24 There are evidence-based recommendations on how to improve the physical environment to encourage physical activity. They are for NHS and other professionals who have responsibility for the built or natural environment.

This includes local transport authorities, transport planners, those working in local authorities and the education, community, voluntary and private sectors. The recommendations cover strategy, policy and plans, transport, public open spaces, buildings and schools.² They include:

- Ensure planning applications for new developments always priorities the need for people (including those whose mobility is impaired) to be physically active as a routine part of their daily life.
- Ensure pedestrians, cyclists and users of other modes of transport that involve physical activity are given the highest priority when developing or maintaining streets and roads.
- Plan and provide a comprehensive network of routes for walking, cycling and using other modes of transport involving physical activity.
- Ensure public open spaces and public paths can be reached on foot, by bicycle and using other modes of transport involving physical activity.

2.25 Southwark has a fast food outlet strategy aimed at limiting the saturation by reducing the number of new outlets in certain areas and promoting healthier menus at existing outlets.

3. Initial responses to questions from the Scoping Document from officers

3.1 What programmes of study are followed by primary and secondary pupils on nutrition, cooking, healthy lifestyles? Are they adequate?

- Programmes of Study range from school to school.
- Schools work on Healthy Eating as part of their Science, PSHE and DT lessons. Each school develops this work individually according to their programmes of study and in line with other curriculum commitments. The previous government had stipulated a wish for all secondary schools to have cookery lessons by 2011 and provided free training for Design and Technology teachers on how to integrate cooking into the curriculum. This is currently not the case.
- 86% of schools have provided information about a whole school approach to healthy eating for the Healthy School status, indicating that work is taking place to promote healthy eating with an understanding of nutrition and what constitutes a healthy meal.
- The amount of time allocated to this area of work also varies from school to school. Many schools have an active School Council that is involved in the development of healthy school meals.

3.2 How are pupils consulted with regard to sport and exercise? Is there sufficient variety and accessibility for different interests?

- The National curriculum for PE provides school staff with an opportunity to work on a range of physical activities. Dance has been introduced to many schools as

² [PH8 Physical activity and the environment: guidance](#) Jan 2008

part of the curriculum and others have piloted a range of activities such as yoga and Tai Kwondo. The latter was initially funded through NRF opportunities and has been successfully financed by schools themselves.

- As part of a whole school approach, the Healthy Schools team advocates strongly that pupils are involved in the decision making process around curriculum and after school activities.
- Unfortunately it is more difficult now to hear what pupils say across the borough as surveys such as the Pupil Voice or SHEU are no longer used.
- Most schools are providing some physical activity after schools with a range of activities but this is dependant upon individual schools also.
- Southwark Community Games provide a range of sporting opportunities inside the school time and additional After School clubs. SCG made a concerted effort to address the range of sports on offer to ensure there was a greater equity and appeal for girls to engage; this was shown to be important and effective as the ratio of girl/boy engagement improved as a result.

3.3 What facilities are available to young people and their parents if they acknowledge there is a weight problem and want help?

- In the first instance the family GP or school nurse would be most accessible and they will have had access to local training on how to support families on this issue, and informed of the Map of Medicine care pathway to support decision making re treatment.
- A wide range of internet based support and self help is available, and the PCT and Council have both set up links to the government's own Change4Life website which provides useful suggestions for effective behaviour change and links to further support. The Council and PCT have supported schools with several workshops and information to promote use of the campaign with their pupils and parents.
- The National Child Measurement Programme has been running for four years, whereby pupils in reception and Year Six are measured. From this 09/10, school nurses follow up children of very unhealthy weight, providing advice and sign posting to parents.
- Prior to this year, there had been a MEND programme (Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, Do it) whereby a self-referral process was established and parents of obese children could attend, with their child, a twice weekly programme for nine weeks. Funding for this has now ceased. Lessons from the MEND inform the Superstars Challenge and School Sports Partnership programmes.

3.4 Are we making best use of London Olympics?

- A termly newsletter of sporting and cultural opportunities is being sent to all schools.

All schools are being encouraged to:

- join the Get Set London 2012 network [100% schools by Easter 2011]
- join the Change for life campaign and the WOW campaign [walking to school]
- take part in Dance Challenge 2010 and 2011 [target of at least 40 school and community groups in 2010]
- take part in the Programme of sporting activity for schools related to Olympics values, Led by the Schools sports partnership, this will be a series of Olympic based sporting activities for schools including the Southwark Schools Olympics (July 2012)

- There are currently a series of pilots operating across the country, known as the School Style Olympic Project which brings new sports to young people on school sites. This will involve a series of competitions throughout the terms. This is currently in its early stages, and will develop over the coming months.

4 Issues and emerging recommendations

4.1 Early Years / prevention

Evidence of need - the most recent Childhood Measurement Programme shows that Southwark has the highest levels of Reception Year obesity nationally. In Reception year pupils 14.8% were obese and a similar proportion (15.0%) were overweight. In year 6, one in four children (25.7%) was obese and 14.5% overweight. Locally maternal obesity is also of concern and is a factor in poorer maternity outcomes and higher infant mortality.

- 4.1.1 Implement NICE guidance (2010) for maternal obesity “Weight management for before and after pregnancy”. Local authority leisure and community services should offer women with babies and children the opportunity to take part in a range of physical or recreational activities. This could include swimming, organised walks, cycling or dancing. Activities need to be affordable and available at times that are suitable for women with older children as well as those with babies. Where possible, affordable childcare (for example, a crèche) should be provided and provision made for women who wish to breastfeed.
- 4.1.2 Develop and implement consistent healthy eating and physical activity policies across Southwark Children’s Centers that promote breastfeeding and ensure compatibility with the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and Caroline Walker Trust nutrition guidelines.
- 4.1.3 Develop and carefully promote courses using professional chefs on cooking, shopping and nutrition through aspirational marketing to appeal to parents and carers.
- 4.1.4 Active encouragement for all nursery staff to attend under 5’s healthy weight training to support implementation of policies. Extend also to anyone caring for a child under 5 (there may be a high proportion of children being looked after by unregistered childminders e.g. family members).
- 4.1.5 Consider the potential for undertaking a local weighing programme using school nurses to weigh children in early years.

4.2 Population level change

Evidence of need - Creating healthier environments (activity- and food-related) and integrating healthier behaviours into our everyday living have been demonstrated as a necessary part of any response to support change of behaviour patterns associated with obesity. Solutions include changes in transport infrastructure and urban design

as they are more likely to affect multiple factors influencing obesity than individual changes and support a healthier, sustainable environment.

4.2.1 Promoting active travel - ensuring every school has a healthy transport plan that encourages active travel i.e. walking and cycling to school.

4.2.2 Create a healthier environment for our children and young people by restricting the licensing of new hot food takeaways e.g. within 400m boundary or 10min walking distance of schools, children centre's, youth-centered facilities. High concentrations of fast food outlets are currently in Peckham Town centre, Queens Rd Peckham, Walworth Rd. Other London boroughs have been very effective in their planning restrictions (e.g. www.barking-dagenham.gov.uk/2-press-release/press-release-menu.cfm?item_code=3761), supporting more healthy eating opportunities, greater diversity of local outlets as well as reducing litter and anti social behaviour.

4.3 Schools and Free school meal pilot

4.3.1 Ensure a whole school approach to implementing the universal free school meals programme by involving all staff, children, parents, governors and the wider school community. A whole school food policy should promote the uptake of school meals, nutrition based standards, healthy behaviours and environments and sustainability issues (could include PSHE lessons, farm trips, and breakfast clubs, grow cook and eat clubs, stay on site lunchtime policy etc).

4.3.2 The 'Superstars Challenge' ensured that children received 3 hours of sports provision and that included 45 minutes of constant cardio-vascular movement. Time spent travelling to and from the activity was not counted, whereas this usually can be. Officer reported it took time to negotiate this level of provision with schools as this was 3 hours less academic time delivered. Integrating the 'Superstars Challenge' with the free school meal offer might be the most effective strategy.

4.3.3 Concern was expressed that that lunches provided are often prepared hours in advance. The food is often insipid tasting and then children choose the tastier bits, which may not be the healthiest parts of the meal. Moreover sometimes the food at delivery point has little resemblance to the menu description. There was concern that that responsibility for school meal provision has now moved to the governors which may not be realistic for them to adequately monitor.

4.3.4 Ensuring there is delivery of high quality physical activity and school sports throughout the borough and that school are asked to report on levels of engagement in physical activity and sports as measures of health and wellbeing. The SCG Superstars Challenge programme is directly linked to Healthy Schools programme and is incorporated into the obesity challenges throughout the borough. In addition Southwark Community Games wider programme is additionally targeted at very precise areas of population in local neighbourhoods and the link with sport and physical activity as part of the

London 2012 brand. This should be linked into the LBS Olympic Delivery Board, and the Health Factor Steering Group.

- 4.3.5 The NICE recommendations and the Bacons partnership emphasise that for sports to be effective it needs to be fun and of high quality; coaches need the right level of skills. Ensure that all school can get sports coaching for relevant teachers. Encourage active and outdoor play in schools during playtime.

4.4 Working with populations at greater risk

Evidence of need – There appears to be a higher risk of obesity for people from some groups in Southwark including lower socioeconomic groups, some ethnic minority groups (the Black or Black British population have a higher prevalence of obesity) and people with other needs such as learning disabilities and mental ill-health can find it more difficult to maintain a healthy weight.

- 4.4.1** Enhancing healthier eating knowledge and behaviours amongst at risk populations, working with relevant geographic and ethnic communities.
- 4.4.2** Supporting people with learning disabilities and mental ill-health, as well as the carers and staff that work with them to encourage healthy eating and physical activity behaviours.