

Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight

Briefing Paper

Public Health Northamptonshire 2021

1. Purpose of this paper

1. For information and assurance through the contents of this report.
2. Ensure this work is aligned to projects within the Council.
3. To identify further key stakeholders to be involved; political champions and appropriate governance arrangements.

2. Context

‘Obesity is a complex problem with multiple causes and significant implications for health and beyond. We know that there is no one single solution. Tackling such an ingrained problem requires a long-term, system-wide approach that make obesity everybody’s business, is tailored to local needs and works across the life course.’¹

In July 2019 PHE brought out their research surrounding the four years of pilot work on the Whole Systems Approach (WSA) to obesity² which complements the LGA report of 2017³.

A local WSA responds to complexity through an ongoing, dynamic and flexible way of working. It enables local stakeholders, including communities, to come together, share an understanding of the reality of the challenge, consider how the local system is operating and where there are the greatest opportunities for change. Stakeholders agree actions and decide as a network how to work together in an integrated way to bring about sustainable, long-term systems change.

Actions to tackle healthy weight and obesity at a local level do not just benefit people’s health. They can have positive impacts on other local agendas, including employability, education, the environment and transport. The WSA adds value by providing the opportunity to engage stakeholders across the wider system to develop a shared vision and actions that tackle driver’s right across the system. Figure 1, below illustrates the key components of this work and gives some examples of current actions for each. A WSA works on all these areas simultaneously with an agreed plan to effectively impact on healthy weight and obesity.

Nationally, obesity is a key priority and Covid has meant it has been even more highlighted as a challenge that needs addressing. The government has initiated a new national policy⁴ and provided additional investment⁴ to boost current activities and requirements and to emphasise that all Integrated Care Systems prioritise this work. The recent LGA briefing, 2021⁵, has also highlighted the role of local authorities in this work. It advocates for robust weight management services within a whole-system approach to tackling healthy weight and obesity, and particularly following Covid to focus on those most in need – men, people living with obesity from deprived areas and

¹ PHE, 2019, Whole Systems Approach to Obesity: A guide to support local approaches to promoting a healthy weight.

² Ibid 1

³ LGA 2017, Making Obesity Everybody’s Business [Making obesity everybody’s business: A whole systems approach to obesity | Local Government Association](#) 04/11/2019

⁴ DHSC, 2020, Tackling Obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives. source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-obesity-government-strategy> 27/07/2020

⁵ LGA, 2021, Must Know: behavioural weight management services – a guide to tackling obesity. [Must know: behavioural weight management services – a guide to tackling obesity | Local Government Association](#) 27/07/2021

people from BAME groups and to ensure inclusive services for people with protected characteristics.

Figure 1: Framework for the Whole Systems Approach in relation to Healthy Weight
(With examples of current initiatives in Northamptonshire for each aspect)

<p>Partnership approach and engagement <i>Event – Autumn Mapping events Governance</i></p>	<p>Communication and marketing <i>Awareness raising and education Campaigns Behavioural insight</i></p>	<p>Workforce skills and knowledge development <i>MECC (Making Every Contact Count) ‘Let’s talk about weight’</i></p>	<p>Pregnancy and Infants <i>Infant feeding Baby Friendly Initiative Peer breastfeeding support Healthy lifestyles midwives Healthy Start</i></p>
<p>Providing access to services including weight management and Exercise on Referral <i>Contract Weight Management Exercise on Referral Tier1 -4 Pathways</i></p>	<p>Whole system approach to Healthy Weight in a Place context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Partner and forums conversations and engagement to develop the ambitions and actions. · Data collection and briefings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Hotspot areas at MSOA /LSOA level ▫ Target groups for weight management · Behavioural insight · Creation of the narrative 		<p>Activating communities in supporting healthy eating and active lives initiatives <i>Community cooking & growing Adult learning Universal children’s offer Local community voice</i></p>
<p>Schools and early years’ settings <i>Healthy schools Scheme ‘Healthy Me’ early years NCMP and healthy lifestyle groups (NHFT) Weight management pathways Special schools</i></p>			<p>Create an environment that promotes physical activity <i>Green spaces Nsport strategy Country parks lottery project Healthy walks</i></p>
<p>Creating Healthy workplaces <i>Standards and product offer Workplace roles and plans</i></p>	<p>Planning a healthy environment <i>Planning Licensing Local Nature Partnership SPD’s on Hot food takeaways in Local Plans</i></p>	<p>Active travel <i>CWIS – cycling and walking strategy LCWIP Transport plans Town transport strategies</i></p>	<p>The food environment and access to healthy foods <i>Eat Out Eat Well Award Sustainable Food Places Procurement for public services Community food Food poverty</i></p>

The Long Term Plan 2021/22 planning guidance sets out a requirement for the acceleration of preventative programmes and proactive health management for groups at greatest risk of poor health outcomes. The new Weight Management Enhanced Service encourages practices to develop a supportive environment for clinicians to engage with patients living with obesity about their weight, and provides up to £20m funding for referrals to weight management services. This enhanced service goes alongside a broader expansion of weight management services, including the launch of the NHS Digital Weight Management Service for those with hypertension and diabetes, and further investment into local authority tier 2 services.

The government has recently invested through PHE over £30m into local authorities commissioned adult behavioural weight management services. This has been aggregated on our levels of population, obesity and deprivation and the figure for West Northamptonshire for 2021/22 is £211,075 and for North Northamptonshire is £181,070.

3. Local need

With almost two thirds of the adult population across the county and a third of 11-year-olds being overweight or obese the scale of the challenge to tackle is stark and clear. It is mirrored nationally and has implications beyond the individual and health. It impacts on life chances physically, economically and emotionally and is a key priority as demonstrated in table 1 below.

Table 1: Proportion of resident's overweight or obese in Northamptonshire⁶		
Children Reception (age 4-5) 11)	Year 6 (age 10-11)	Adults 18+
22%	32%	64%
North Northamptonshire		
24%	34%	66%
West Northamptonshire		
21%	30%	62%

4. Background

At the onset of this work in 2019 it was clear that there were services, work and initiatives across the system influencing the environment in Northamptonshire that support the healthy weight agenda. However, this work was not necessarily joined up, working to shared targets and agendas or working across all areas, or utilising data and soft intelligence to determine need and actions.

The past 18 months has seen the networking and mapping of this area and development of how a coordinated plan across the two new Unitary Authorities can be initiated. This plan is being led by public health and in partnership with stakeholders will identify clear ambitions and targets for a system wide approach to tackling issues surrounding healthy weight.

⁶ PHE Fingertips website [Public Health Profiles - PHE](#) 05/05/2021

The first partnership conversation was held through a webinar in November 2020 with over 40 partners across the system coming together to share best practice, agree challenges and how we can work together to develop a system wide coordinated plan. This work is now expanding and with the inauguration of the two new Unitary Authorities a workplan is being developed with partners.

5. Progress to date

5.1 Development of the whole systems framework

Public Health has been networking with key partners across the system, including NHS, Primary Care, Local Authority Planning, Transport, Education, NSport, Voluntary and Community Sector and mapping services across the system to understand the current position and identify opportunities for partnership working. Planning for a series of webinars is in progress to consider each aspect of the framework and agree plans and ambition. These will include potential targets and plans for the years 2022 and beyond.

5.2 Draft WSA strategy

Currently drafting the template for a document that pulls together the principles, ambitions and workplan of the project following events, conversations and webinars. By January 2022 an overarching plan with actions and targets will be drafted for approval. Each aspect of the whole systems approach (WSA) will have a lead group or person who informs and helps drive the document objectives and action plan. Integral in the document is a clarity of the targets, goals and monitoring and evaluation plans to ensure we can identify the difference made and the gaps still existing.

5.3 Development of weight management services and pathways

Public Health are working in partnership with the CCG on weight management pathway development from universal to tier 4, incorporating the LA and CCG services. This has included re-tendering of tier 2 adult weight management services, with the new providers commencing in April 2021.

- **Local Authority Tier 2 weight management services** - There are currently three providers for tier 2 services in the council, which are: Slimming World; Northampton Town Football Club and a digital offer from Solutions for Health – all self-referrals. Self-referral site is [here](#).
Currently working with Sarah Barnes on a collective weight management pathway page for system 1 that also takes into account the NDPP work.
- **PHE fund for Tier 2 weight management services** – as mentioned above, PHE have provided additional in-year funding to increase the reach of Tier 2 services and target specific groups not currently engaging with services. In order to identify and encourage more community-based programmes an ‘Expression of Interest’ for funding has been circulated to community and voluntary groups. 15 applications across the county have been received and are currently being evaluated and if successful will commence in the autumn. A second round is also planned.
- **Enhanced GP Service & launch of National Digital Weight Management Service**
- The LTP 2021/22 planning guidance sets out a requirement for the acceleration of preventative programmes and proactive health management for groups at greatest risk of poor health outcomes. The Weight Management Enhanced Service

encourages practices to develop a supportive environment for clinicians to engage with patients living with obesity about their weight, and provides up to £20m funding nationally for referrals to weight management services. This enhanced service goes alongside a broader expansion of weight management services, including the launch of the NHS Digital Weight Management Service for those with hypertension and diabetes, and further investment into local authority tier 2 services. This service launched on 1st July. Public Health are working with the CCG to ensure that pathways and referrals into services are clear for the system.

5.4 Communications and engagement

Public Health have launched a new campaign 'Your Roadmap to Better Health' to promote health and wellbeing and will develop and deliver a wider communication and engagement plan throughout 2021. The aim is to increase community engagement in order to raise awareness, access and usage of relevant services. This will involve particularly working with targeted groups that are not currently accessing services. It will also utilise the national government 'Better Health' campaign material.

5.5 West Northants Sustainable Food Place (WNSFP)

In West Northants a group of key organisations representing a wide range of interest in good, sustainable food, including Public Health, has come together to inspire and co-ordinate work under the 6 criteria below and produce a sustainable food strategy for our area, which aligns to the WSA programme.

- Taking a strategic and collaborative approach to good food governance and action
- Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement
- Tackling food poverty, diet related ill-health and access to affordable healthy food
- Creating a vibrant, prosperous and diverse sustainable food economy
- Transforming catering and procurement and revitalizing local supply chains
- Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food and farming and an end to food waste⁷

The group obtained registration as a Sustainable Food Place in April of 2021. Northampton Hope Centre convenes the work of the partnership and chairs meetings, and with Sustain and Lottery funding employs a development worker. A number of subgroups have been set up and Public Health are chairing the Food and Health Partnership Group which has held its first meeting. The group's aim is to agree a shared framework of action on food and health.

A similar food network is beginning to form in the North under the Chair of Elaine O'Leary from Northamptonshire ACRE and Public Health are a key partner along with others from North Northants.

5.6 Planning partnerships

Prior to unitary status Public Health have worked with planning teams to develop and implement planning policies creating healthier environments. By taking this approach, we can work with the local planning system to improve access to healthy food. Northampton has included a 'Hot Food Takeaways' policy in their Local Plan, only permitting new hot food takeaway proposals located at least 400m from any primary or secondary school entrance. Additionally, Public Health respond to planning application

⁷ Sustain: Sustainable food places criteria, https://www.sustainablefoodplaces.org/about/our_approach/ 26/05/2021

consultations where there are applications impacting on the food environment. In the new unitary authorities, Public Health will continue to work with planning teams on the development of policies that improve the food environment across the whole county, encouraging healthier food choices and enhancing access to good, local food.

5.7 Physical Activity Network

The 2018/21 Northamptonshire Physical Activity Framework needs updating for 2022. Public Health have established a network group with an initial focus on bringing in partners from primary care and the NHS, in order to ensure the new framework uses the whole systems view. Key links have been made contributing to the proposed development of the pathway for physical activity across the universal to tier 4 health spectrum. This framework will be an integral strategy in the whole system approach and the goal is to ensure it explores the areas highlighted in figure 1 above and identifies current best practice, opportunities and challenges.

5.8 Updating JSNA documents

Task and finish group set up to refresh the data that informs the narrative for this work. The initial JSNA Insight Pack will be available in September 2021.

6. Future Plans

2021/22

- By September 2021 hold the initial internal WSA project board and agree the direction of travel and the governance structure for this work. This will include taking the project through CLT / ELT, CCG and Councillor briefings.
- Continue the networking across identified groups. Particularly NHS; business; voluntary sector and communities. This ongoing work will increase the awareness of the initiative across partners and communities and identify key champions. Meeting with the '1001 Days' strategic group to begin discussions on their work and contribution to this agenda.
- Develop a series of webinars for schools in partnership with the Healthy Schools Advisers.
- Identify and work with commissioners and officers in the CCG / ICS regarding the whole system and joint working. The recent Kings Fund report, 2021, clearly describes the role of the NHS and primary care in the whole system approach⁸.
- To ensure a wide reach of this work we are keen to identify key senior management and political champions in each of the 2 new unitary authorities who can drive this work.
- Developing a grant model to encourage and facilitate community approaches and solutions particularly in the areas of cooking skills, growing food and being active.

2022/23

Further implementation of the plans and review of the current position and forward targets and ambitions developed.

⁸ Holmes, J., 2021, Tackling Obesity: The role of the NHS in a whole-system approach. Kings Fund.

7. Recommendations

Elected members are pivotal in ensuring this work is championed and signalling that this is a priority for North Northamptonshire and engaging the local community and local community assets.

We therefore ask, that Councillors support and endorse the whole systems approach described above in Public Health tackling healthy weight and obesity.

- This work will enable the whole system to come together and identify shared agendas and goals in line with the Corporate Plan, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Integrated Care System Plans.
- Identify a political champion who can work together with Public Health in leading and driving this work.

Project lead: Deborah Mbofana - Public Health Practitioner (NNC), August 2021