

Progress report of the Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight to the September 2019 Health Improvement Board

Obesity prevalence

Adults

In Oxfordshire, 58.9% of adults were either overweight or obese in 2017/18. This is lower than the national average of 62% but it has significantly increased in the last 2 years.¹ There were approximately 45,900 GP-registered patients in Oxfordshire who were recorded as being obese in 2016-17.²

Population estimates for 2016/17 show that in in Oxfordshire there are approximately:

- 186,998-208,300 (197,681) overweight adults
- 88,560-99,803 (94,301) obese adults
- 8,104-14,047 (10,805) severely obese adults

Children

Childhood obesity prevalence in Oxfordshire is significantly lower than national rates and has remained steady locally in recent years. However, the most recent local data from 2017/18 show that:

- 20% Reception Year children were overweight or obese (22% England)
- Rising to 30% of children overweight or obese in Year 6 (34% England)
- 8% Reception Year children were obese (9.5% England)
- Doubles to 16% of children obese by Year 6 (20% England)

We see different rates across the county and in both Reception and Year 6, obesity prevalence is considerably higher in children from more deprived areas. In Oxfordshire:

- 1 in 10 Reception children from the most deprived areas is obese
- By Year 6, one in four children from the same areas is obese

Obesity prevalence also varies by ethnicity. In Oxfordshire, children from Black and Asian ethnic groups experience a significantly higher prevalence of obesity than children from White groups.

Population estimates for 2016/17 show that in in Oxfordshire there are approximately:

- 1,634 and 1,850 (1,739) overweight children
- 1,512 and 1,718 (1,612) obese and severely obese children

Lifestyle and Social Determinants

Obesity is a complex problem with many drivers. Income, social deprivation and ethnicity have an impact on the likelihood of becoming obese.

Overweight, obesity and poor diet are linked to type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and many cancers. Obesity increases the risk of developing

¹ Public Health Outcomes Framework. Available [here](#)

² https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/system/files/documents/6%20Lifestyles%20JSNA%202018_0.pdf

respiratory, musculoskeletal and liver diseases and is associated with bullying in children and common mental health disorders in both adults and children. Children who are overweight or obese at 4-5 years tend to remain so at aged 10-11 years and are more likely to enter adulthood as overweight or obese.

Severely obese people are over three times more likely to need social care than those who are a healthy weight.³ The UK wide costs attributable to people being obese or overweight are projected to reach £9.7 billion per year by 2050. Preventing a 1% increase in the prevalence of people who are overweight and obese could lead to combined savings of around £97 million per year for the NHS and local authorities.

Most of the health complications of obesity can be reduced by moderate weight loss. Even a 1% BMI reduction (approximately 1 kg weight reduction per person) across the UK population could avoid 179,000–202,000 incident cases of diabetes, 122,000 cardio vascular diseases, and 32,000–33,000 incident cases of cancer.⁴

Policy Context

Reducing obesity is a priority public health issue; NICE recommends that Local Authorities, CCGs and Health and Wellbeing Boards commission a range of lifestyle adult and child weight management programmes.^{5,6} A Whole Systems Obesity Guidance was published in July 2019 by Public Health England.⁷

A Whole Systems Approach (WSA) for healthy weight aims to bring stakeholders together from a broad range of sectors to address the food and physical activity environment and jointly develop local delivery plans. Lifestyle adult and child weight management programmes form part of the system. The launch [blog](#) provides a useful summary of the approach, and a LGA [briefing](#) provides additional detail for elected members.

The Health Improvement Board (HIB) agreed the reduction of obesity as a priority in spring 2018 and endorsed the plan to develop a comprehensive adoption of a WSA from April 2019. The WSA supports the Growth Board endorsed building a 'healthy place shaping' approach into all Oxfordshire Housing and Growth deal strategies, polices and workstreams.

Overarching principles to guide our work

- There is no single solution to tackle obesity
- We need to work collaboratively across traditional sectors and boundaries
- Collective and coordinated action is greater and more effective than its parts
- We need to gain further insight and co-design solutions with our communities
- Universal and targeted action is needed to address health inequalities
- We all need to be confident talking about weight

³ PHE (2014) Preliminary analysis of Health Survey for England combined data for 2011 and 2012. Obesity Knowledge and Intelligence, 2014

⁴ Wang YC, McPherson K, Marsh T, Gortmaker SL, Brown M. Health and economic burden of the projected obesity trends in the USA and the UK. The Lancet. 2011; 378:815-25

⁵ NICE (2014) Weight management: lifestyle services for overweight and obese adults. Available [here](#)

⁶ NICE (2014) Weight management: lifestyle services for overweight and obese children and young people. Available [here](#)

⁷ PHE (2019) Whole Systems Approach to Obesity. Available [here](#)

Progress on the Whole Systems Approach in Oxfordshire

Public Health reviewed the draft WSA guidance prior to publication and developed an outline WSA project plan. Priority actions for Oxfordshire include addressing the food environment, ensuring support services are in place and joined up across the healthy weight pathway, and working with partners and professionals across the system for galvanised action. Public Health have begun this work and lots of progress has been made, however obesity is a complex and multifaceted problem that requires collaborative action and diverse solutions.

Public Health will work with partners to investigate and align the policy and interventions for obesity, physical activity, active travel, air pollution, mental wellbeing, economic development and place-shaping in Oxfordshire. We aim to connect a range of stakeholders and facilitate linking services to provide opportunities for residents to maintain and achieve a healthy weight. We will encourage and facilitate a community owned, co-produced approach to build local capacity.

Public Health haven't yet identified all the stakeholders, or initiatives required to tackle obesity in Oxfordshire. The initial set up phase, which Public Health is leading, involves engaging stakeholders, building the case for action and mapping the current provision and drivers of obesity in Oxfordshire. We will then widen the approach, working with key stakeholders to develop a multi-agency action plan in phase 2 and conduct a deep dive to test the approaches in 1 or 2 areas before scaling up a systems approach across Oxfordshire in phase 3.

We have created a WSA Core Working Group to plan and to take forward actions which includes Dr Kiren Collison, Clinical Chair, Oxfordshire CCG, Dr Sarah Rayfield, Speciality Registrar in Public Health, The Health Foundation, Jannette Smith, Health Improvement Principal, Oxfordshire County Council and Claire Gray, Health Improvement Practitioner, Oxfordshire County Council.

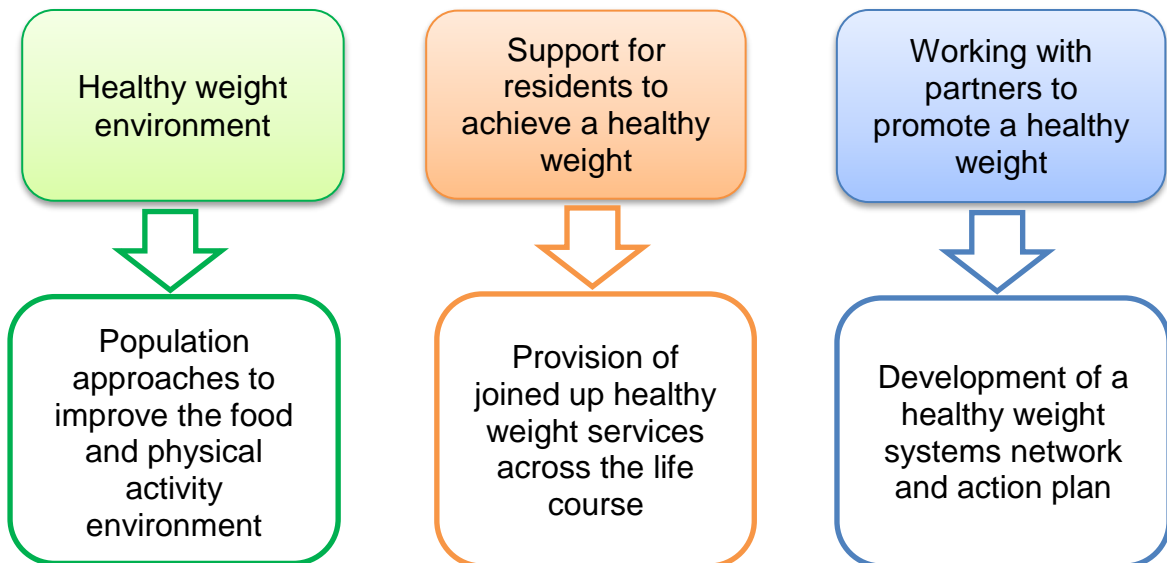
We brought partners together from Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning group, Cherwell District Council, Oxford Health, Oxford University Hospital Trust, University of Oxford, Active Oxfordshire, Good Food Oxford, The Health Foundation and Achieve Oxfordshire in a childhood obesity workshop to identify what a WSA for Oxfordshire should include, who we need to engage with, and to map the current child obesity initiatives in Oxfordshire.

This workshop enabled us to capture this and to test and learn WSA mapping approaches and the questions to ask to yield the best results. It was hoped that a Systems Network could be developed from this group to support phase 2 of the project, but this proved more challenging than predicted. Further work has been started to this, but we are requesting the support of the HIB to facilitate this.

Further detail of what we have achieved to date for the initial set up phase and plans for phase 2 and 3 are listed below.

Where do we want to be?

We will develop, test and implement a whole systems approach to healthy weight across the lifecourse that will focus on 3 key delivery themes, detailed below.



In 2018/2019 we have:

- Worked with University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University to secure funding for a Use of Internet of Solutions to Tackle Childhood Obesity Project
- Engaged with relevant partners to initiate the development of a healthy weight system story map for Oxfordshire for stakeholder engagement and to inform targeted action

- Submitted an expression of interest for the Local Government Association Childhood Obesity Trail Blazer programme
- Rolled out the Sugar Smart initiative across Oxfordshire
- Supported 20 schools to sign up to WOW – the year round walk to school challenge
- Extended our adult weight management service contract to August 2020
- Completed primary care and client consultations to inform the procurement of future adult and family weight management services

- Reviewed the WSA guidance from PHE
- Identified key internal and external stakeholders to support a WSA to healthy weight
- Begun to work across all Oxfordshire County Council directorates to promote a healthy weight in all policies approach
- Worked in partnership with Active Oxfordshire to raise awareness of the role of physical activity and healthy weight and ensure joined up working
- Held the first childhood obesity whole systems workshop with a range of partners to map the current system and gain feedback our proposed approach

In 2019-2021 we will continue with the above and work with partners to:

- Develop a healthy weight system story map for Oxfordshire to identify the scale of the issue, develop a clear rationale for targeted action, and engage stakeholders
- Map the current healthy weight initiatives in Oxfordshire to better understand the existing system
- Map the drivers of obesity locally and explore opportunities for further action
- Review the levers and barriers to implementing restriction zones for new hot food takeaway premises around schools and colleges
- Review the levers and barriers to restrict advertising of high fat high sugar foods on bus stops, bill boards and other advertising spaces
- Review the levers and barriers to incentivise healthy catering in Oxfordshire

- Conduct a range of face to face interviews and surveys to gain insight from a range of stakeholders, including businesses, the voluntary sector, and children and families to understand their needs and priorities
- Work with communities to co-produce and pilot potential solutions
- Work with partners to develop a seamless pathway of care across the healthy weight pathway
- Procure a public health tier 1 and tier 2 weight management service
- Review approaches to reduce weight stigma and develop a workforce that is confident talking about healthy weight

- Complete an audit of the local policy and strategy related to healthy weight
- Test a range of participatory approaches and activities to inspire and engage stakeholders and identify priorities
- Conduct a gap analysis detailing the opportunities and actions that will have the greatest leverage of change in the system
- Develop a 3-year WSA action plan for Oxfordshire
- Test a WSA in 1 or 2 identified areas

Recommendations

Public Health are looking to link with the right people across Oxfordshire to discuss how we can work together better and to assist us with mapping the current activity related to preventing and tackling obesity in Oxfordshire.

1. Each organisation on the Health Improvement Board is asked to identify appropriate representatives who can be involved with this important area of work. This will include working within a Systems Network to develop a Whole Systems Action Plan for Healthy Weight in Oxfordshire.

For more information on the whole systems approach:

PHE [video](#) provides an overview and a [full version](#) of the PHE blog is available.

Jannette Smith, Health Improvement Principal, Oxfordshire County Council
Jannette.smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk