

APPENDIX

Childhood Obesity Members' Task Group Scoping Paper

Subject

1. The NHS Long Term Plan identifies obesity as approaching epidemic rates among children, and advocates closer working with local government and other public services so that there can be a combined effort in tackling children's obesity levels. Nationally, the government has pledged to halve childhood obesity and significantly reduce the gap in childhood obesity between the poorest and most affluent areas.

2. The Mayor of London's Health Inequalities Strategy has prioritised the need to help more children achieve a healthy weight, particularly in deprived communities, and cut childhood obesity. Recently, the Mayor has banned advertising of food and drink which is high in fat, salt or sugar, across Transport for London's estate. ¹

3. Childhood obesity is a priority in the prevention work stream of the Brent Health and Care Plan, and the North West London STP Health and Wellbeing Partnership. The National Child Measurement Programme has consistently recorded rates in Brent above the average for London and England. In 2017/18 there was an obesity rate of 14.7% for children in Reception, and a 28.1% rate for children in Year 6. A significant number of the borough's children are already obese at Reception but the problem is worsening with the rate doubling by Year 6. In addition, 14.9% of Reception children and 15.7% of Year 6 children were overweight.

4. Childhood obesity is a major health inequality. Data from the National Child Measurement Programme indicates that obesity rates vary among children in Brent according to their ethnicity, and family's household income. The highest levels of excess weight were recorded in the Black ethnic group while the Asian ethnic group has relatively low levels at Reception but much higher levels at Year 6. There is also a relationship with poverty although it is weaker. Children in Stonebridge, Brent's poorest ward, have among the highest levels of being obese or overweight while children in Kenton, the most affluent ward, the lowest rates. ²

5. Nationally, the NHS is treating 1,000 children a year who develop severe complications, including diabetes, cardiovascular conditions, and sleep apnoea. Obesity in childhood is linked to obesity in adult life, which increases NHS costs. For some children, obesity is a cause of poor mental health and emotional wellbeing. ³

Scope

6. The scope of the scrutiny review has been narrowed to four areas: NHS, local government and public services; external environment; home, and parental

¹ *The London Health Inequalities Strategy*, (Greater London Authority, 2018), p11;

² *Childhood Obesity*, Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, 28 February 2018

³ *NHS Long Term Plan* (NHS England, 2019) pp.37-46

engagement. Task group evidence sessions will explore the reasons for childhood obesity rates in the borough by looking in greater detail at these four areas.

7. Childhood obesity involves a number of services and professionals across the NHS, local government and public services. An evidence session will review how the 'whole system' works with children and parents. This could include how doctors, health and early years professionals in Brent are identifying when a child is overweight or could become obese; what advice and guidance is given to parents about a child's healthy weight, and how professionals initiate conversations with parents, and refer to healthy weight management services. The task group is particularly interested in how the NHS, GPs and local government services such as health visitors and midwives support a parent in the first 1,000 days of a child's life, including in pregnancy, and their advice to parents around breastfeeding and introducing a child to solid foods after a child is born. In addition, it will look at what Public Health information is provided to help parents recognise the signs or symptoms of a child who is in danger of becoming obese. The evidence session could also look at information provided to children up to the age of Year 6 about sugar and diet in schools and early years settings and the promotion of initiatives such as the Daily Mile or Kids Run Free programme. It will also look at the take up of Healthy Schools London among schools in the borough, and the Healthy Early Years Award in Brent.

8. A safe external environment and greater opportunities to be physically active outside the home play a role in preventing obesity. The task group would like to understand what outdoor play spaces exist for children up to Year 6 and how they are being given opportunities to be physically active with their parents. This could include walking to school, sport and games, and physical activity. The task group will also look at the role of programmes such as the Healthy Catering Commitment which create a healthier external environment for children and their parents in the borough's high streets. In addition, the task group will look at particular projects such as Play Streets, which can have a positive effect on children's physical activity.

9. The task group would also like to look at home environment and childhood obesity. Factors causing obesity can include diet and consumption of food and drink which is high in fat, salt or sugar, and the role of food preferences of family members. The task group is considering looking at what opportunities are provided by the NHS, local authority, and the public sector for parents to consider their home environment and the role of diet and food and drink consumption in a child's health. It will also look at the particular problems faced by low-income families, and how different cultural backgrounds may affect the choices made by parents.

10. The members of the task group believe it is important that there is a conversation with parents in Brent about childhood obesity and that they are given an opportunity to input into the scrutiny review. The final meeting will be an 'open mic' forum which provides an opportunity for the task group members to engage with parents and community organisations to find out their views around the issue of childhood obesity. It will also look at parents' engagement with NHS and Public Health and council services in this area.

Appendix A

Task Group Membership:

Councillor Thakkar, Chair

Councillor Knight

Councillor Hassan

Co-opted task group members:

The committee would like to co-opt onto the task group a representative from **Brent Youth Parliament**.

Terms of Reference

- a) Understand the causes of childhood obesity among children in Brent up to Reception and Year 6.
- b) Examine the trends for obesity rates among Reception children and the increase in obesity by Year 6.
- c) Evaluate the impact of NHS, health services and public services in preventing childhood obesity and preventing and responding to excess weight and obesity in childhood.
- d) Review the effects of external environment and home environments on children's health, wellbeing and weight, including the impact of household poverty, parents working hours and other family 'stressors' such as insecure housing or employment.
- e) Evaluate the role of parents and parenting in preventing childhood obesity with particular reference to adult obesity.
- f) Understand how different children may be affected, in particular those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and children who are carers.
- g) Review local authority and NHS strategies and Policy Framework as appropriate.
- h) Make reports or recommendations to NHS bodies, the council's Cabinet or Full Council on the basis of the evidence it has gathered as part of the review.

Evidence Sessions

Evidence Session 1	Themes/Areas for discussion	Attendees/Organisations Invited
<p>Health services, NHS and public services</p> <p>16 July 2019</p>	<p>Breastfeeding, solid foods.</p> <p>How encouragement is given to mothers around breast feeding, and training for health professionals; how health services work with other agencies and work places to encourage and create an environment to support mothers.</p> <p>Signposting by GPs; midwives, paediatricians and consultants in hospitals.</p> <p>GP training in discussing weight management.</p> <p>Understanding what weighing/measuring takes place 0-4 in Brent</p> <p>Collecting data and information systems: GPs, A&E departments, paediatricians, school nurses, children's centres</p> <p>Training for healthcare professionals in identification Healthy weight 'pathways' for 0-5; 5-10 year olds</p> <p>Healthy Early Years (HEY) Award; National Child Measurement Programme in schools</p>	<p>GPs</p> <p>health visitors</p> <p>Brent CCG</p> <p>NHS paediatricians</p> <p>Public Health England</p> <p>Brent Council officers</p> <p>Charities, third sector organisations</p> <p>Midwives</p> <p>Healthwatch</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>Barnardo's</p> <p>Private, voluntary and independent (PVI) early years providers</p>

Evidence Session 2	Themes/Areas for discussion	Attendees/Organisations Invited
<p>External Environment</p> <p>23 July 2019</p>	<p>Walking to school, driving to school or pre-school</p> <p>Opportunities for children's physical exercise</p> <p>Helping children who live in unsafe areas or who do not have access to safe walking routes or opportunities to be physically active</p> <p>Brent's parks and playgrounds and encouraging physical activity</p> <p>Wider opportunities to be physically active in a safe environment</p> <p>Creating healthier high streets</p> <p>Play Streets in Brent</p>	<p>Parent group representatives</p> <p>Brent Council Transportation officers</p> <p>Transport for London</p> <p>Private, voluntary and independent (PVI) early years providers</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>Sports organisations</p> <p>Charities, third sector organisations</p> <p>Health visitors, practice nurses</p>

Evidence Session 3	Themes/Areas for discussion	Attendees/Organisations Invited
<p>Home Environment</p> <p>3 September 2019</p>	<p>Diet</p> <p>Budgeting</p> <p>Food preferences of family members</p> <p>Family habits and physical activity</p> <p>High sugar food</p> <p>Food growing</p> <p>Fast food and takeaways</p> <p>Culture and diet</p>	<p>Parent group representatives</p> <p>GPs</p> <p>Brent CCG</p> <p>Food growing organisations</p> <p>Charity, third sector organisations</p>

Evidence Session 4: 10 September 2019

The final session will be an engagement event and an 'open mic' for Brent parents and interested residents and organisations. This will be run by the Strategy and Partnerships Team and modelled on It's Time to Talk engagement sessions.

The open mic session will attempt to reflect back what the task group has found in the previous evidence sessions.

Parents and others will be invited to discuss the issues around childhood obesity and meet with the task group members so they can hear their views at the 'open mic' session.

Questions and areas for discussion could include:

- Why do parents engage or not engage with NHS and Public Health services?
- What are the particular challenges for parents with pre-school children who are obese?
- What can parents, residents and community organisations do to help themselves?