

Health & Adults Scrutiny Sub Committee, 11th May 23



Addressing unhealthy weight in Tower Hamlets

Katy Scammell
Associate Director of Public Health



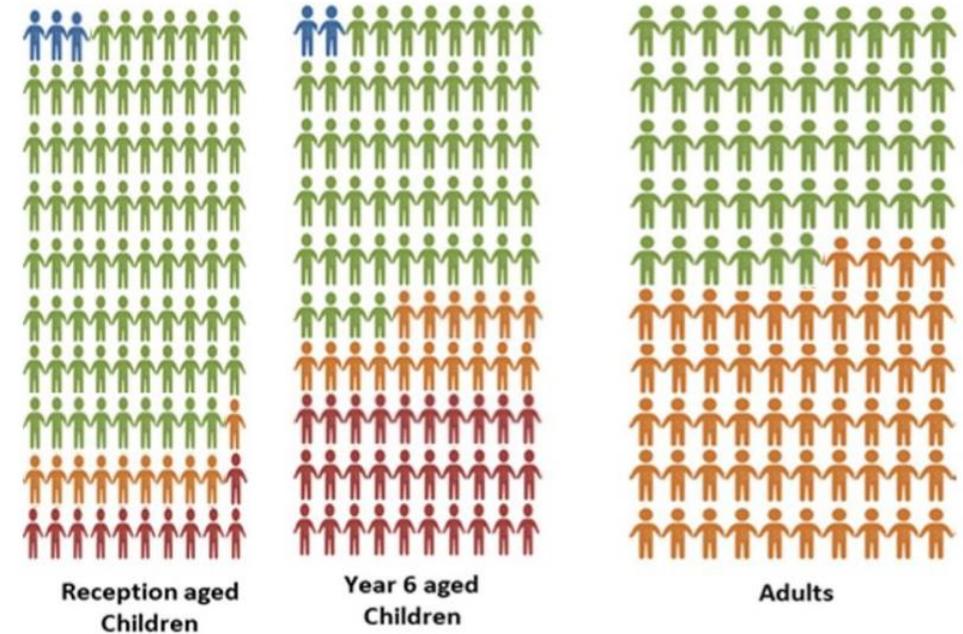
What we'll cover

- Current picture
- Causes of unhealthy weight
- Interventions and commissioned activities to address unhealthy weight
- Stakeholder involvement
- Measuring success
- Challenges



The current picture: child excess weight in TH

- **1 in 5** (20%) children in **Reception** have excess weight
- Over **2 in 5** (45%) children in **Year 6** have excess weight.
- Over half of adults (53%) have excess weight



Source: National Child Measurement Programme, 2021/22.

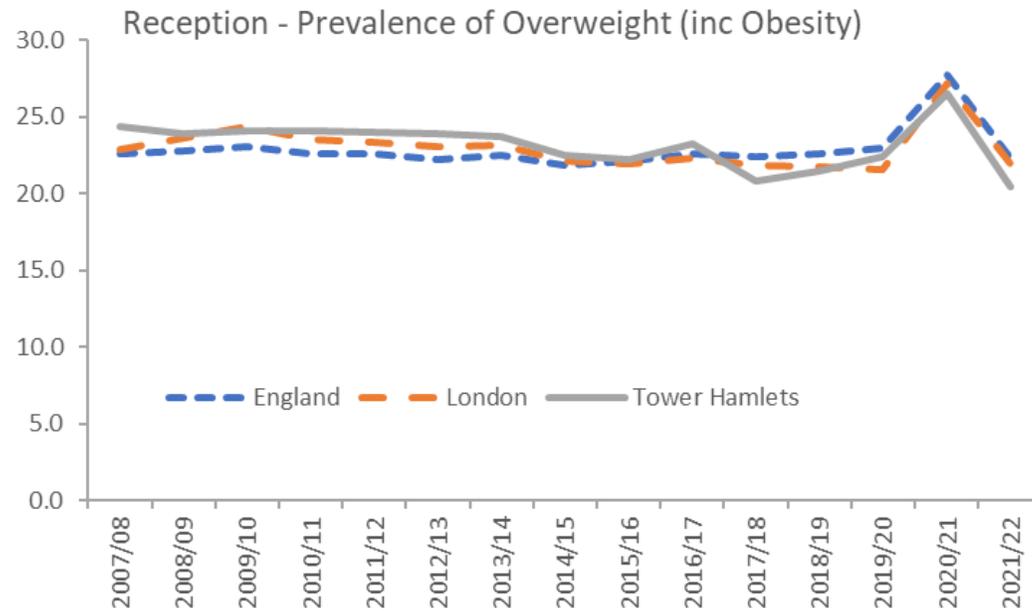
Adult data: OHID Fingertips



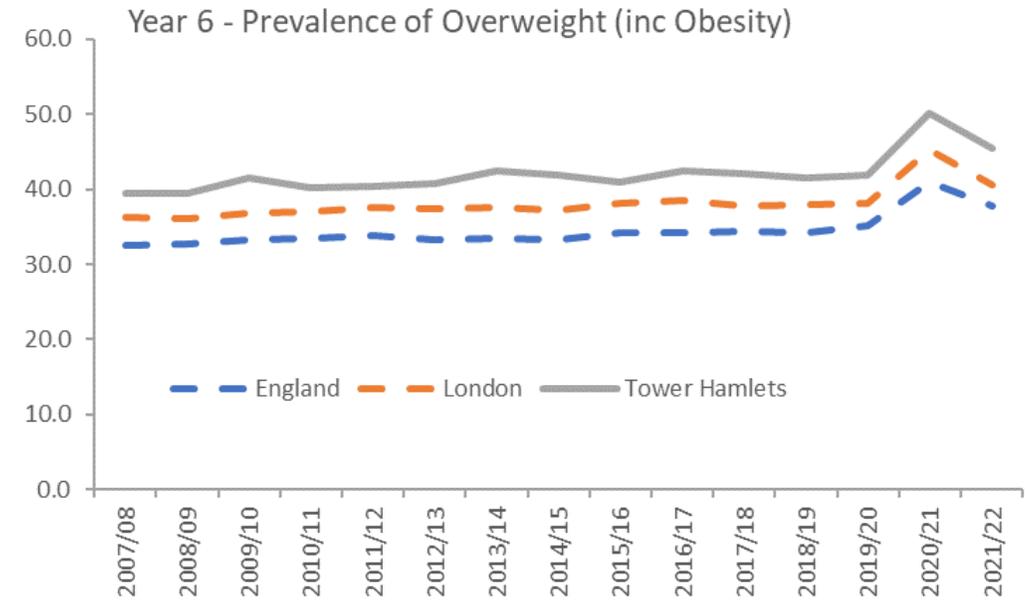
Child excess weight pattern over time



Reception: % of children with excess weight, 2007/8 – 2021/22



Year 6: % of children with excess weight, 2007/8 – 2021/22



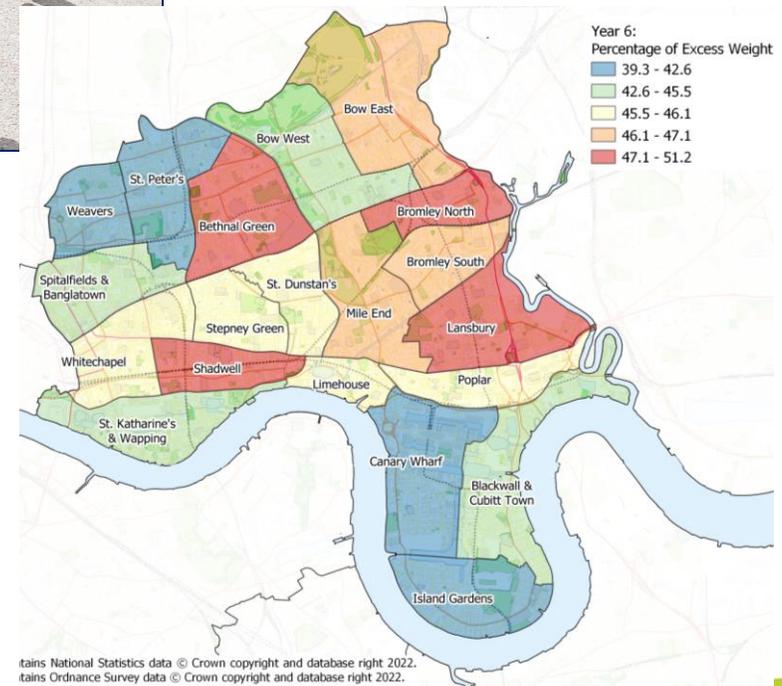
NCMP 2021/2022



Inequalities

Differences by:

- Economic status
- Ethnic group
- Disability status

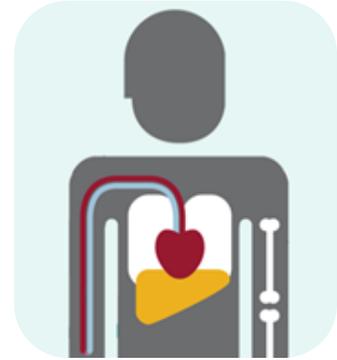


The importance of being a healthy weight



PHYSICAL

- High blood pressure and high cholesterol - risk factors for cardiovascular disease
- Type 2 **diabetes**
- **Breathing problems** - asthma and sleep apnea
- **Joint problems** and musculoskeletal discomfort
- **Fatty liver disease**, gallstones, and gastro-esophageal reflux (i.e., heartburn)
- Risk factor for **Covid-19** outcomes.
- Risk of developing leading causes of death and disability in the UK including **heart disease, cancer and stroke**



PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Anxiety, depression, low self-esteem and lower self-reported quality of life
- Social problems - bullying and stigma



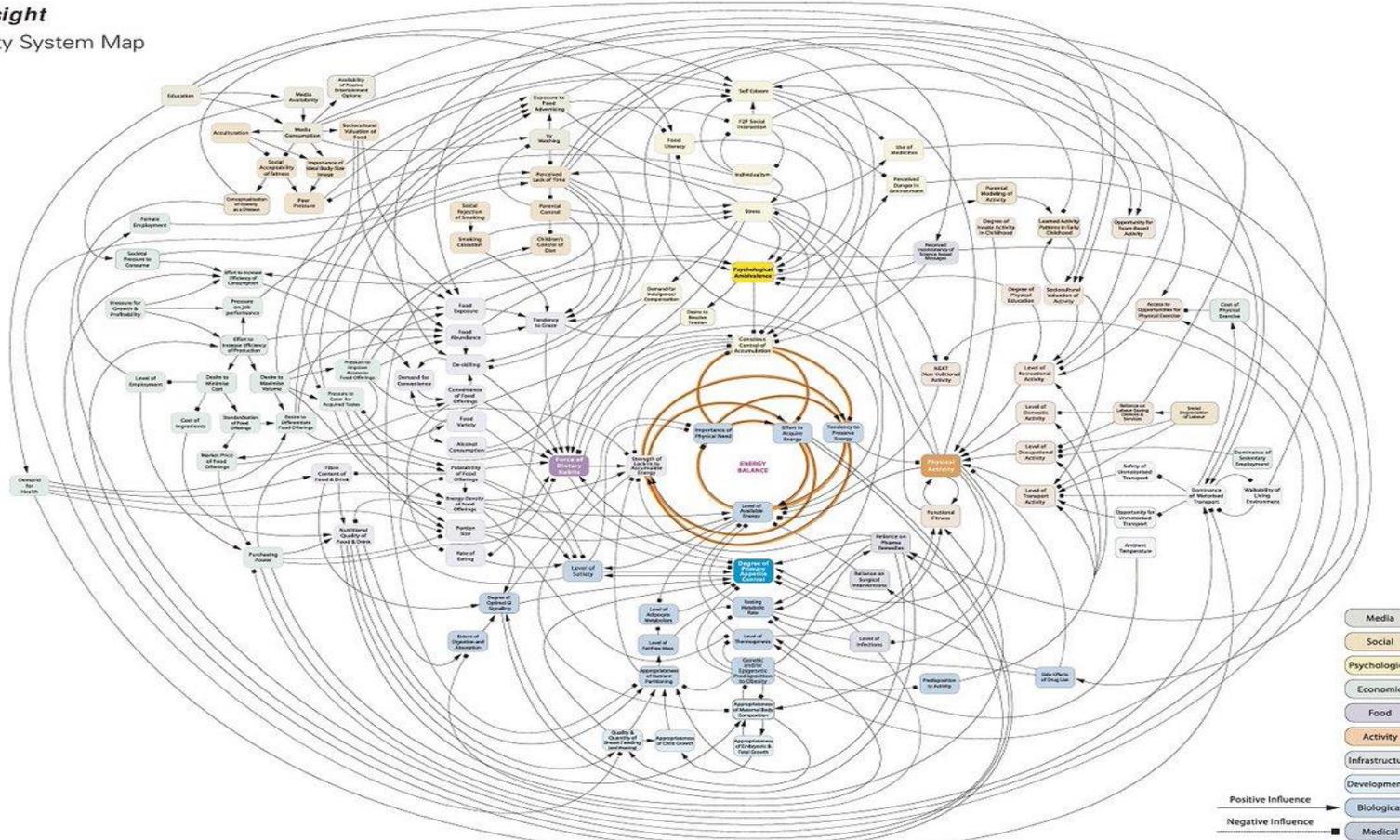
EDUCATIONAL

- School absence and poorer educational outcomes

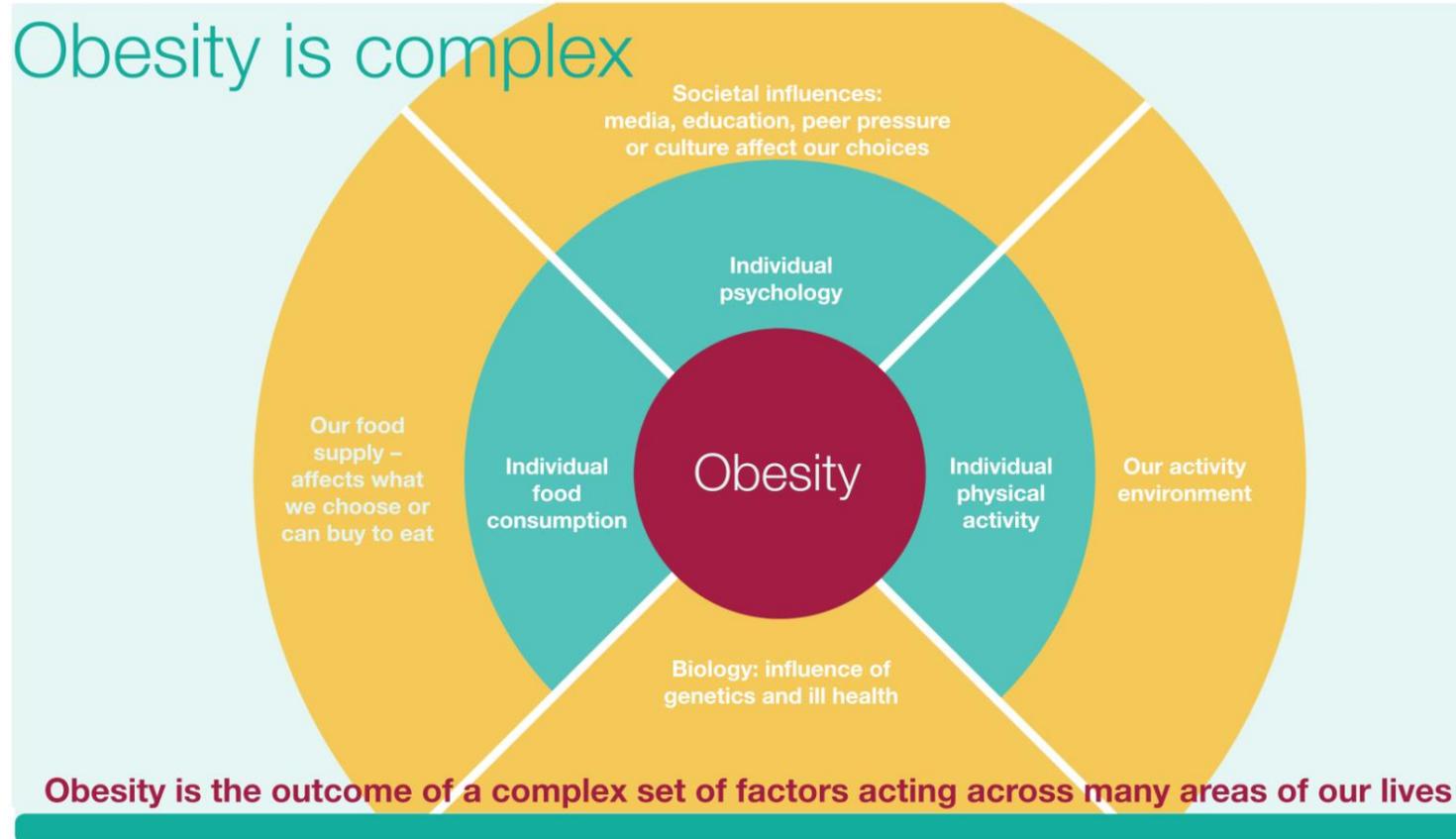


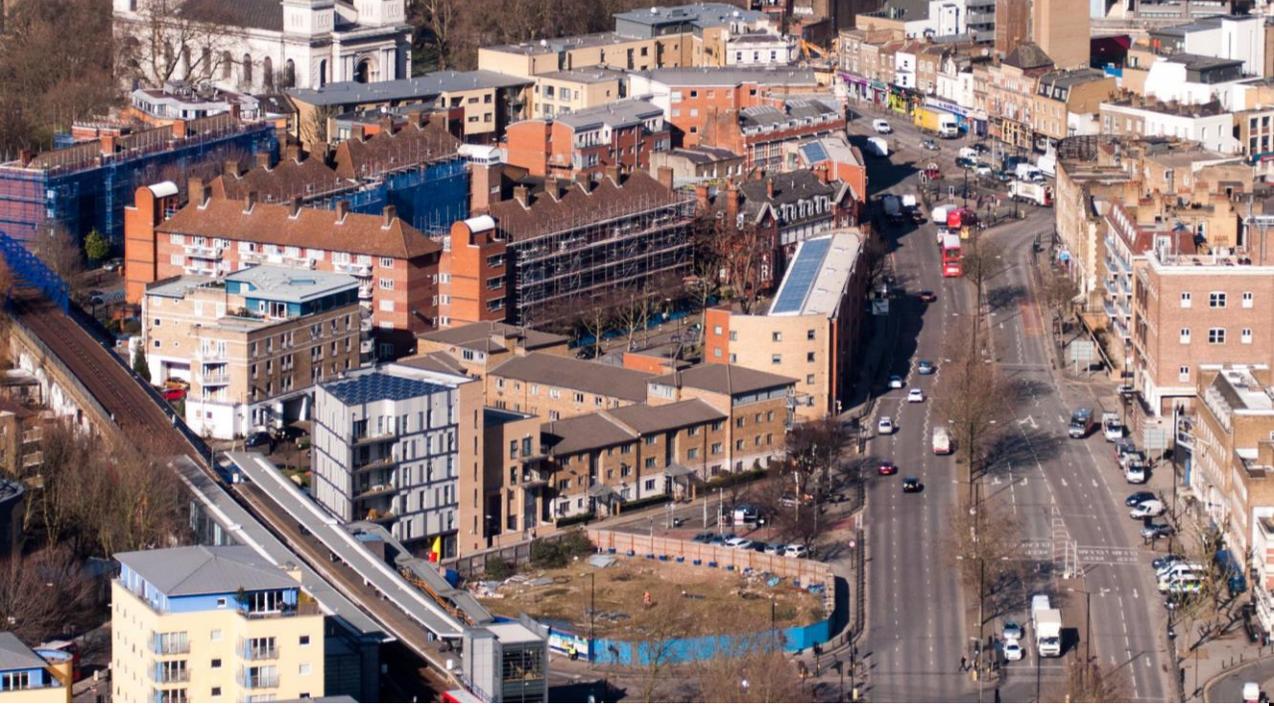
Causes of unhealthy weight (1)

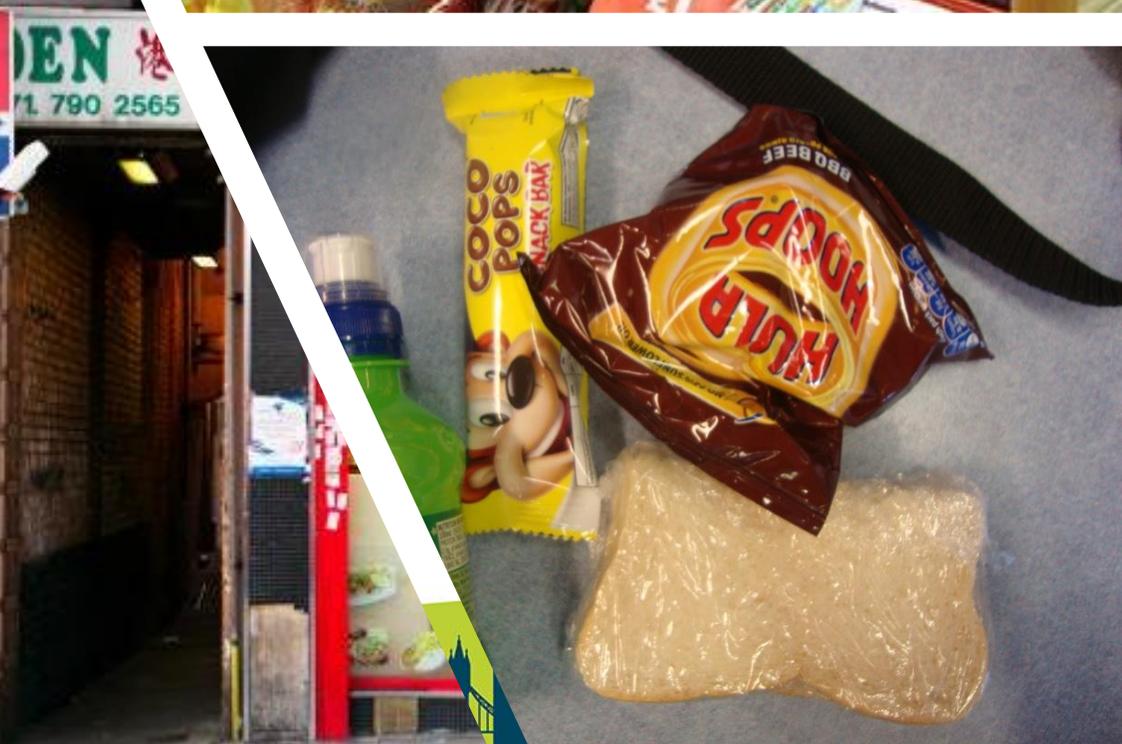
Foresight
Obesity System Map



Causes of unhealthy weight (2)









The best of London in one borough



What works?

- Creating healthy environments
- School curriculum and school setting
- Support for parents



Process for developing priorities for the borough's Child Healthy Weight Action Plan



Completed child Healthy Weight Needs Assessment:
understood the issue, it's impact on children and effective action

Engaged over 40 people working across the borough, including key systems leaders

Hosted 4 meetings with system leaders

Listened to children, young people and families



Prioritising proposed actions

We developed a prioritisation framework to systematically review, assess and prioritise the potential actions based on the following criteria:

Sufficient evidence on its impact

Opportunity to address health inequalities

Achievable with available resources

Within our control or influence

Key actions to focus on



What are we doing about it?

Action across 3 themes:

- Healthy places
- Healthy spaces
- Healthy services



Healthy places

- Play programme
 - Evidence review
 - Play Charter Working Group
 - Play estates
 - Inclusive play
- Maximise opportunities through the new local plan
- Healthy advertising policy
- Food for Health



Healthy spaces

- Primary school food improvement programme
 - Pilot in 10 schools
 - Whole school food approach
 - Support from Healthy Lives Team
 - Conditions of grant
- USFM in secondary schools
- Daily mile
- In-sourcing of leisure contract



Healthy services

- Healthy weight training for professionals
- Healthy weight directory
- Healthy weight pathway
- National Child Measurement Programme pilot
- Healthy families support
- Parental engagement programme
- Fruit and vegetable voucher scheme
- Healthy Start voucher scheme
- Cycle training and support
- Physical activity and sports team



Wider corporate priorities that will positively impact on healthy weight – some examples



1. **Tackling the cost of living crisis:** will help tackle food poverty, supporting people to afford healthy food.
2. **Homes for the future:** tackling overcrowding will make it easier for people to cook at home
3. **Accelerating education:** free school meals and breakfast clubs will provide healthy food for children. Investing in youth centres can support young people to develop life skills like cooking and participate in leisure activities.
4. **Boost culture, business, jobs and leisure:** opening up sporting opportunities, ensuring parks and other council facilities meet people's sporting needs will help people to be more active
5. **Invest in public services:** insourcing the leisure contract brings new opportunities to support physical activity, with the overall plan of implementing a borough-wide healthy child weight programme bringing all the actions together.
6. **Empower communities and fight crime:** families will feel safer to walk and cycle, and use public spaces.
7. **A clean and green future:** improving air quality standards will encourage residents to be more active outside, including using sustainable travel modes.
8. **A council that listens and works for everyone:** using our insight and research capabilities will inform decisions on how best to support residents to be a healthy weight.



Examples of how we're working with residents

- Insight work: focus groups with young people and interviews with parents
- Healthy advertising: consulted through events, meetings and surveys
- School food improvement programme: taste sessions, focus groups and surveys
- NCMP programme: focus groups and surveys



Examples of what residents have told us

- Fast food is often cheaper and more convenient than healthy food
- School food isn't always appealing
- Families can be unaware of the physical activity options available locally
- Air quality needs to improve on the walk to school
- Communication and support around the national child measurement programme could be stronger



Measuring impact



- Each project has an individual evaluation plan to measure impact.
- Formal evaluations are planned for:
 - Food for Health
 - School food improvement programme
- We use a number of health indicators to measure healthy weight outcomes:
 - Reception and Year 6 excess weight levels
 - Healthy eating levels: fruit and vegetable intake
 - Dental decay in children
 - Physical activity levels
 - Breastfeeding prevalence



Governance



- Children and Families Executive
 - Chaired by James Thomas, Corporate Director of Children and Culture
- Health and Wellbeing Board
 - Chaired by Cllr Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care



Challenges

- Many factors influence health weight – we need to have a whole-borough approach to tackling this.
- The environment is often not supportive of being a healthy weight.
 - High number of fast food outlets
 - Limited green space
 - Insufficient high quality play spaces
 - Barriers to walking and cycling
- Cost of living



What would TH look like if we were a place that supported healthy weight?



- There's lots of places for children to play outdoors that are well used and meet everyone's needs
- Active travel feels easy and safe, and the air is clean
- Children and young people aren't exposed to unhealthy advertising
- It's easy and cheap to buy healthy and tasty food
- Everyone knows where they can get support to be active and eat healthily
- Our leisure services are accessible to everyone
- Families have the knowledge and space to cook healthy meals
- All schools promote healthy eating and physical activity
- Children and young people identified as being an unhealthy weight are helped to access support



Change is possible!



