

Health and Wellbeing Board

10 April 2018

Walsall Children and Young Person's Healthy Weight Strategy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Health and Wellbeing Board on the progress of the refreshed Walsall Children and Young Persons Healthy Weight Strategy.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to:

- Note progress on the refreshed Walsall children and young person's healthy weight strategy
- Provide strategic and clear leadership acknowledging the need for a whole systems approach, involving a variety of organisations, community services and networks all operating at a range of levels collaboratively
- Note that the final Walsall children and young person's healthy weight strategy and action plan will be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board once completed

3. Report detail

- 3.1 A healthy weight is about much more than an individual's weight or body shape. It can so often be an essential foundation for physical, emotional and social wellbeing. Children and young people who stay a healthy weight tend to be fitter, healthier, better able to learn, and more self-confident. They are also much less likely to have health problems in later life.
- 3.2 Similarly to national observations, there is an increasing trend in the numbers of children who not a healthy weight in Walsall. In 2016/17, 73.3% of children in reception year and 58.5% of children in year six were measured as a healthy weight.
- 3.2 If children feel good, are more comfortable and confident in themselves and are well nourished, they are better prepared to learn and able to concentrate resulting in improved educational outcomes. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at age 5 in Walsall is increasing, although it is significantly below the National average. Ensuring that children are a healthy weight can improve school readiness.
- 3.3 There is evidence of a correlation between childhood who are not a healthy weight and the proportion of children with decayed, missing or filled teeth

(d3mft), caused by the increased consumption of food with high sugar content. There has been a decrease in the rate of d3mft in children in Walsall, as well as regionally and nationally since 2011, in part due to the implementation of water fluoridation in the borough. However, the proportion of children with d3mft in Walsall is one of the highest in the Black Country and higher than the West Midlands regional average, but similar to the overall national rate. In 2012/13, tooth decay was also the most common reason for hospital admissions in children aged five – nine years.

- 3.4 There is already a lot of good work taking place in Walsall with good multi-disciplinary and multi-agency working. The strategy will provide an opportunity to systematically implement a whole systems approach to help Walsall children and young people achieve and maintain a healthy weight and ensure that good practice is shared across the localities.
- 3.5 In order to achieve our vision and harness the energy of all partners, concerted action is needed from commissioners and partner agencies, providers and the public. This increasing issue will only be changed if we are able to work across the whole system to facilitate change and provide appropriate services and support.

The Draft Children and Young Persons Healthy Weight Strategy

- 3.6 Achieving a higher proportion of children and young people who are a healthy weight in the Walsall population is a complex social and public health issue. The evidence is very clear that policies and interventions aimed solely at individuals will not be sufficient to reverse the trend. The strategic objectives of the draft strategy will reflect these complexities.
- 3.7 A whole system approach to healthy weight not only promotes direct behaviour change but it should also bring about change in the environment where people live. This involves and engages stakeholders across society including the voluntary sector, early year's settings, schools, NHS, food retailers and manufacturers, planning and licensing, transport, sport and leisure and amongst others.
- 3.8 Key to the whole system approach is engaging with children, young people and their families and local communities. They have a significant role to play in shaping and delivering the strategy and action plan. This should lead to more effective, locally owned and more sustainable approaches and create an environment and culture where all children and young people have the opportunity to maintain a healthy weight.
- 3.9 The focus of the strategy will be from a positive approach, focusing on what works well in a local area and then building from that, rather than analysing the problems. The latter tends to lead to attempts to address specific problems rather than looking at the issue more widely, as a whole system approach.
- 3.10 Crucially, the strategy will set out a vision and the rationale for a whole systems approach (**See Appendix A**). This is in recognition that

achievements cannot be made in silo but that a coordinated multi-agency approach is required in order for children and young people to achieve a healthy weight in Walsall and identifying where integration of other strategies is necessary.

- 3.11 In order to develop the whole systems approach to healthy weight an event was held in December, which sought to bring together all local stakeholders in the borough. Eighty-four representatives attended from a wide variety of organisations. Workshop activities took place to map what activities or assets there are in Walsall. In addition the activities gathered ideas and input from stakeholders which will help to inform and shape the strategy and action plan.
- 3.12 The draft aims of the strategy are to;
1. Promote an environment that supports wellbeing and healthy weight as the norm
 2. Support our children and young people and their families and the communities they live in to become healthier and more resilient which will include addressing the wider determinants of health and is to encourage people in Walsall to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- 3.13 Long-term, sustainable change will only be achieved in Walsall through the active engagement of families and communities. Focus groups will be taking place across Walsall comprising of many different groups and views including voluntary, community and faith sector organisations. The focus groups will have a positive approach, focusing on what works well in a local area, which should look at the issue more widely, as a whole system.

4. Implications for Joint Working arrangements:

- 4.1 The refreshed healthy weight strategy is closely aligned to 'The Walsall Plan: Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017 – 2020' where the benefits of partnership working is acknowledged and valued. It highlights the opportunities for innovation and delivering differently by developing strong partnerships. The strategy is reliant on a whole systems approach to see a marked improvement in the number of children and families being a healthy weight and improving their wellbeing.
- 4.2 Developing strong partnerships will increase integration and avoid duplication therefore enabling everyone to be more efficient and effective for Walsall children, young people and their families.

5. Health and Wellbeing Priorities:

- 5.1 The Children and Young Persons healthy weight strategy will complement the Council's overall priorities as identified in the corporate plan 2018 – 2021, in particular to reduce inequalities and maximise potential.

- 5.2 The strategy has been developed using the knowledge gained from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment refresh, which provides a detailed picture of the weight status of children and young people in the area.
- 5.3 Safeguarding is a key priority for Walsall council and the public health department in terms of the services that they deliver and commission and this equally applies to the Children and Young Persons Healthy Weight Strategy
- 5.4 Walsall council and partnership organisations have in place safeguarding policies and procedures and workforce development plans to ensure that safeguarding is and continues to be a key priority.

Background papers

Appendix A: Draft Walsall Children and Young Peoples Healthy Weight Strategy: Vision, aims and outcomes

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Appendix A

Draft Walsall Children and Young Peoples Healthy Weight Strategy: Vision, aims and outcomes

