



# Northumberland

## County Council

### HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

13<sup>th</sup> October 2022

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## NORTHUMBERLAND HEALTHY WEIGHT DECLARATION

**Report of: Liz Morgan Interim Executive Director of Public Health and Community Services**

**Cabinet Member: Cllr Wendy Pattison Adult Wellbeing**

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### **Purpose of Report**

- The purpose of this report is to introduce Food Actives, Healthy Weight Declaration (HWD) for Local Authorities and the 16 commitments which form the HWD.
- To highlight how the HWD can contribute towards ongoing work within Northumberland using Whole Systems Approach (WSA) to support healthy weight.
- To propose Health and Wellbeing Board adopt the HWD on behalf of Northumberland County Council (NCC).

### **Recommendations**

- It is recommended that the board adopt the HWD (and it's 16 commitments for action) for Northumberland County Council. North Tyneside Council have also adopted the HWD for Local Authorities and Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust are in the process of adopting the HWD designed to support NHS organisations.
- Support a joint launch of the HWD between Northumberland County Council, North Tyneside Council and Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. If support is gained, the joint launch is likely to be early 2023.

### **Link to Corporate Plan**

It is likely that this report will support the overarching theme below, identified in the NCC Corporate Plan 2021-2024:

- Tackling inequalities within our communities, supporting our residents to be healthier and happier.

## **Background**

The causes of Obesity are complex and exist in the places where we live, work and play. This was recognised pre-pandemic by Northumberland County Council's Public Health Team who used Public Health England's (PHE) Whole Systems Approach (WSA) to Obesity, a tool developed to support creation of environments conducive to achieving and maintaining healthy weight. The PHE guidance aims to enable local stakeholders to become engaged in the healthy weight agenda. Work to develop 'whole systems' has continued nationally throughout the pandemic and Food Active, a charitable organisation, has adapted their Healthy Weight Declaration (HWD) to work in tandem with WSA to Obesity.

Locally, Northumberland's Joint Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy<sup>1</sup> identifies four cross-cutting themes to support our residents to maximise their health and wellbeing while looking to reduce inequalities. The HWD supports all four themes, encouraging a systems wide approach to obesity as part of Local Authorities' long-term plans to prioritise prevention and health promotion.

Decisions taken, when considering adoption of the HWD should also consider the current cost of living crisis. Local actions to support the creation of a healthy weight environment (of which food will be an integral component), should be sustainable, achievable and consider the rising cost of food and fuel. It is anticipated that the HWD will support the councils' inequalities plan and emerging poverty and hardship plan. From a resource perspective, it will be important to understand where our residents and businesses may need support with things such as healthy eating and physical activity and where we can look to local communities and organisations to support actions within the HWD themselves and be the lead for some of the commitments outlined below.

### **Local Authority Healthy Weight Declaration**

The aim of the declaration is to achieve a local authority commitment to promoting healthy weight across all policy areas with a view to improving the health and well-being of the local population. The Declaration includes 16 standard commitments (see table 1 below) with the opportunity for NCC to add its own local commitments relevant to Northumberland's specific health needs. The Declaration will provide a mechanism for NCC to take leadership at strategic level on the promoting of healthy weight, influencing the thinking and commitment of departments and agencies outside of public health who can make a direct impact and support Northumberland's vision to support residents to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

**Table 1:** Local Authority, Healthy Weight Declaration: 16 Commitments

<b>Healthy Weight Declaration Commitments</b>	
	1. Implement the Local Authority HWD as part of a long term, term 'systems wide approach' to obesity.
	2. Advocate plans that promote a preventative approach to encouraging a healthier weight with local partners, identified as part of a 'place based system' (e.g., Integrated Care System).

<sup>1</sup> [Northumberland Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. 2018-2028](#)

<b>Strategic / System Leadership</b>	3. Support action at national level to help local authorities promote healthy weight and reduce health inequalities in our communities (this includes preventing weight stigma and weight bias).
	4. Invest in the health literacy of local citizens to make informed healthier choices ensuring clear and comprehensive healthy eating and physical activity messages are consistent with government guidelines.
	5. Local authorities who have completed adoption of the HWD are encouraged to review and strengthen the initial action plans they have developed by consulting Public Health England's Whole Systems Approach to Obesity, including its tools, techniques and materials.
<b>Commercial Determinants</b>	6. Engage with the local food and drink sector (manufacturers, caterers, out of home settings) where appropriate to consider responsible retailing such as, offering and promoting healthier food and drink options, and reformulating and reducing the portion sizes of high fat, sugar, and salt (products).
	7. Consider how commercial partnerships with the food and drink industry may impact on the messages communicated around healthy weight to our local communities Such funding may be offered to support research, discretionary services (such as sport and recreation and events) and town centre promotions.
	8. Protect our children from inappropriate marketing by the food and drink industry such as advertising and marketing in close proximity to schools, and promotions within schools at events on local authority-controlled sites.
<b>Health Promoting Infrastructures/ Environments</b>	9. Consider supplementary guidance for hot food takeaways, specifically in areas around schools, parks and where access to healthier alternatives are limited.
	10. Review how strategies, plans and infrastructures for regeneration and town planning positively impact on physical activity, active travel, the food environment and food security (consider an agreed process for local plan development between public health and planning authorities).
	11. Where Climate Emergency Declarations are in place, consider how the HWD can support carbon reduction plans and strategies, address land use policy, transport policy, circular economy waste policies, food procurement, air quality etc.
<b>Organisational Change / Cultural Shift</b>	12. Review contracts and provision at public events, in all public buildings, facilities and providers to make healthier foods and drinks more available, convenient and affordable and limit access to high calorie, low nutrient foods and drinks (this should be applied to public institutions scrutiny given to any new contracts for food drink provision, where possible).
	13. Increase public access to fresh drinking water on local authority-controlled sites; (keeping single use plastics to a minimum) and encouraging re-useable bottle refills.
	14. Develop an organisational approach to enable and promote active travel for staff, patients, visitors, whilst providing staff with opportunities to be physically active where possible (e.g.,

	promoting stair use, standing desks, cycle to work/school schemes).
	15. Promote the health and well-being of local authority staff by creating a culture and ethos that promotes understanding of healthy weight, supporting staff to eat well and move more.
<b>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</b>	16. Monitor the progress of our action plan against the commitments, report on and publish the results annually.

## Why a Declaration for Healthy Weight is needed in Northumberland

Unhealthy Weight (being overweight or obese) is a serious public health issue that increases disability, disease, and deaths and has substantial long term economic, wellbeing and social costs. The proportion of the population affected by unhealthy weight continues to rise.

In Northumberland:

- Two thirds of adults over the age of 18 are overweight or obese\*

Our National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) informs us<sup>2</sup>:

- One in five children in Reception are overweight\*\* (including obesity).
- One in three children in Year 6 are overweight\*\* (including obesity).

\* Adults are defined as overweight (including obese) if their body mass index (BMI) is greater than or equal to 25kg/m<sup>2</sup>.

\*\* Children are classified as overweight (including obese) if their BMI is on or above the 85th centile of the British 1990 growth reference (UK90) according to age and sex.

The Marmot review<sup>3</sup> highlights factors such as income and social deprivation having an important impact on the likelihood of becoming obese, with a strong relationship between deprivation and childhood obesity. The burden of obesity falls hardest on children from low-income areas. In Reception, children living in IMD decile 1 (the most deprived decile) were 61% more likely to be an unhealthy weight when compared to children living in IMD decile 10 (the least deprived). By Year 6, this gap widens to 76%.

In summary, nearly a third of children aged 2 to 15 are overweight or obese and younger generations are becoming obese at earlier ages and staying obese for longer. Without action across the system, obesity could overtake tobacco smoking as the biggest cause of preventable death.<sup>4</sup>

## The Impact of COVID-19 on Healthy Weight

COVID-19 has brought the importance and urgency of addressing overweight and obesity to the fore. As outlined, Northumberland residents living in areas of greatest deprivation, are at an increased risk of experiencing higher levels of overweight and obesity. In addition, unhealthy weight has been associated with increased risk of complications from COVID-19. Insights from new evidence suggest that two thirds of

<sup>2</sup> <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/obese>

<sup>3</sup> Marmot, M., 2013. Fair society, healthy lives. *Fair society, healthy lives*.

<sup>4</sup> Public Health England. 2017. Health Matters: Obesity and the Food Environment.

people who have fallen seriously ill from contracting COVID 19 were overweight or had obesity.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the above, local and national rates of obesity are storing up future problems for individuals, communities and our healthcare system. A recent PHE report<sup>6</sup> highlights that people who are overweight or obese who contract COVID-19 are more likely to be admitted to hospital, intensive care units and sadly die from the virus compared to those of a healthy weight.

In response, the government published the National Obesity Strategy in July 2020 and, in March 2021, allocated local authorities additional funding to expand weight management services. It is therefore important to bolster this with local action such as the Local Authority Healthy Weight Declaration to create healthier places and reducing health inequalities as part of the wider prevention agenda.

### **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	Adoption of the Healthy Weight Declaration will support key policy priorities and themes within the County Council Corporate Plan. It will also support the North East and North Cumbria (NENC) Integrated Care System workstream; health and prevention.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	The cost of working with Food Active to support Northumberland County Councils HWD is £1950 + VAT. Funding for a Local Authority approach will come from the Public Health ringfenced grant. Within this 'fee', Food Active will support Northumberland with access to HWD PR, ongoing support within the Food Active team (which includes nutritionists), access to the HWD support pack, use of artwork and logo upon successful adoption and support with monitoring and evaluation.
<b>Legal</b>	There are no immediate legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.
<b>Procurement</b>	The HWD encourages the review of contracts and provision at public events, in all public buildings, facilities and 'providers to make healthier foods and drinks more available, convenient and affordable and limit access to high calorie, low nutrient foods and drinks (this should be applied to the council and partner organisations with scrutiny given to any new contracts for food drink provision, where possible).
<b>Human Resources</b>	
<b>Property</b>	No specific implications for property
<b>Equalities (Impact Assessment attached)</b>	All of this work will be through inequalities lens

<sup>5</sup> Intensive care national audit and research centre, 2020 Patients critically ill with COVID-19.

<sup>6</sup> Public Health England. (2020) Excess weight and COVID-19: insights from new evidence

Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	23 other local authorities have adopted this nationally as a robust process to consider healthy weight and as such presents no direct risks to NCC.  However, there is a risk to the implementation of HWD 16 commitments within the context of the cost-of-living crisis which will be monitored closely over the first year.
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	NA
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	Voice of customers will be actively sought as we progress implementation
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	It is anticipated that the Healthy Weight Declaration will support the councils carbon reduction plans. Alongside our Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight, the HWD looks to address and support methods of non-motorised transport and public transport while also considering food procurement (locally sourced food is likely to have a positive impact upon 'food mileage' and carbon reduction).
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	Adoption of the HWD as part of the joint health and wellbeing strategy action plan
<b>Wards</b>	All

### **Background papers**

- Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight. Why a local authority declaration on healthy weight is needed. 2020, Health Inequalities Group evidence briefing.
- [Whole systems approach to Obesity: A Guide to support local approaches to promoting a healthy weight.](#) Public Health England. 2019.
- [Fair Society, Healthy Lives. The Marmot Review. 2010](#)

### **Report sign off**

***Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:***

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