



Northumberland County Council

Health and Wellbeing Board

14th September 2023

Northumberland Healthy Weight Alliance

Report of: Councillor Veronica Jones, Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities

Responsible Officer(s): Gill O'Neill, Executive Director – Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities

1. Link to Key Priorities of the Corporate Plan

Northumberland Healthy Weight Alliance (HWA) will support the NCC Corporate Plan 2023-2026 priorities:

Tackling inequalities; Children and young people have the best start in life and grow up well. Residents have the building blocks of a good life. Empowered and resilient communities.

Driving Economic Growth; Skilled and aspirational people. A connected county.

The establishment of a HWA was a recommendation in the 2021/22 Director of Public Health (DPH) Annual Report: Healthy Weight for all Children

The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy is being refreshed to reflect the Marmot policy areas (listed below) and help deliver the inequalities plan.

1. Give every child the best start in life
2. Enable all children and young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
3. Create fair employment and good work for all
4. Ensure a healthy standard of living for all
5. Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention
6. Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention
7. Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together
8. Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes

How healthy weight supports these principles is shown below in the report.

2. Purpose of report

- To update board members on progress regarding Northumberland HWA.
- To feedback on the HWA workshop, May 2023, including suggested priority areas for action, key stakeholders and monitoring of impact arrangements.
- To inform board members of the appointment of a HWA 'Champion' / Chair.
- To seek agreement that Northumberland HWA reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Health and Wellbeing Board:

- approves the establishment of Northumberland HWA, to bring agencies and communities together to ensure a coordinated approach to healthy weight.
- agree that Northumberland HWA reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- delegate responsibility to the HWA to deliver the Healthy Weight Declaration (signed November 2022).

4. Forward plan date and reason for urgency if applicable

Not Applicable

5. Background

The 2021/22 [Director of Public Health Annual Report](#) outlines the complexities associated with public health challenges such as obesity. The DPH report makes a series of recommendations which aim to make healthy weight, specifically for children and young people, a priority for Northumberland. One of the recommendations in the DPH report is the formation of a HWA. This paper outlines the role of the HWA and updates members on progress to date.

Why Action is Needed Across Northumberland

[Previous Health and Wellbeing Board reports](#) have outlined the picture of unhealthy weight in Northumberland and the health, social and economic burden of unhealthy weight as well as the compounding impacts of the recent COVID-19 pandemic and the current cost of living crisis. In Summary;

- nearly a third of children aged 2 to 15 are overweight or obese and younger generations are becoming obese earlier and staying obese for longer (*JHWB Strategy – Best Start in Life theme*)
- almost two thirds of adults in Northumberland are overweight or obese, with those from lower income households much more likely to fall into this category compared to people from higher income households (*JHWB Strategy – Living and Ageing Well*)
- excess weight is a significant health issue for all ages, contributing to both physical and mental ill health, a reduced number of years spent in good health and reduced life chances (*Marmot principle – Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention*)
- in light of COVID-19 and the association between health inequalities, chronic disease and obesity as risk factors, it is important for Northumberland to build back better, providing healthier places, reducing inequalities and building resilience into recovery plans as part of the prevention agenda. (*Marmot principle – create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities*)
- the current cost of living crisis is placing additional strain on household budgets as prices of essentials such as food & fuel increase. Low-income families may turn to purchasing cheaper foods, often with little nutritional value with less access to a range of healthy and affordable foods resulting in diet-related inequalities and further widening health disparities. (*Marmot principle – ensure a healthy standard of living for all*)
- promoting healthy weight is even more important amidst the cost-of-living crisis to reduce pressure on the health and social care system, promote well-being and quality of life, and ensure a productive workforce and healthy economy. (*Marmot principle – create fair employment and good work for all*)
- Northumberland County Council has the potential to impact positively on the drivers that influence behaviours, including access and availability of food and drink options. The Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight presents an opportunity to tackle some of these drivers.

Northumberland's Healthy Weight Alliance

There is no single cause of overweight and obesity. The causes exist in the places we live, work and play with a multitude of complex factors including access to healthy food, proximity to fast food outlets, advertising and the marketing of calorie dense food and drinks and opportunities to be physically active. Establishment of Northumberland HWA aims to make healthy weight everybody's business with all stakeholders having an important role to play, including our residents. The goal is to ensure consideration and support for healthy weight is included in all our policies and practices.

Healthy Weight Alliance Workshop

In May 2023, the council's Public Health Team coordinated the first HWA workshop. Forty-five delegates from various organisations with a range of strategic roles attended. The aim of the workshop was to revisit the positive work which had been progressed pre covid pandemic. The workshop used the strategic themes from the Local Authority Healthy Weight Declaration to initiate conversations around healthy weight and collect insight from colleagues. The five strategic themes are:

- a) **System Leadership** – Adopting a long term, system-wide approach to healthy weight.
- b) **Commercial Determinants** – Promoting healthy food and drink options, while protecting our residents against the harmful effects of inappropriate marketing by the food and drink industry.
- c) **Health Promoting Environments** – Ensuring where we live has a positive impact on physical activity, active travel, the food environment and food security.
- d) **System and Cultural Change** – How our Anchor institutes (and partners) work to create a culture and ethos promoting an understanding of healthy weight.
- e) **Healthy Weight across the Life course** – A life course approach that supports healthy weight of both the current and future generations.

Workshop feedback was framed around 3 key questions (see appendix one)

1. What might our key areas of focus look like and why.
2. How will we know what success looks like (and how will we measure success).
3. Who are the key organisations / people that need to be involved.

From the 5 facilitated table discussions a range of key priority areas were identified across each of the key strategic themes. Feedback was broad and diverse, however, overarching themes included:

- development of a food strategy for Northumberland,
- design and development of where we live to maximise access to healthy foods and be physically active,
- giving every child the best start in life – utilising assets e.g. family hubs to promote good nutrition in the early years e.g. breastfeeding and infant feeding.

Another workshop will be held shortly to present feedback to delegates and agree priorities. The National Obesity Health Alliance, advocates 3 priority areas for action. Following this workshop, terms of reference will be prepared for approval by the Health and Wellbeing Board. The HWA will be chaired by Paul Jones, Director of Environment and Transport and include senior staff from organisations across the county.

Next Steps

Another workshop will be held shortly to present feedback to delegates and agree priorities. The National Obesity Health Alliance, advocates 3 priority areas for action. Following this workshop, terms of reference will be prepared for approval by the Health and Wellbeing Board. The HWA will be chaired by Paul Jones, Director of Environment and Transport and include senior staff from organisations across the county. .

6. Options open to the Council and reasons for the recommendations

Options open to the Council include:

- i. Adopting the recommendations outlined in section 3 of this report.
- ii. Consider the governance and delegated responsibilities for the HWA and suggest alternative arrangements.
- iii. Reject the recommendations with a clear rationale for non-adoption of the recommendations.

To progress work to create a Healthy Weight environment for all, it is recommended that the board agree to option i. outlined above.

7. Implications

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Policy | Establishment of the HWA will support key policy priorities and themes within the Corporate Plan. It will also support the North East and North Cumbria (NENC) Integrated Care System health and prevention workstream and the Marmot principle of strengthening the role and impact of ill health prevention |
| Finance and value for money | <p>Funding for a Local Authority approach will come from the Public Health ringfenced grant. NCC has already paid to work with Food Active to support Northumberland County Council's HWD £1950 + VAT.</p> <p>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.</p> |
| Legal | No implications identified |
| Procurement | The HWD encourages the review of contracts and provision at public events, in all public buildings and facilities. This supports the Marmot principle of creating and developing healthy and sustainable places and communities. |
| Human resources | There are no implications for HR |
| Property | No specific implications for property |

| | |
|---|--|
| Equalities Act: is a full impact assessment required and attached? | No - not required at this point All of this work will be through inequalities lens adopted by the inequalities plan, using the three screening questions: what can communities do for themselves; what communities need help with and what can't communities do which agencies need to do |
| Risk assessment | 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 as lower income families would need to spend 47% of their disposable income on food to meet the Government's healthy diet recommendations. |
| Crime and disorder | N/A |
| Customer considerations | Voice of residents will be actively sought as we progress implementation. |
| Carbon reduction | It is anticipated that the HWA will support the council's carbon reduction plans. This supports the Marmot principle of pursuing environmental and health equity together |
| Health and wellbeing | Establishment of the HWA supports the joint health and wellbeing strategy and action plan |

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| Wards | All Wards |
|--------------|-----------|

8. Background papers

- Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight. Why a local authority declaration on healthy weight is needed. 2020, Health Inequalities Group evidence briefing.
- [Northumberland Declaration on Healthy Weight](#)
- [Obesity Health Alliance](#)
- [Northumberland Director of Public Health Annual Report 2021/22 - Healthy Weight for all Children](#)

9. Links to other key reports already published

N/A

10. Author and Contact Details

David Turnbull - Public Health Senior Manager
Email: david.turnbull@northumberland.gov.uk

Report sign off.

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

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| | Full Name of Officer |
|--|----------------------|

| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Monitoring Officer/Legal | Neil Masson obo Stephen Gerrard |
| Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer | Jan Willis |
| Relevant Executive Director | Gill O'Neill |
| Chief Executive | Helen Paterson |
| Portfolio Holder(s) | Veronica Jones |

Appendix 1. Feedback From Initial Healthy Weight Alliance Workshop: May 2023

System Leadership – Adopting a long term, system-wide approach to healthy weight.

| |
|--|
| Strategic System Leadership |
| What Key Areas of Work Should We Focus on? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Align healthy weight into our key policies, plans and strategies• Use our procurement powers to explore opportunities around healthier foods• Explore pulling our expertise and knowledge together to develop a local food strategy – which considers, growing foods, food production, sales, sustainability |
| How Will we Measure Success? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healthy Weight featuring in all Policies• Relationships with Anchor Institutes e.g. how many anchor organisations are active members of the HWA |
| Who Should be Involved? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commercial Partners• Schools and other education institutions• NHS & Partners• North of Tyne Combined Authority• VCSE Organisations |

Commercial Determinants – Promoting healthy food and drink options, while protecting our residents against the harmful effects of inappropriate marketing by the food and drink industry.

| |
|--|
| Commercial Determinants |
| What Key Areas of Work Should We Focus on? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is in our control? – Breakfast Clubs, Events, Advertising, Cafés, Restaurants, Take-Aways, Vending Machines, Menu Options• How we could work with Delivery Companies (of fast food) to encourage promotion of healthier foods / alternatives• Procuring Healthy Ingredients – To use in staff restaurants / schools / hospitals |
| How Will we Measure Success? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of commercial organisations working with us? |

- Changes in LA and partner restaurants etc?

Who Should be Involved?

- Northumberland Communities Together – Nourish Northumberland
- Licencing
- Procurement

Health Promoting Environments – Ensuring where we live has a positive impact on physical activity, active travel, the food environment and food security.

Health Promoting Environments

Key Areas

- Accessible Environments – Parks, Green Spaces and Local Amenities
- Design of Built Urban Developments – How do we address current unusable / inadequate infrastructure (retrofit)?
- Environments / Assets with multiple benefits i.e. Allotments
- Addressing Transport Issues

How Will we Measure Success?

- Money leveraged into the county e.g. via North of Tyne
- % of the population walking / cycling / scooting
- What is our measure of good design? – Set of shared design principals
- Vibrant high streets – Relationships with local businesses / producers

Who Should be Involved?

- Elected Members
- Town and Parish Cllrs
- VCS
- Various L.A. Departments
- Chamber of Commerce
- Residents

System and Cultural Change – How our Anchor institutes (and partners) work to create a culture and ethos promoting an understanding of healthy weight.

System and Cultural Change

Key Areas

- Creation of a Northumberland Food Strategy (to include / consider)

Procurement
 Reducing Food Poverty
 Climate Change

- Supporting Local Businesses to compete with big industry / large scale providers

Revised commissioning framework

- How we use our collective powers to change culture and support the economy and improve health

NCC - Organising events for local producers, share local resources
 Active Northumberland - Review of catering offer, review of food suppliers
 NHFT - Review vending provision, food labelling patients and staff
 ICB - Review of systemwide tool for patients living with obesity

How Will We Measure Success?

- Staff H&WB Surveys – with an agreed framework / set of questions to compare
- Analysis / Audit of our Making Every Contact Count (MECC) impact
- Procurement Policies – That include (even prioritise) local producers

Who Should be Involved?

- Northumbrian water
- Farmers – NFU
- VCS – Food Banks
- Residents / Community Groups
- Workforce Health Leads / Reps

Healthy Weight across the Life course – A life course approach that supports healthy weight of both the current and future generations.

Healthy Weight across the Life course

Key Areas

- Starting Well (Starting Early)
 Addressing Maternal Obesity
 Utilising Family Hubs – Breastfeeding, Infant Feeding (weaning), health literacy
- School Food and Physical Activity Environment

Adopting an Active Schools approach

- Improving cooking knowledge and skills (including equipment)
- Clear consistent messaging across the life course

How Will We Measure Success?

- School Food Plans (?)
- Progress tracked against the Core 20 Plus 5 offer (Adults and CYP)

Who Should be Involved?

- Education – School Governors
- Early Years – Midwives, Health Visitors, Infant Feeding Teams
- Food Banks