



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

Healthy Weight Strategy

2024-2029

Foreword

Tackling obesity is everyone's business – there is no single individual, group or organisation that can do this alone.

Eating too much or moving too little can contribute to a person becoming overweight but the causes of obesity are much wider than this. The wider environmental, social and economic factors all play a part in our health outcomes and can cause obesity.

Being an unhealthy weight has a huge impact on people's lives – you are more at risk of developing illnesses such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease as well as being more at risk of having a diagnosed mental health problem such as depression or anxiety. Furthermore, being overweight can mean that you are likely to live fewer years than people who are a healthy weight.

Across Telford and Wrekin, we have higher levels of children and adults who are overweight or living with obesity, compared to the national average. We must do something about this, and now is the time to act. Working together using a whole systems approach is vitally important to be able to tackle the upstream drivers of obesity.

The Healthy Weight Strategy 2024-2029 outlines our system's joined-up approach and commitments to improving healthy weight outcomes for our residents. Being a healthy weight can lead to people living healthy and fulfilling lives and this five year strategy looks at medium to long term solutions that contribute to this vision.



Liz Noakes
Director of Public Health



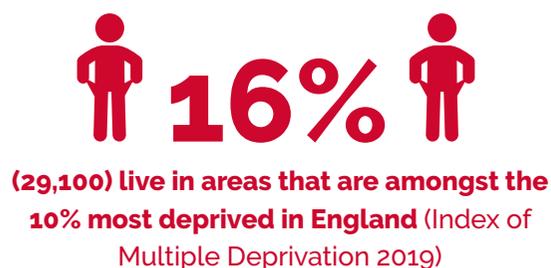
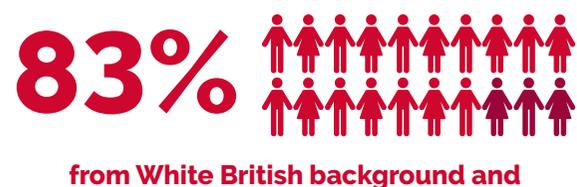
Cllr Kelly Middleton
Healthy, Safer and Stronger Communities and Partnerships, Lead Public Health, Mental Health and Domestic Violence



Contents

Local Context	4
Definition, language and terminology	5
Engagement	6
Key priorities	7
Whole systems approach – summary of priorities	8
Priority 1 – Supporting our children to grow into a healthy weight	10
Priority 2 – Promoting a healthier food environment including healthy settings	14
Priority 3 – Creating opportunities for all	18
Priority 4 – Empowering system partners	22
Evaluation	26
Acknowledgements	28
Appendices	29

Local context



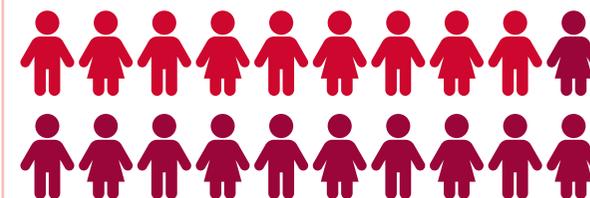
Children and young people



(25.4%) (530) children in Reception in the borough are overweight or living with obesity (higher rate than England) (OHID 2022/23)



(38.9%) (855) children in Year 6 in the borough are overweight or living with obesity (higher rate than England) (OHID 2022/23)



Less than half of the children in the borough (44.4%) meet the physical activity recommendations (60 minutes per day) (OHID 2021/22)

Adults



The borough has higher rates of adults who are overweight (OHID 2021/22)



of adults with learning disabilities are living with obesity (OHID 2021/22)



1 in 4 adults
(26.8%) do less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week. This increases to 48.7% where adults have a disability or long term health condition. (OHID 2021/22)

- Children living in the most deprived areas of Telford and Wrekin are 7.8% more likely to be living with obesity than those in the least deprived areas (OHID 2021/22).
- The prevalence of children living with obesity is highest in the 'Black' ethnic group (OHID 2021/22).
- Boys are more likely to be overweight or living with obesity than girls (OHID 2021/22).

- 24.2% of pregnant mothers are living with obesity (NHS Digital April 2023 – data for SaTH).
- 7.7% of adults are diagnosed with diabetes (QOF 2022/23).
- 14.1% of adults have diagnosed hypertension (high blood pressure) (OHID 2021/22).
- 27.2% of primary school pupils are eligible for income related free school meals (LAIT 2023).

- Only 26.1% of adults meet the recommended daily 5 a day fruit and vegetable consumption (OHID 2021/22).
- Fast food accessibility is worse in some areas, including Madeley and Sutton Hill.

Obesity - definition, language and terminology

Whole systems approach – throughout this strategy, we will use the term 'Whole Systems Approach'. This involves applying systems thinking, methods and practice to collectively tackle complex issues like obesity with all system partners involved. OHID, previously PHE, produced guidance for local areas to apply a Whole Systems Approach to tackle obesity, which we will base our framework on: [Whole systems approach to obesity - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Other terminology used throughout the strategy, is explained below:

“Overweight and obesity are defined as abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that may impair health.”

(WHO, 2021)

BMI – Body mass index (BMI) is the most widely used method to check if you're a healthy weight for your height. The BMI range for Healthy Weight is 18.5-24.9.

Overweight – if your BMI is 25 or over, you're in the overweight range.

Obese – if your BMI is 30 or over, you're in the obesity range.

For Black, Asian and some other ethnic minority groups, the healthy weight range is lower (23 for overweight, 27.5 for living with obesity).

Underweight – if your BMI is below 18.5, you're in the underweight range.

BMI Centile – for children aged 2-18 years old, BMI takes into account age and sex as well as height and weight and is shown as a “centile”. This compares with other children of the same age and sex as a percentage. Overweight is classed as 91st centile or above, and very overweight is classed as 98th centile or above.

BMI is a useful indicator of healthy weight for most people, however there are limitations as it measures whether a person is carrying too much weight, but not too much fat. Other measures of excess fat include the waist to height ratio.

People's beliefs and stigma

It is recognised that some people do not perceive BMI alone to be a measure of a “healthy weight”. During engagement with Telford and Wrekin residents, people suggested that being a healthy weight means “feeling good, moving well, not being tired”. 72% of people who were engaged with knew their height and weight.

It is also noted that the terminology used by professionals may have a negative impact on people – “Health professionals seem to think everything is linked to weight”.

1 in 3 people who were engaged with felt that they have been treated differently or discriminated against because of their weight.

Our language

With this in mind, across Telford and Wrekin, we will aim to avoid language which has the potential to contribute to weight-based discrimination. Terminology drawn from BMI classifications and ranges will only be used in relation to explaining data, trends and patterns. Positive and sensitive language will be adopted in communications with residents and partners. Our messaging will also aim to reduce any potential unintended harm to those at risk of being underweight or eating disorders.

Engagement results

During August and September 2023, members of the public and professionals were consulted with to establish their thoughts and views on healthy weight through a short survey. The survey was promoted through social media and through various community groups to ensure that results were representative of the local population. A number of focus groups were also completed with community groups that are often underrepresented and/or at higher risk of obesity, including males, over 55s, residents with a learning or physical disability or mental health condition.

872 members of the public and 136 professionals completed the Healthy Weight Survey and a summary of the results is shown below:

Public

- 90% of the public agree that being a healthy weight is important to them.
- 4 in 5 (81%) people are trying to lose weight or have tried to in the past.
- Only half of the public (55%) feel like they can successfully manage their weight.
- 1 in 3 (33%) feel that they have been treated differently or been discriminated against because of their weight.
- The majority of the public stated that the increase of food prices has not affected them much (62%), however, 19% of the public

have had to prioritise paying bills over food shopping. 10 people (1%) responded that they have had to send their children to school without breakfast or a packed lunch, which is 10 too many.

- The main challenges to eating a healthy diet include: 1. having time to prepare healthy food; 2. motivation; 3. ideas of what to cook; 4. being able to afford a healthy diet; 5. the amount of unhealthy food choices available.
- The main challenges to being physically active include: 1. finding time; 2. the cost of activities; 3. confidence in joining in; 4. level of ability.
- The key drivers to support people to achieve a healthy weight are: 1. seeing the progress made; 2. seeing improvements in health and confidence; 3. having support from family and friends.

- The majority of the public (77%) felt that teaching healthy cooking from a young age can help children and young people to eat well. Positive media messages can encourage healthy eating in children and young people.

Professionals

- 92% of professionals that responded thought that healthy weight was important to their role.
- However, only 66% felt confident in being able to support others to achieve a healthy weight.
- Almost half (48%) of professionals feel that their own weight impacts their confidence and ability to support others.
- Almost 1 in 3 professionals (29%) felt that residents they work with have been discriminated against or treated differently for being overweight.
- Professionals felt that the main challenges to members of the public are cost; understanding of healthy weight; the wider environment; and motivation.
- Professionals felt that challenges to support others with healthy weight include: dedicated time; access to training; too much focus on body weight alone.

The Healthy Weight Survey Summary Report can be found in Appendix 2

Key priorities

Throughout the strategy, we will focus on four key priorities:

Whole systems approach

Supporting our children to grow into a healthy weight



Promoting a healthier food environment including healthy settings



Creating opportunities for all



Empowering system partners



Whole systems approach

Supporting our children to grow into a healthy weight

Promoting a healthier food environment including healthy settings

Creating opportunities for all

Empowering system partners

Together, using a whole systems approach, we will ensure:

- Parents eligible for healthy start vouchers are utilising support.
- Parents and families are supported to provide infants with the best start in life.
- Families with young children have access to information on how to best start their child's diet and nutrition, including signposting to services that support breastfeeding and the introduction of complimentary foods.
- Schools across our borough utilise the initiatives within our Schools Health and Wellbeing Programme – including the uptake of Healthy Schools Rating Scheme.
- A whole curriculum approach to healthy weight is adopted in schools.
- Improve the uptake of free school meals for all eligible children.
- Healthy cooking is taught from an early age.
- Children living with obesity, and their families will be signposted to available support services.
- Pro-active follow up and targeted support is available to children who are identified as overweight or living with obesity through NCMP.
- Professionals working with pregnant women, children and young people and families can confidently support healthy weight.

- Schools are provided with resources to support compliance with school food standards.
- Planning policies reflect public health and opportunities are explored to improve access to healthy foods and to reduce exposure to unhealthy food in the wider environment.
- Opportunities for community growing initiatives, and healthy cooking demonstrations are maximised across the borough.
- Where available, food within public settings will include healthy choices – starting with our own council and NHS venues, we will ensure that residents, patients, staff and visitors have access to healthy foods.
- Tools and resources are available to support voluntary and community settings to promote healthy eating and physical activity, this also includes workplaces.
- Professionals and organisations providing activities and food to our children are equipped with knowledge of healthy foods (including Happy Healthy Active Holidays).

- Residents are equipped with the knowledge to become the healthiest version of themselves and to support their families and friends, including reducing sedentary behaviour and eating healthy foods.
- Capacity to support residents will be strengthened through peer support, volunteers and befriending.
- Residents are aware of opportunities and activities already taking place.
- Existing assets are optimised, including our community assets, green and blue spaces, leisure centres.
- Physical activity initiatives are co-designed with community-based groups and organisations, including the identification and acquisition of external funding where necessary.
- The cost of activities will be sustainable and affordable for our residents.
- Services and activities we provide are accessible to all, with focus on priority population groups.
 - Residents with a learning disability or special educational needs.
 - Residents with a physical disability or long-term health condition.
 - Residents with a common mental health problem, or serious mental illness.
 - Residents with dementia, and their carers.
 - Residents within our social care settings, and their carers.
 - Residents experiencing peri-menopause or menopause.
 - Residents from Black and Asian ethnic groups.
 - Residents within our most deprived wards.
- Opportunities for long term support is explored for people who have used a weight management service.

- Professionals working with our priority population groups will have access to training opportunities.
- Training opportunities for our workforce will equip professionals with the confidence and knowledge to support others with their weight, utilising quality conversations and making every contact count framework.
- Further engagement with professionals takes place to better understand how they can be supported, particularly where professionals feel that their own weight impacts their ability to support others.
- Robust pathways between services are established so residents are signposted to the right support.
- Development of a healthy weight campaign and brand that is supported by system partners.
- System wide communications are developed to reduce confusion and conflicting messages.
- System partners use a language that aims to reduce the stigma associated with weight and avoid discrimination.
- System partners take responsibility to ensure healthy weight is embedded in everything they do, including commissioned services and contracts.

Whole systems approach

The four key priority themes are underpinned by a “Whole Systems Approach”.

We aim to ensure that healthy weight is embedded in everything we do and becomes everyone's business.

Our key system partners include Telford & Wrekin Council; NHS Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin; Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust; Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust (SaTH); Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust; Voluntary and Community Sector; Schools; Workplaces as well as local clubs and community groups.

The local system will work together in an integrated place-based way, supporting the development of healthier communities. Our language and communications aim to reduce stigma and discrimination as well as conflicting messaging.



Priority 1 – supporting our children to grow into a healthy weight



Why is this a priority?

The National Child Measurement Programme measures the height and weight of Reception and Year 6 aged children annually. There are above average levels of overweight and obesity in children across Telford and Wrekin, compared with regional and national averages.

Children from our most deprived areas are more likely to be overweight or living with obesity. Prevalence is also higher amongst boys compared to girls.

Children living with obesity are at an increased risk of health problems including asthma, sleeping problems, musculoskeletal problems, and type 2 diabetes. These health problems can worsen as children move through the life course and become adults.

Services supporting children from early years to adolescents should adopt a whole systems approach to embed tackling obesity into everything they do.

Outside of the home, children spend most of their time at school, making the role of schools vitally important to supporting children to grow into a healthy weight.



Priority 1 – what we know



Last year in Telford and Wrekin...

530

Reception aged children
were overweight (25.4%)



855

Year 6 aged children
were overweight (38.9%)



What we have heard through engagement:

77% of parents felt that teaching healthy cooking from an early age could help encourage children and young people to eat well.

Positive media messages can encourage healthy eating in children and young people.

A quarter of professionals working with children and families do not know what healthy start vouchers are; another quarter know what they are but do not promote them.

Parents identified more activities outside of school and an increase in PE lessons as ways to encourage children to be more physically active.

65% of parents would go to their GP for advice if they were worried about their child's weight. Parents would also speak to family members or friends and make use of online information and apps. Less people state that they would go to a child's school or school nurse for advice.

"Children are simply not being educated enough about, or even made aware of, so many healthy food options."

"Schools have an incredible opportunity to introduce children to new foods and simple cooking skills."

"Kids don't play out anymore due to safety concerns."

"Children have become very unfit in primary school – they don't have enough physical activity."

"Too much TV and social media use for kids to find the time to get out of the house and be active."

"The problem with after school classes is the cost."

Priority 1 – what we have been doing



The Healthy Child Programme including health visiting and school nursing is available across the borough.

Family Hubs are one-stop centres where families can get free information, guidance and support on infant feeding, mental health, healthy lifestyles and many other services. Booklets with services for 0-2 year olds are disseminated to families through professionals.

The Healthy Families programme has supported children and families to create healthier lifestyle habits.

Our schools Health and Wellbeing Programme supports schools with a toolkit to promote a healthier setting. Schools with higher levels of childhood obesity and within our more deprived communities have received targeted support.

Over 6000 children have benefited from Eatwell and family cooking sessions.

Let's Dine work in partnership with schools to provide healthy and nutritionally-balanced meals. Pupils are often involved in helping to create the menu.

Our Active Partnership, Energize, has delivered the Creating Active Schools pilot with five local schools.

The Holiday Activities and Food Programme provides children with enrichment activities and access to healthy food over the school holidays.

The 10 by 10 initiative is promoted across the borough to help children discover new opportunities such as team sports, swimming and riding a bike.

Free swimming is available in our local authority leisure centres to Telford and Wrekin residents under the age of 25 including opportunities for free lessons for children who cannot swim.

Kids4£1 provides opportunities for families to enjoy holiday activities including swimming, tennis, golf and soft play for a small cost.

Urban Games multi sports sessions delivered during the school holidays are free for young people aged 8+. Activities include cricket, football and basketball.

Priority 1 – commitments



Together, using a whole systems approach, we will ensure:

Parents eligible for healthy start vouchers are utilising support for healthy foods and free vitamins.

Parents and families are supported to provide infants with the best start in life .

Families with young children have access to information on how to best start their child's diet and nutrition, including signposting to services that support breastfeeding and the introduction of complimentary foods.

Schools across our Borough utilise the initiatives within our Schools Health and Wellbeing Programme – including uptake of the Healthy Schools Rating Scheme.

A whole curriculum approach to healthy weight is adopted in schools.

Improved uptake of free school meals for all eligible children ensuring they receive at least one healthy, substantial meal per day.

Healthy cooking is taught from an early age and children will have the opportunity to try healthy foods.

Children living with obesity, and their families will be signposted to support services, including opportunities for physical activity, healthy eating and cooking sessions, the Healthy Families Service, as well as relevant online resources.

Pro-active follow up and targeted support is available to children who are identified as obese through the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) .

Professionals working with pregnant women, children, young people and families can confidently support healthy weight.

Priority 2 – promoting a healthier food environment – including healthy settings



Why is this a priority?

The places we live and work can impact significantly on our health and wellbeing. Addressing the wider determinants such as living and working environments can help to tackle complex health challenges such as obesity.

Many people find it challenging to eat healthily because we are living in environments where less healthier food options containing high amounts of sugar, salt and fat are readily available.

Obesity and excess weight levels are highest amongst our population living within the most deprived areas. We know that across England, the most deprived areas have five times more fast-food outlets compared to the most affluent areas.

Organisations should work together to create healthier food environments, making access to affordable healthier food the norm.

We know from engaging with our residents, that time and motivation are the main challenges to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. By ensuring a whole systems approach is adopted throughout settings where our residents spend a lot of their time, we can address those barriers and support people to lead a healthy lifestyle.



Priority 2 – what we know



What we found in our needs assessment:



Fast food accessibility is worse in some areas of Telford and Wrekin than others. **Parts of Madeley and Sutton Hill have a high density of fast-food outlets.**



87,700 people aged 16 and over in Telford and Wrekin were employed in the year ending June 2023 (ONS 2023)

What we have heard through engagement:

“Secondary schools don't seem to worry about offering healthy options. Fruit or salad is not always available, but brownies always are”

“Schools always promote healthy eating but at the same time they serve burgers, nuggets, sausages”

“Schools have an incredible opportunity to introduce children to new foods and simple cooking skills”

“There are no healthy options when picking up lunch on the go, it is no wonder people make poor choices with food”

“Local shops do not stock many healthy choices, so the only option is to spend more money to travel to bigger supermarkets”

“Adverts of 'healthy foods' are misleading and often difficult to spot”

“You go to a Telford and Wrekin event, and you are given biscuits, offered sugar in your tea or coffee”

“It would be great to see companies have a valued interest and support people with their health”

“Have to choose to eat cheaper less healthy foods”

“There are too many 'fast food' outlets, and the cost of calorie rich food is less than healthier alternatives”

“Delivery services mean you can get junk food delivered to your house – so much easier to get”

Many residents have switched to cheaper brands, buying more processed foods, and not buying as much fruit, vegetables or fresh food.

Families have prioritised feeding children over feeding themselves.

A number of our residents have needed to use forms of credit such as overdrafts and credit cards, to buy food.

Priority 2 – what have we been doing

We have been supporting schools to self-assess against the standards within the Healthy Schools Rating Scheme.

Our Health Protection team have taken part in the Food Standards Agency pilot to assess school food standards whilst undertaking food hygiene inspections. This has been supported by the council's Health Improvement Team who have been working with schools, providing support and resources to improve compliance with the standards.

Healthy Lifestyles support available in workplaces with a focus on engaging employers with high levels of routine and manual workers.

Supporting workplaces to improve access to healthy foods, physical activity and weight management opportunities, including the NHS Digital Weight Management Programme for NHS staff.



Priority 2 – commitments



Together, using a whole systems approach, we will ensure:

Schools are provided with resources to support compliance with the school food standards and improve access to healthy foods throughout the school day.

Planning policies reflect public health priorities and opportunities are explored to improve access to healthy foods and to reduce exposure to unhealthy food in the wider environment.

Opportunities for community growing initiatives, and healthy cooking demonstrations are maximised across the borough.

Where available, food within public settings will include healthy choices - starting with our own council and NHS venues, we will ensure that residents, patients, staff and visitors have access to healthy foods.

Tools and resources are available to support voluntary and community settings to promote healthy eating and physical activity, this also includes workplaces.

Professionals and organisations providing activities and food to our children are equipped with knowledge of healthy foods (including Happy Healthy Active Holidays).



Priority 3 – creating opportunities for all



Why is this a priority?

Children and adults with a physical or learning disability are at greater risk of obesity and often face additional challenges to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

Mental health and obesity has a two-way association where conditions such as depression can lead to increased weight, and obesity can lead to depression.

Obesity is also a risk factor for developing dementia. People living with dementia and their carers face challenges to eating healthily and having the time and ability to take part in physical activity. Physical activity can help to improve wellbeing and promote independence, which benefits both people with dementia and their carers.

The cost of obesity is a significant burden to our health and social care systems and costs for housing adaptations, specialised equipment and carer provision will continue to increase as levels of obesity increase and our population ages.

Our engagement work highlighted a lack of support for women experiencing weight gain through perimenopause and menopause.

Overweight and obesity levels are highest amongst adults and children from black ethnic groups. The risk of developing weight-related health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease is higher in some Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups.

Motivation is a main challenge affecting people's ability to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Support from family and friends, as well as services that encourage improvements in health, fitness and confidence can help when making a lifestyle change.

Cost is often a barrier for people taking part in wellbeing activities. There are many opportunities for residents to take part in free or low-cost activities in the borough but it is important that these are widespread and accessible to all.

Priority 3 – what we know



What we have heard through engagement:



Time and motivation are the main challenges for people to eat a healthy diet.

Other challenges include affordability and the amount of unhealthy food choices available.

Seeing an improvement in fitness, health and confidence; having support from family and friends; and not focussing on body weight alone, all help people with achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

Over half of people are aware of weight management support available including the councils' Healthy Lifestyle Service, NHS Digital Weight Management Programme and the National Diabetes Prevention Programme (56%).



Time and cost are the main challenges for people to be physically active.

Other challenges include confidence and level of ability.

"Many physical activities are prohibitive for my physical health difficulties."

"Improved access for disabled people to take part in exercise."

"The subsidised swimming at my local pool has been invaluable."

"Sometimes the cost puts me off – I don't want to commit to a membership and £6 per session can be a bit steep."

"Mental health support links with healthy weight."

"I don't push myself but I could do it with a fitness 'buddy.'"

"There needs to be more on how menopause affects weight and how people need to change their eating and exercise to reflect this as they go through the changes."

"Can't always be bothered to prepare meals because I feel so tired."

"No great time or motivation."

"Accepting that change takes time."

"Sensory processing issues – children with sensory disorders don't always like batch cooking as it changes the texture."

Priority 3 – what we have been doing



The Healthy Lifestyles Service is free and available to Telford and Wrekin residents who want to make lifestyle changes.

Telford and Wrekin Council run a Health Champion scheme – a network of volunteers that are passionate about health and wellbeing and want to help others to live healthy and happy lives. Around 100 champions engage with the local community to share key health messages and signpost people to local organisations.

The NHS Digital Weight Management Programme is available to residents with a BMI of over 30 and a diagnosis of either hypertension or diabetes. NHS staff are also able to access the programme if their BMI is over 30.

The NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme is available to residents who are at risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

The X-PERT Diabetes programme is available to residents with type 2 diabetes and equips participants with the knowledge and skills to help

make lifestyle choices to manage blood glucose levels more efficiently.

Our social prescribing teams based within primary care connect people to activities, groups and services in the local area.

Telford & Wrekin leisure services provide facilities such as swimming pools, accessible fitness facilities and classes, skiing and skating whilst also offering a generous concessions scheme.

Inclusive leisure activities are available to residents with learning and/or physical disabilities. Staff members within leisure services have taken part in training to increase their knowledge and awareness of disabilities.

Our Green Spaces are Go Campaign and activities has led to an increase in the number of residents accessing our parks and green spaces for physical activity.

The Ketley Bank, Oakengates and St Georges community cycling project (KOG) has encouraged more people to cycle through 'Learn to Ride'

Schemes, bike maintenance sessions and through training local people to volunteer as Ride Leaders.

Telford and Wrekin Active Travel team have delivered initiatives to encourage residents to cycle and walk more as part of everyday activities. The Active SMiles project encourages employees and families to try active commuting.

Mens walking groups have brought men together providing a safe space to end the stigma around men's mental health and improving physical health.

Specialist non-surgical (Tier 3) and surgical (Tier 4) weight management services are in place at SaTH for patients who require advanced weight management.

A Healthy Pregnancy Support Service is available at SaTH to support pregnant women to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

The Aspirations road to success programme supports people who have a health condition and are new to exercise.

Priority 3 – commitments



Together, using a whole systems approach, we will ensure:

Residents are equipped with the knowledge to become the healthiest version of themselves and to support their families and friends, including reducing sedentary behaviour and eating healthy foods.

Residents are aware of opportunities and activities already taking place.

Capacity to support residents will be strengthened through peer support, volunteers and befriending.

Existing assets are optimised, particularly those that are free or low cost - including our community assets, green and blue spaces, and leisure centres.

Physical activity initiatives are co-designed with community-based groups and organisations to provide innovative opportunities for physical activity, including the identification and acquisition of external funding where necessary.

The cost of activities are sustainable and affordable for our residents.

Services and activities we provide are accessible to all, with a focus on priority population groups:

- Residents with a learning disability or special educational needs
- Residents with a physical disability or long-term health condition
- Residents with a common mental health problem, or serious mental illness
- Residents with dementia, and their carers
- Residents within our social care settings, and their carers
- Residents experiencing peri-menopause or menopause
- Residents from Black and Asian ethnic groups
- Residents within our most deprived wards

Opportunities for long term support is explored for people who have used a weight management service.



Priority 4 – empowering system partners



Why is this a priority?

Working as a whole system is recognised to collectively address health challenges such as obesity. The causes of obesity are complex and there is no one single solution. We must ensure that healthy weight is embedded in everything we do and that actions from each system partner are coordinated to support this system change.

There are many local services that aim to prevent or reduce long-term conditions, where effective joined up pathways can positively contribute to preventing and reducing levels of obesity. It is important to recognise the interdependencies amongst services and provide an easy route for people to access the variety of support available.

Our system partners in Telford and Wrekin include the local authority, NHS, voluntary and community organisations as well as workplaces and schools.



Priority 4 – what we know



What we have heard through engagement:

97%

Most professionals state that they have a good understanding of healthy weight.



66%

Only two thirds of professionals feel confident to support others with their weight.



47.7%

Almost half of professionals feel that their own weight impacts their ability to support others.

“Services are quick to suggest weight loss but do not help with ways to do this”

“There is lots of conflicting advice around weight loss”

“Constantly changing messages about what is healthy – from google and professionals”

“People don’t understand why someone might be overweight, it’s not just food”



Priority 4 – what we have been doing



We have engaged with our system partners across the public, private, voluntary and community sector to explore the enablers and barriers to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

We have promoted training to professionals working with children and families to increase their confidence of raising the issue of excess weight.

We have promoted training to healthcare professionals through the e-learning for healthcare site to improve care for children and young people living with excess weight.



Priority 4 – commitments



Together, using a whole systems approach, we will ensure:

Professionals working with our priority population groups have access to training opportunities.

Training opportunities for our workforce will equip professionals with the confidence and knowledge to support residents with their weight, utilising quality conversations and the making every contact count framework.

Further engagement with professionals to better understand how they can be supported, particularly where professionals feel that their own weight impacts their ability to support others.

Robust pathways between services are established so residents are signposted to the right support.

Development of a healthy weight campaign and brand that is supported by system partners.

System wide communications are developed to reduce confusion and conflicting messages.

System partners use a language that aims to reduce the stigma associated with weight and avoid discrimination.

System partners take responsibility to ensure healthy weight is embedded in everything they do, including commissioned services and contracts.



Evaluation

Performance monitoring

How will we know if the strategy is working?

A selection of national and local indicators will be used to demonstrate the impact of our Healthy Weight Strategy and action plan with regular assurance reporting to the Telford and Wrekin Health and Wellbeing Board.

Existing system wide partnership groups will support delivery of the strategy including the Telford & Wrekin Integrated Place Partnership; the Best start in Life Early Help Board; and the CVD Prevention Group. Task and finish groups will also be convened to take forward key projects.



National Indicators

A number of national public health indicators will be used to monitor the progress of the Healthy Weight Strategy. These include:

Reception prevalence of overweight (including obesity)

2022/23 – 25.4%

Year 6 prevalence of overweight (including obesity)

2022/23 – 38.9%

Percentage of physically active children and young people

2021/22 – 44.4%

Percentage of adults (aged 18 plus) classified as overweight or obese

2021/22 – 71.4%

Percentage of physically active adults

2021/22 – 64.2%

Percentage of physically inactive adults

2021/22 – 26.8%

Percentage of adults aged 16 and over meeting the '5 a day' fruit and vegetable consumption recommendations

2021/22 – 26.1%

Local Indicators

Along with national statistics, local indicators will be used to track progress of the Healthy Weight Strategy. These indicators are performance measures of the actions and projects delivered under each priority. Qualitative information will also be collected, for example case studies, to demonstrate impact that any of the actions have on our local residents. A clear focus is to reduce health inequalities so wherever possible we will monitor progress using this lens.

Supporting our children to grow into a healthy weight

- Uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers (% eligible, % uptake).
- Uptake of Income Related Free School Meals (% eligible, % uptake).
- Number of schools with a Healthy Schools Rating (no. of schools with Bronze, Silver, Gold and no. of schools with improved ratings).
- Number of professionals receiving training to identify, signpost and refer children and families to appropriate services, MECC or University of Bath training (no. of professionals and staffing groups e.g. early years/ schools).
- Number of children and families receiving targeted support from NCMP (no. of families contacted, no. of families signed up to Healthy Families, no. of families achieved goals).

Promoting a healthier food environment including healthy settings

- Number of schools adopting recommendations from School Food Standards resources.

- Number of community growing initiatives implemented.
- Number of healthy cooking demonstrations completed with adults and children.
- Numbers of settings (including workplaces) adopting healthier food choices.
- Number of organisations and professionals who deliver activities and food (e.g. HHAH providers) that have received training on recommended food provision.

Creating opportunities for all

- Number of co-designed community physical activity interventions established, and numbers of participants taking part (including priority population groups).
- Uptake of lifestyle services and weight management programmes, from priority population groups.
- Engagement of priority population groups with healthy weight campaign.

Empowering system partners

- Number of professionals receiving training to identify, signpost and refer to appropriate services (no. of professionals and staffing groups e.g. primary care).
- Number of professionals receiving training to have quality conversations about weight / making every contact count (no. of professionals and staffing groups e.g. primary care).
- Number of partners engaged with healthy weight campaign and adopting branding.



Acknowledgements

We are especially grateful and give a big thank you to all the residents who gave up their time to complete our survey and take part in the focus groups.

Thank you also to the wide range of council officers and colleagues in partner organisations who have contributed to the publication process and report content, this includes colleagues in the public health and health improvement teams, adult social care, children and families services, community engagement, communication and external affairs, and insight teams as well as partners from the NHS, voluntary and community sector, schools and workplaces.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Throughout the Healthy Weight Strategy, there is reference to the Healthy Weight Needs Assessment and Healthy Weight Survey. To view the Healthy Weight Needs Assessment, [click here](#).

Appendix 2

Healthy Weight Survey Summary Report

The Research

In August 2023, Telford & Wrekin Council launched a Healthy Weight Survey to engage with the local community, stakeholders and professionals to gather their views of the topic 'Healthy Weight'. The survey was live for a period of 8 weeks. The aim of the survey was to identify:

- The meaning of healthy weight to members of the public and stakeholders;
- The challenges and barriers to achieving a healthy weight;
- The strategies and services that are in place and support people to manage their weight.

The survey had two sections with separate questions for members of the public and for professionals who work with members of the public. In addition to the survey, a number of focus groups were held with local people and organisations in areas of risk or underrepresentation, to encourage further discussion. The information below provides a summary of results gathered through the Healthy Weight Survey.

Members of the Public

Engagement

872 members of the public completed the Healthy Weight Survey.

Respondents were located across Telford and Wrekin. More responses were received from people living in the East of the borough, compared to the West.

Participation was well spread across all age groups, however, fewer responses came from age groups 18-24, 75-84 and 85+.

More women participated in the survey than men (75.8% women, 23.3% men, some respondents preferred not to say).

38.5% of respondents were parents, carers or expectant parents of a child/children under 18 years old.

People with long-standing illnesses, health problems or disabilities were well represented at 37% of respondents.

Participants were from a range of ethnic groups.

There was a higher number of responses from the 'White' ethnic group.

A variety of economic backgrounds were represented with the highest proportion being employed. Responses were received from individuals who were seeking employment and unemployed.

Understanding of Healthy Weight

90.1% of the public survey respondents strongly agree or agree that being a healthy weight is important to them.

Members of the public were asked whether they were trying to lose weight or have tried to in the past. 81.4% answered 'yes' and 18.6% 'no'.

55.1% of respondents feel that they can successfully manage their weight, while a further 29.4% disagree and 15.3% were not sure.

Of the respondents with children, only 6% felt that they did not have a good understanding of their child's/children's nutritional needs.

33% of respondents feel that they had been treated differently or been discriminated against because of their weight.

There was some awareness of current services on offer from both public respondents and stakeholders. However, only a small number of public respondents reported using existing provisions.

What helps or supports people to achieve a healthy weight

53% of the public survey respondents reported that seeing the progress made has helped them to make a lifestyle change before. Other top answers include seeing an improvement in fitness, health and confidence; having support from family and friends; not focussing on body weight alone.

Informal support from others (e.g. family, friends) and support from the nursery or childcare provider helps parents/carers encourage healthy behaviour in children.

65% of parents would go to their GP for advice if they were worried about their child's weight. 77% of respondents with children felt that teaching healthy cooking from an early age can help to encourage children and young people to eat well. 58% also felt that positive media messages can encourage healthy eating in children and young people.

More activities on offer outside of school and more PE lessons within school were identified by parents as ways to encourage children to be more physically active.

What are the challenges and barriers to achieving a healthy weight

The increase in food prices has changed the way some public respondents make purchases, with 19.4% prioritising paying bills/rent over food shopping.

62% of respondents state that the increase in food prices has not really affected them. 10 people (1%) stated that they have sent their child/children to school without breakfast or a packed lunch.

The main challenges that members of the public have to eating a healthy diet include: having the time to prepare healthy food; motivation; ideas of what to cook; the amount of unhealthy food choices available.

The main challenges that members of the public have to being physically active include: finding time; cost of activities; confidence in joining activities.

Professionals

Engagement

136 professionals completed the Healthy Weight Survey.

A large proportion of professionals were from Telford & Wrekin Council and the NHS (including NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, and Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust). Fewer responses were from the voluntary and community settings.

A range of job roles were represented in the survey, including: GP, practice nurse, occupational therapist, social worker, physiotherapist, receptionist, healthy lifestyle advisor, school teacher, clinical lead, SEND worker.

Understanding of Healthy Weight

97% of stakeholders felt that they had a good understanding of healthy weight.

92.6% of respondents also felt that understanding healthy weight is important to their role.

66.1% of stakeholders felt that they were confident/able to support others to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

Of the stakeholders that work with pregnant women and babies, only 9% felt that they did not have a good understanding of the nutrition needed by this group. 8% of respondents also did not feel confident in providing information on the benefits of breastfeeding in pregnancy.

23% of respondents were unsure of the meaning of Healthy Start and 26% knew what it is but did not promote it.

29% of stakeholders felt that the residents they work with have been discriminated against/treated differently if they are overweight.

What helps or supports people to achieve a healthy weight

Dedicated time to explain and support lifestyle changes was identified by stakeholders as the most effective method in helping pregnant women, adults, children, young people and their families to achieve a healthy weight.

Other enablers that professionals identified include: providing person-centred support; and not focussing on body weight alone.

What are the challenges and barriers to achieving a healthy weight

When asked whether their personal experience of managing their own weight impacts on their confidence/ability to support others, 47.7% answered 'yes'.

The challenges identified by stakeholders support the response from the perceived challenges from members of the public, but also cover more topics including: access to training; finding up to date, accessible and easy read materials; a lack of understanding around a healthy diet; too much focus on body weight alone; integration between services.

Suggestions

Throughout the research with the public and stakeholders there was a range of suggestions including:

- Support tailored to individuals, with a focus on providing services that are accessible to certain age ranges, genders, deprived groups, people with long-term conditions and carers.
- The introduction of a whole curriculum approach to healthy weight in schools involving school assemblies, parental participation, themed competitions and food donations.
- Support for healthy weight in the workplace in the form of opportunities to move throughout the day and healthy eating schemes.
- Training sessions for professionals and engagement with grassroots workers to provide them with the tools to signpost people to the correct resources.
- Members of the public highlighted a need for more healthy weight support groups. Some also referred to the need for longer-term support.