



London Borough
of Hounslow

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

Healthy Hounslow:

Becoming a supportive
environment for a healthy
weight

October 2019

Hounslow: A healthy environment for healthy weight?

Hounslow has over 100 parks, new development across the borough, numerous sports clubs and over 70 schools. Yet – is it an environment that is promoting healthy weight and good health? Why are over one third of the borough’s children overweight at the end of primary school? Why have the obesity related hospital admissions for adults more than doubled in the last five years? And why, over the last five years, have another 5,000 people been diagnosed with diabetes in the borough?

Why is the Hounslow green space not being used by more people for physical activity? Why are around one third of Hounslow adults classified as ‘inactive’. Why do most adults in Hounslow report a diet low in fruit and vegetables?

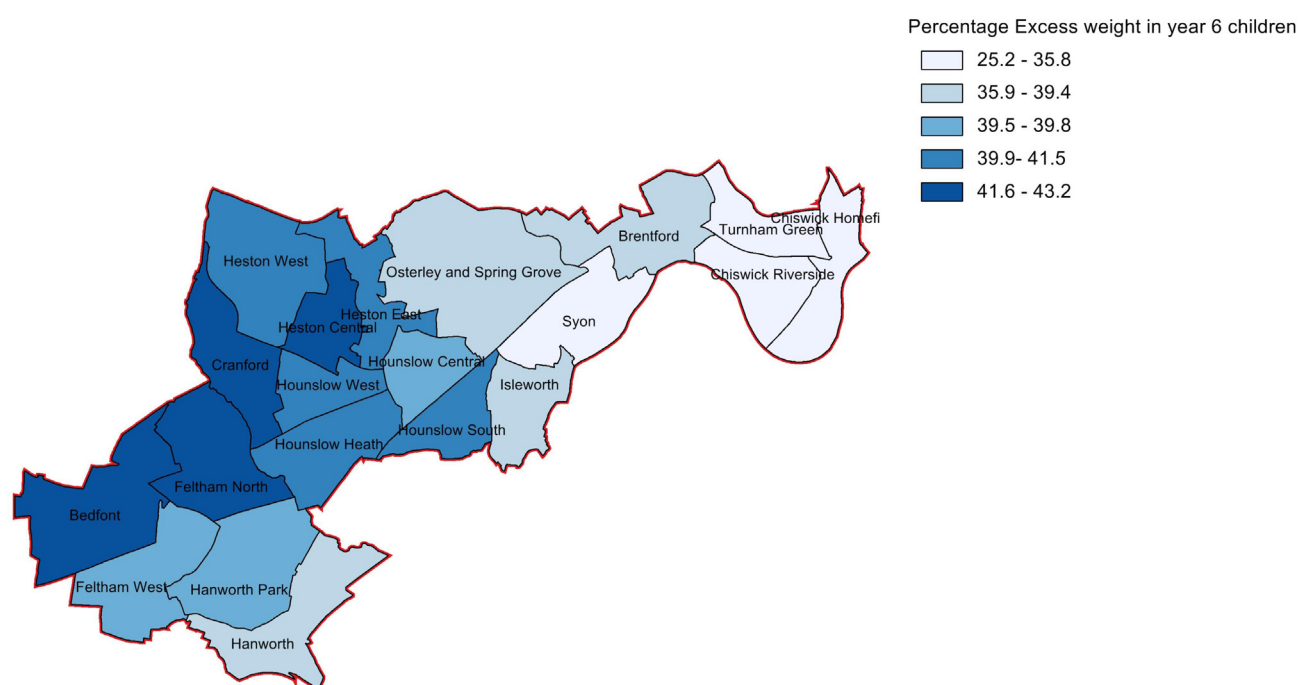
Everyone’s decisions are individual about lifestyle. But personal decisions are affected by our environment – such as whether it is easy and safe to cycle to school or work. Decisions are also affected by other factors, such as advertising and unhealthy food sales, around us. Do our children see adverts for unhealthy snacks and drinks on their way to school? How we are supported, for example to breastfeed, can influence how infants are fed. Whether we have access to safe playgrounds or parks can influence whether our children will be allowed out to play. And how those around us act may also influence us – does our council building or our local hospital or leisure centre lead by example and provide healthy food?

Not everything in our environment is the responsibility of the council or partner organisations. Some decisions that affect healthy weight are made at the national or other levels. But the question for the borough is – is the borough doing everything that can be done with the powers and levers it has to support a healthy lifestyle and a healthy weight? Is the council leveraging its resources in a way that best supports health? Could it (and other partners in the borough) be ever more focussed in using the available resources and powers to make the borough a more health promoting environment?

Why do we need to think about weight in Hounslow?

We are ambitious for children's health in Hounslow. However, currently over one third of Hounslow's children are overweight at age 10/11 and this is posing a threat to current and future health. In some parts of the borough

such as Bedfont, Cranford and Feltham North wards, over 42 per cent of 10/11 year olds are overweight¹. In these wards, at least 27 per cent of this age group are technically obese.



Why does this matter? In childhood, being overweight or obese is associated with asthma, early onset type-2 diabetes and cardiovascular risk factors. Some mental health conditions such as depression, low self esteem and behavioural problems² are also linked to childhood obesity. Poor diet is also associated

with poor oral health. Obesity is not equally found over the borough. Likewise, good health in our children is not equal across Hounslow. Not only that, the scientific literature says that childhood obesity is a strong predictor for obesity in adulthood and, thus, future health.

1 3 year average, Local Health, PHE Fingertips, July 2019

2 <http://healthsurvey.hscic.gov.uk/media/78619/HSE17-Adult-Child-BMI-rep.pdf>

In Hounslow, the latest data from GP records shows that 21,603 adults in the borough were recorded as being obese in 2017/18. Approaching two thirds of all adults in the borough were overweight in 2017/18 (60.4 per cent)³. In adulthood, obesity is linked to poor cardiovascular health, diabetes and other conditions such as cancer. Indeed, Cancer Research UK recently highlighted the role of obesity in cancer, second only to tobacco as a cause, and a growing risk factor⁴. Linked to these high levels of obesity is the rapid increase in diabetes in Hounslow. Obesity is estimated to account for 80-85 per cent of the

risk of developing type 2 diabetes⁵. Over the last five years, another 5,000 residents have been diagnosed with the condition taking the current Hounslow total to around 19,808 (in 2017/18). Like obesity, the rate of ill health from cardiovascular conditions varies markedly by ward in Hounslow. Obesity is also likely to be a contributor to the over nine-year gap in Healthy Life Expectancy for women and over eight year gap for men between least and most deprived populations found across the borough⁶.



Obesity related ill health not only causes difficulties for the individuals and families affected, but also, in the short, medium and long term adds to costs for council services. Such services include mental health services

for children and social care costs for adults. In terms of diabetes alone, one estimate suggests that the total amount spent on caring for people with diabetes in social care settings represents 12.67 per cent of the total amount

3 <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/qof%20adult%20obesity#page/1/gid/1/pat/6/par/E12000007/ati/102/are/E09000018/iid/92588/age/168/sex/4>

4 www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/causes-of-cancer/obesity-weight-and-cancer

5 www.diabetes.co.uk/diabetes-and-obesity.html

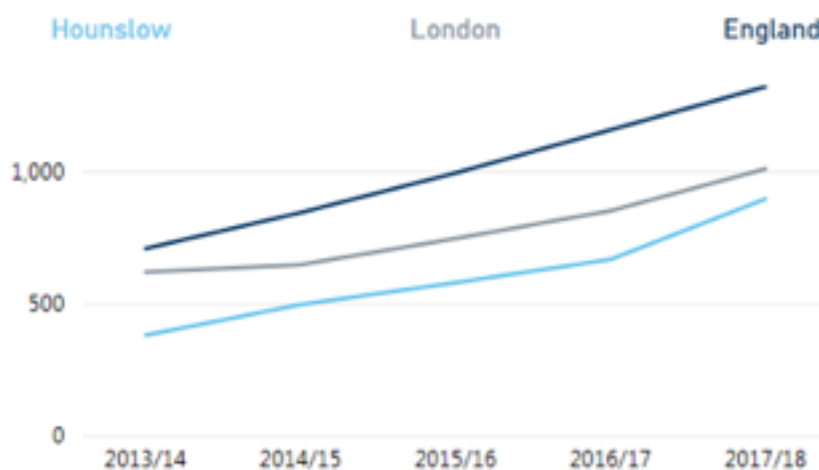
6 fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework/data#page/1/gid/1000049/pat/6/par/E12000007/ati/102/are/E09000018/iid/92031/age/1/sex/2

spent on caring for people in residential care, nursing care and home care settings across England⁷. An older study calculated that one in 20 people with diabetes incurs social care costs⁸. The contribution of obesity in the early onset of ill health means that it has a likely important but preventable role in people seeking services earlier than might have been

the case⁹. If trends in such obesity related conditions continue to rise, the council will face potentially overwhelming rises in costs while budgets are likely to continue to reduce. Box 1 shows the increase in hospital admissions, a doubling over the last five years, related to obesity for Hounslow residents.

Box 1

Hospital admissions where obesity was a factor per 100,000 by year¹



Source: Hospital Episode Statistics, NHS digital (accessed May 2019)

In an even broader sense, obesity has links with climate, air quality and food waste. Obesity has been calculated to contribute to climate change through more food energy requirements and associated carbon emissions and also higher use of cars, higher fuel use for transport over walking and other methods¹⁰. Linked to this, reducing car use, particularly for short local

journeys, can not only reduce obesity but can also contribute to a reduction in poor air quality, an ambition set out in the Hounslow Air Quality Action Plan. More effective and a healthier diet and use of food and leftovers can also reduce food waste, contributing to borough waste and climate goals.

⁷ <http://diabetesfrail.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/ldop-behind-closed-doors.pdf>

⁸ www.diabetes.org.uk/resources-s3/2017-11/diabetes_in_the_uk_2010.pdf

⁹ www.nhs.uk/news/obesity/obesity-could-rob-you-of-20-years-of-health/

¹⁰ www.nhs.uk/news/obesity/obesity-adds-to-climate-change/

What are we doing and what more can be done?

Addressing childhood obesity was one of the top priorities of the Hounslow Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-2016. It remains a top priority in the 2018-2022 Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, with a focus on adult obesity also added in. Childhood obesity levels are also a measure in the Hounslow Corporate Plan. Under the first strategy, a range of innovative work was started to support a healthy weight and they continue under the new strategy. A major borough 'Child Obesity Prevention' event was held in 2015 which brought together partners from across Hounslow and gave support to new work. A Hounslow Obesity Task Force was subsequently set up by the Hounslow Health and Wellbeing Board to bring together partners and help take forward the National Plan of Action on childhood obesity at the borough level. Work undertaken to date by a range of partners and supported by the council has included and continues to include:


- The council is taking part in the Mayor of London's Healthy Early Years London programme and provides support to all early years settings and childminders in achieving the 4 levels of awards. These cover healthy eating, oral and physical health and early cognitive development.
- 'Henry' healthy weight and physical activity promotion piloted in Children's Centres and continues for 0-5 years and parents and carers
- Refurbishment of target play areas with community involvement for new designs
- New enhanced Health Visiting component ('Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home-visiting' programme known as MESCH') added in 2018 which includes a healthy eating focus

FOR CHILDREN 0-5 YEARS AND PARENTS AND CARERS:

- Support given to community providers (Health Visiting, Children's Centres and others) to promote and support breastfeeding in the community. UNICEF accreditation level 1 achieved in 2018 and work ongoing in 2019/20 to meet Level 2.



FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE 5-19 YEARS:

- One You Hounslow established in 2016, which provides healthy eating campaigns across the borough, healthy eating advice for parents, and weight management services for children and teenagers and promotion of local physical activity opportunities for all ages
 - Physical activity opportunities on housing estates in collaboration with Brentford Football Club Community Sports Trust
 - Play Streets set up by LBH Community Partnership Unit, Transport and Public Health – around 30 streets in the borough now open for play close to home
 - Mile a Day promoted to Hounslow schools, with founder Elaine Whyllie, coming to Hounslow to speak to all schools at the Primary Schools Physical Activity conference in January 2017. Widely adopted by Hounslow schools.
- Targeted support for physical activity opportunities for ‘Looked After Children’ and care leavers
 - Beat the Streets active travel programme piloted in 2015 and going on to achieve over 29,000 residents participating in 2017. Will run again in 2019.
 - Physical activity and healthy eating promotion at the Hounslow Junior Citizen event in 2017 and 2019, reaching nearly all Year 6s in the borough.
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- The logo for 'Beat the Street' features a central green circle with the words 'Beat the Street' in white, bold, sans-serif font. Surrounding this central circle are various colorful icons representing different modes of transport and activities: a person on a bicycle, a person walking, a person running, a person pushing a stroller, a person on a skateboard, a person on a scooter, a person on a kick scooter, a person on a roller skis, a person on a sled, a person on a snowboard, a person on a surfboard, a person on a water ski, a person on a jet ski, a person on a boat, a person on a plane, a person on a train, a person on a bus, a person on a car, a person on a motorcycle, a person on a bicycle, a person on a skateboard, a person on a roller skis, a person on a sled, a person on a snowboard, a person on a surfboard, a person on a water ski, a person on a jet ski, a person on a boat, a person on a plane, a person on a train, a person on a bus, a person on a car, a person on a motorcycle.



FOR ALL AGES AND ADULTS:

- Health walks programme in parks across the borough, provided by One You Hounslow from 2016
- Parkruns now established in five Hounslow parks, including two Junior parkruns, with seed funding provided by LBH Public Health
- Innovative trails set up on Hounslow Heath to encourage park use for physical activity
- Healthy food choices app promotion through GP practices and parent healthy eating and oral health workshops in schools
- New signage project with Parks, to help make parks more 'user friendly'
- Making Every Contact Count (MECC) pilot run 2016-2018, with an element on healthy weight

- Provision of eight outdoor gyms and a range of free park based exercise programmes for all ages
- All Hounslow councillors have been invited to support borough wide 'Healthy Hounslow' campaigns, including healthy eating and physical activity promotion with implementation from 2019
- Input into the Local Plan reviews to request that the new plan supports good health including healthy weight
- The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2022 also has a requirement for a consideration of health outcomes in new infrastructure developments



The work above has brought together key partners and has provided and continues to provide residents with valuable information and opportunities for action. Yet, the obesity data shows that we need to continue with these but also do even more to make further inroads into making Hounslow a borough that supports good health.

What next?

A STRATEGIC COUNCIL:

An exercise looking at how the council could be more health promoting includes findings that could bring benefits for reducing obesity at the strategic level¹¹. Some key themes arose that if adopted, could help the council support a healthy weight environment using more of the available levers at the council's disposal.

Studies have shown that healthcare itself only accounts for around 15 per cent of influences on health¹². Broader influences through social circumstances and environmental exposure (45 per cent) and health behavior patterns (40 per cent) are the major determinants of the health situation. The council has a range of

11 Hounslow as a 'Health Promoting Council: Recommendations for next steps (V16). LBH Public Health July 2016.

12 In: Broader Determinants of Health. Kings Fund. www.kingsfund.org.uk/time-to-think-differently/trends/broader-determinants-health

'powers' available that can influence health beyond specific health services, addressing the living environment, housing and other aspects. These powers include service provision and service commissioning, regulatory powers, planning decisions and budget allocation. In the environment of increasing need and decreasing resources, if a council is to be more 'health promoting', it is essential that effort and activity is aligned and integrated, and 'pulling in the same direction' for health.

At the same time, however, the council, like any large organization, can be somewhat contradictory in its approach to health and in how it uses its 'powers'. There are contradictions in the system the Council has to navigate and priorities may sometimes compete and pull the Council in different directions. It makes sense, though, wherever possible, to align activity so that our efforts 'pull in the same direction' and are mutually supportive.

STRATEGICALLY, THE COUNCIL COULD CONSIDER:

- **Preventing mixed messaging and conflicting contracts:** Some commissioned services contradict, in terms of health, other commissioned services or goals. For example, at a very simple level, the advertising boards in the borough are used to both promote healthy weight and also advertise unhealthy food and drink. Our local hospital sells unhealthy food and drink while at the same time we are commissioning hospital linked services to support people suffering from obesity related illness. Vending machines selling unhealthy snacks on council premises also contradict our stated goals of promoting healthy eating. Thus, different contracts conflict in actions and messaging in terms of health.

- **Considering the impact on health of major budget or programme decisions:**

The council spends around a half a billion pounds per year, with specific health spending a small fraction of this total. Yet, all spending can influence health positively or negatively. At a more strategic level,

the new One Hounslow programme offers an opportunity to carry out a systematic analysis of major programme or budget decisions in terms of possible impact on health or on the progress towards the health goals as outlined in the Corporate Plan and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

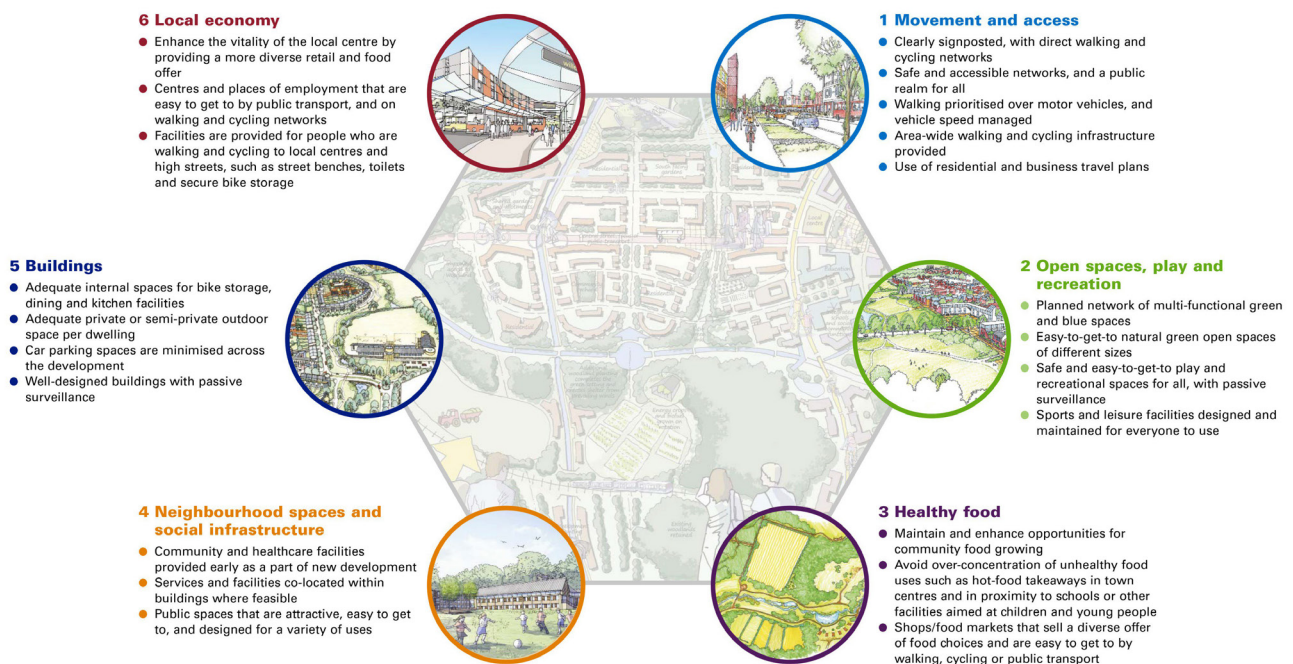
- **Taking a systematic health impact assessment of planning developments:**

The National Planning Policy Framework states that planning policies and decisions should enable and support healthy places and lifestyles. Input has been given to the Local Plan review from the healthy weight perspective. However, a systematic approach to assessment to ensure that all new developments support a healthy weight can bring great benefits in the longer term. To this extent, from late 2019, the Local Planning Authority will require health impact assessments to be undertaken for major and strategic development proposals. The Obesity Task Force has considered the TCPA guidance on healthy weight environments and would like new developments to

incorporate such guidance¹³. Further, a recent 2019 presentation to the Obesity Task Force on 'My Quarter Mile' led to calls for all housing to have accessible, safe and welcoming green space in all developments

within easy reach. The Hounslow Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2022 has called for a focus on using the planning process to support health and wellbeing in the borough.

Planning Healthy-Weight Environments – Six Elements



Source: Planning Healthy-Weight Environments. TCPA, Dec. 2014

- **'Making every contact count' (MECC) and enhancing communication:** MECC could be expanded to make use of all current contacts with residents to share information about existing useful services or facilities that can help improve health and wellbeing and support healthy weight. Council staff are in contact at many potential 'behaviour change' points – such as registering a birth, moving house, starting school and other such moments. Behavioural insight science can help guide this work to make it most effective. This opportunity is not limited to

healthy weight improvement. Other services could also gain from better integration of messages and support to residents and ensuring that messaging is in a format helpful to residents. For our partners in the borough, from the voluntary to the statutory sectors, opportunities also exist for MECC and joining cross borough messaging. The new work on social prescribing offers some opportunities as does recent evidence on the potential for introducing a brief intervention by GPs on healthy weight for adults¹⁴.

¹³ www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/W1.%20Promoting%20healthy%20weight%20environments%20-%20Michael%20Chang.pdf

¹⁴ Aveyard Pa, Lewis A, Hood K, Christian-Brown A, Adab P, Begh R, Jolly K, Daley A, Farley A, Lycett D, Nickless A, Yu L-M, Retat L, Webber L, Pimpin L, Jebb SA. Lancet 2016 DOI 10.1016/ S0140-6736(16)31893-1

- **Leading by example:** Hounslow councillors have been asked to support a series of Public Health campaigns across the borough. They have been asked to attend events in their area, share agreed messaging or try out new initiatives eg attending a Park Run, using an app such as 'Active 10'. Similarly, staff and contractors can also be

asked to lead by example. Further, council premises should provide a supportive environment for healthy weight. Leading by example can not only demonstrate to residents our support for our borough goals but can also lead to improved staff health and reduce absenteeism.

Working in partnership for good health now and for the future

The council is just one element of the partnership needed to help Hounslow be a supportive environment for healthy weight. Partners in new work on obesity also include planners and developers, schools, the voluntary sector, leisure providers, pharmacies, business and others in addition to the health sector. The new work on integrating health and care services across Hounslow, and for some aspects, across a wider footprint, brings opportunities for joint work to help support this goal. A number of London initiatives also call for local and pan-London action¹⁵. The Hounslow Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy is the common document for the Hounslow level work and this sets out not only the agreed aim of reducing obesity, but some common approaches that partners have agreed to take together. We have good data on how our efforts could be targeted in the future for maximum effect. Use of behavioural insights can help make any such intervention most useful to residents.

Additional actions that could be considered under the strategic process outlined above and in new integrated work could include:

ANTENATAL AND 0-5: WITH A 'FIRST 1000 DAYS' FOCUS:

- Look at opportunities within existing resources to support women stay active during the antenatal period
- Sustain breastfeeding in the community as per WHO and national recommendations through achieving UNICEF Level 2 Community support accreditation
- Consider implementing targeted low cost/ free exercise for new parents in parks and similar locations in the form of 'buggy walks' and similar initiatives – which has dual benefits of reducing social isolation and improving maternal mental wellbeing

¹⁵ www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/final_london_food_strategy.pdf

- Fully implement MESCH Health Visiting programme healthy eating component
 - Increase uptake of the 'Healthy Start' vouchers for target families
 - Create a supportive environment for new parents and young children in green spaces and in new developments using 'My Quarter Mile' principles, and connections to those spaces
 - Continue to work with nurseries and childcare providers on promoting healthy eating and physical activity and include such frontline staff in 'Making Every Contact Count' (MECC) opportunities
 - Increase uptake of the 'Henry' healthy eating and physical activity programme through more professional and self referrals
 - Continue to link ongoing oral health promotion advice with healthy food and drink advice
- have safe links to these spaces (going to the park with their family was one of the key ideas that Hounslow Year 6s had for doing more exercise in a 2017 survey)
- Look at investment opportunities to renew the Feltham Arena athletics track and rebuild the proud heritage of athletics excellence that Hounslow has had and could have in the future
 - Look at other investment opportunities in parks and open spaces to enhance age appropriate infrastructure and provide supportive activities and campaigns
 - Ensure all new developments have adequate and easily accessible green play space for both young children and teenagers
 - Schools – all schools to support to implement 30 minute daily physical activity for all children as per the National Plan of Action on child obesity¹⁷ and further encourage uptake of the Daily Mile where not already adopted

5-19 YEARS:

- Create a supportive environment: follow Transport for London (TfL) and other borough's example¹⁶ and stop unhealthy food and drink advertising across the borough
- Continue to enhance local parks to make them safer, well signposted and more attractive and ensure new developments
- Support and request school governors to give their help to ensuring their schools offer a healthy food environment and consider Healthy Schools London guidance¹⁸ (being developed by members of the Obesity Task Force)
- Consider, where possible, opening up schools for weekend and school holiday community use of play and sport space

¹⁶ See example from Haringey: first London borough to do this: www.haringey.gov.uk/news/haringey-council-ban-advertising-unhealthy-foods

¹⁷ www.gov.uk/government/publications/childhood-obesity-a-plan-for-action/childhood-obesity-a-plan-for-action

¹⁸ www.healthyschools.london.gov.uk/

- Continue and further develop initiatives to support active travel such as Beat the Street and others
- Continue improving safety on roads and implement segregated cycle ways, where possible, for active travel
- Implement proposed restriction on new hot food takeaways opening within 400 metres of existing or proposed primary or secondary schools¹⁹
- Further develop the School Nursing website and One You Hounslow website and/ or Family Information Service or other appropriate website to share information for young people on healthy eating and local physical activity opportunities
- Continue to explore and use available data to target communications and interventions most effectively to young people
- Continue to expand the 'Play Streets' initiative across Hounslow to increase physical activity opportunities while supporting social cohesion



ADULTS/ ALL:

- Council, commissioned services, NHS hospitals and centres, leisure and other partners to lead by example in provision of healthy and clearly labelled food on premises with food provision (reduce provision of food with 'empty calories' – ie high calorie food with low vitamins/ fibre/ protein etc) and provide a supportive environment for breastfeeding
- Improve assets using available development investment and other resources to allow free or low-cost exercise in the borough: parks, including Feltham Track, heritage sites (include specific exercise promotion components eg guided walks/ runs/ distance markings etc), targeting investment to the areas of highest need and consider both small and large green spaces within close reach of target residential housing

¹⁹ www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/final_london_food_strategy.pdf

- Build on signposting by all council, NHS, pharmacies and other services to local exercise opportunities and advice on healthy eating. As part of this, consider building on GP Physical Activity Champion training and GP Parkrun practices. Look at previous Hounslow MECC pilot programme for learning for future training of frontline staff. Consider including such messaging in new integration work.
- If Heathrow expansion is approved, use this development to leverage support for investment in a more supportive environment for health for the populations around the airport, populations with higher levels of obesity and poorer cardiac health (active travel, enhanced and better connected green space, improvements in play spaces)
- Consider a GP 'brief intervention' for adults on healthy weight in target areas/ practices with large numbers of patients classified as obese (data available through the 'Quality Outcomes Framework' 'QoF')²⁰
- Continue to link campaign messaging on alcohol with messaging on healthy weight (ie calorie content of alcoholic drinks)
- Further develop links between services giving healthy eating and cooking advice with organisations providing employment and benefit services
- Continue improving safety on roads and implement segregated cycle ways, where possible, for active travel
- Build on work on reducing food waste to use opportunities for healthy eating and use of left overs advice (joint campaigns, signposting, using existing website/ mailout advice)
- Ensure all new developments have adequate and easily accessible green outdoor space for adults of all ages and health status. Consider local green space in 'my quarter mile'.

20 Aveyard Pa, Lewis A, Hood K, Christian-Brown A, Adab P, Begh R, Jolly K, Daley A, Farley A, Lycett D, Nickless A, Yu L-M, Retat L, Webber L, Pimpin L, Jebb SA. Lancet 2016 DOI 10.1016/S0140-6736(16)31893-1

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