

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7 JANUARY 2021

CHILDHOOD OBESITY

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Summary

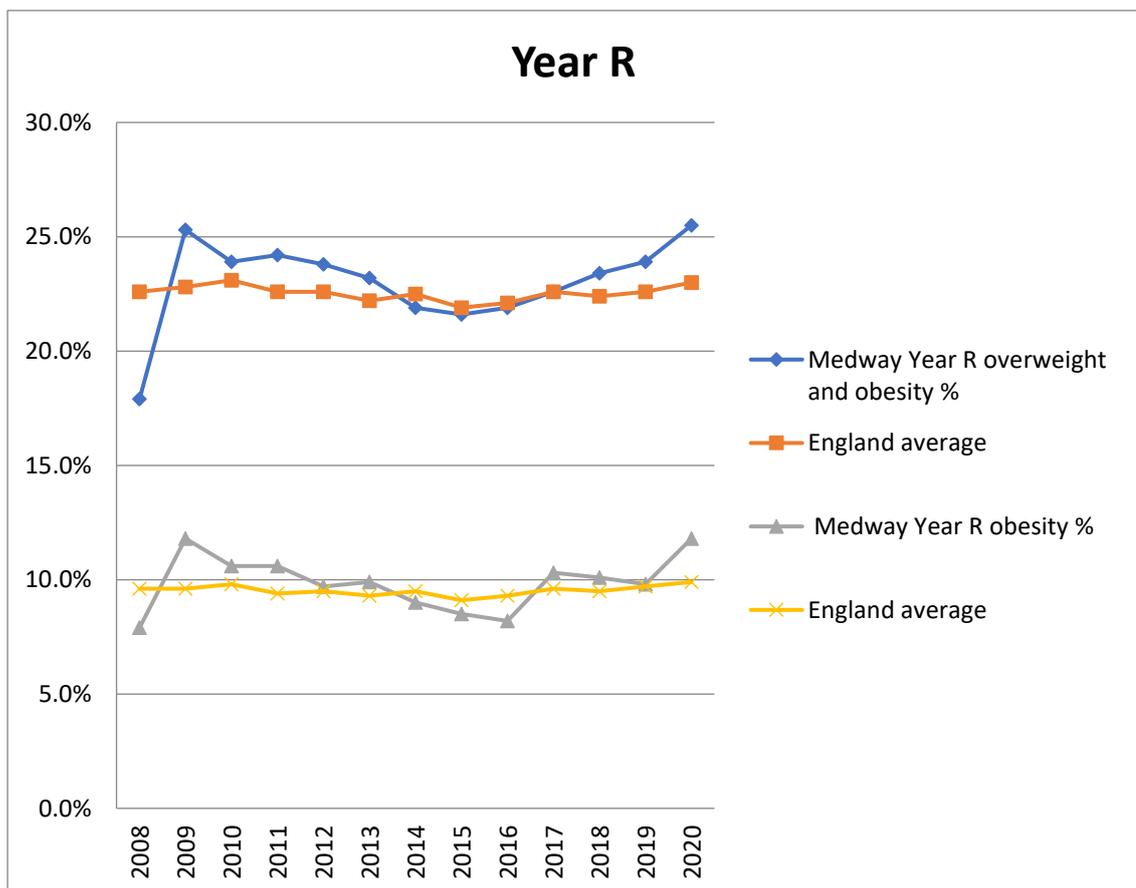
At the March meeting of this Committee, Members requested a report on Childhood Obesity in Medway and the current work to improve performance on this issue. This paper provides some context around the Medway childhood obesity data, a summary of our current whole system approach and some specific activities that Medway Council is leading on.

1. Budget and policy framework

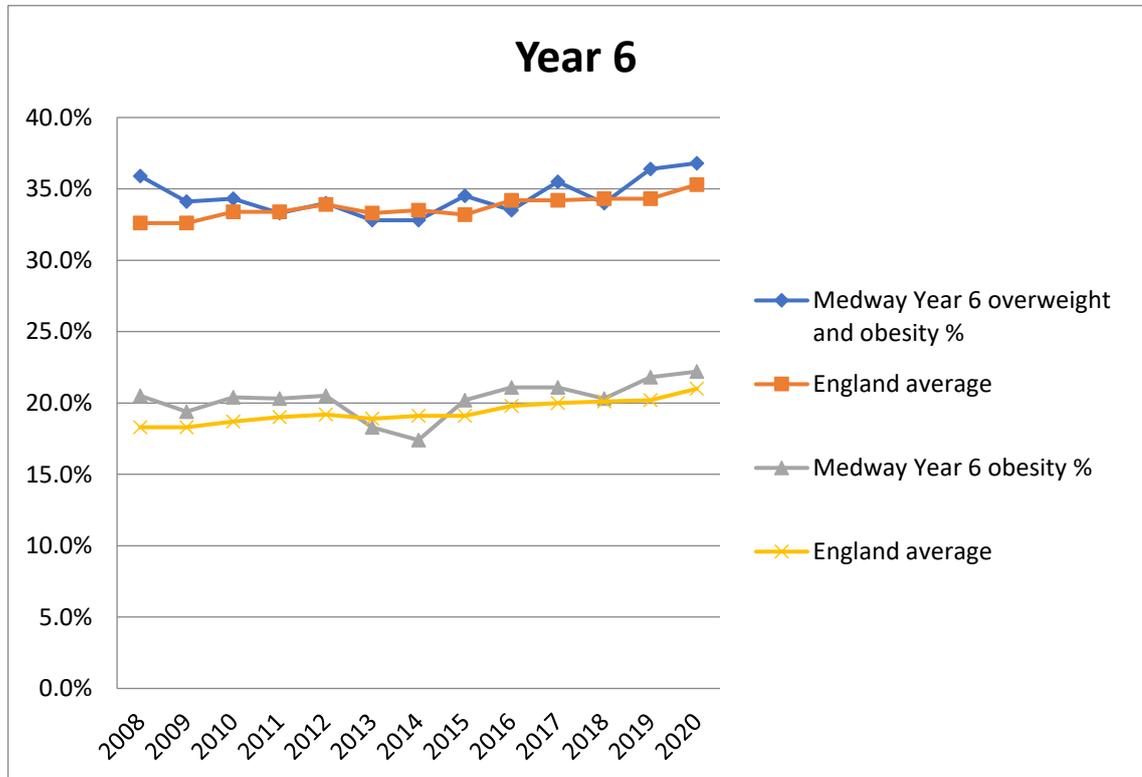
- 1.1. Since 1 April 2013, local authorities have been responsible for improving the health of their local population and for public health services. Medway Council's strategic priorities includes 'supporting residents to realise their potential'. Tackling obesity specifically links to the aspiration of creating 'healthy and active communities'.
- 1.2. Reducing childhood obesity is also one of our recently stated obsessions for Medway children and it also relates to and directly impacts on all of Medway's Health and Wellbeing Strategy's five themes. Obesity is considered to be one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21st century. It is having an impact on people's lives now, in terms of quality of life, risk of developing chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and its association with common mental health disorders. Doing nothing is not an option. Without action, the health of individuals will continue to suffer, health inequalities associated with obesity will remain and the economic and social costs will increase to unsustainable levels. Obesity is a complex problem with a large number of different but often interlinked causes, with no single measure likely to be effective on its own in tackling the problem.

2. Background

- 2.1. With the majority of adults in England overweight or obese, and a substantial number of children on the same trajectory, particularly those in the most deprived areas, national and local action is needed now. Tackling such an ingrained problem requires a long-term, system-wide approach that makes obesity everybody's business.
- 2.2. The following graphs show the need to take immediate and sustained action, as obesity rates continue to be challenging for Medway.
- 2.3. **Figure 1:** Year R (4-5 year olds) overweight and obesity rates in Medway compared to England average. There has been a recent increase in the overweight and obesity prevalence for this age group. The national picture suggests a plateauing of these rates for England as a whole.



2.4. **Figure 2:** Year 6 (10-11 year olds) overweight and obesity rates in Medway compared to England average. Medway's levels have recently increased to above the England average, with both rates being an all time recorded high for year 6 children. The national picture suggests a steady increase in these rates for England as a whole



2.5. In addition, the most recent National Child Measurement data shows that obesity prevalence for children living in the most deprived areas was more than double that of those living in the least deprived areas for both reception and year 6.

2.6. The proposed Medway whole system approach builds on the last five years of activity that has been largely delivered through the Medway Healthy Weight Network, which is co-ordinated by Medway Council's Public Health team. The new revised approach follows the steps suggested by Public Health England (PHE) in their 2019 'Whole systems approach to obesity publication'. This guide and set of resources support local authorities and its partners with implementing a whole systems approach to address obesity and promote a healthy weight.

2.7. Recent rises in obesity prevalence for children and adults, require all Medway partners to refocus their attention on the whole system problem that is obesity, in order to sustain a downward trend in prevalence. A whole system approach is necessary if we are to meet the government's ambition of halving childhood obesity by 2030.

- 2.8. Medway Council continues to take its responsibility seriously and prioritise tackling obesity through a wide range of interventions. This includes:
- Comprehensive range of adult and children weight management services
 - Adult and family cookery classes
 - Volunteer led walking, cycling and Nordic walking schemes
 - Workplace health programme supporting businesses to be healthy
 - Breastfeeding support services
 - Free swimming and discounted leisure concessions
 - Hot Food Takeaway planning guidance note
 - Healthy Early Years award supporting nurseries and pre-schools
 - Exercise referral programme
 - Free training for health and other frontline professionals on subjects such as obesity awareness and how to discuss weight with patients/residents
 - Range of health and mass participation sporting events
 - Active travel to school projects such as walking buses and bikeability
 - Health promotion campaign such as Better Health, Sugar Smart and Beside You
 - Commissioning 0-19 child health services and other support within schools
 - Medway's range of high quality greenspaces and parks
 - Coordination of the Medway Healthy Weight Network, Infant Feedings Strategy Group, Food Partnership and Physical Activity Alliance
- 2.9. Additional interventions that are already planned for 2021 include
- A pilot projects within one Primary Care Network for the launch of a new tier 3 weight management service for children and young people who have the highest obesity levels
 - Launch of the Mason Mile Family Friendly walks in April 2021
- 2.10. Despite this level of activity and given the increasing obesity prevalence compared to the national ambition to halve our rates, the local authority, NHS and our wider partners have a wide range of other evidence based interventions it could pursue.

3. National Whole System Obesity Guidance

- 3.1. PHE's guidance on whole system approach includes six key phases (Figure 4):
- Set-up: Securing senior-level support and establishing the necessary governance and resource structure to implement the approach;
 - Building the local picture: Building a compelling narrative explaining why obesity matters locally and creating a shared understanding of how obesity is addressed at a local level;
 - Mapping the local system: Bring stakeholders together to create a comprehensive map of the local system that causes obesity;

- Action: Stakeholders come together to prioritise areas to intervene in the local system and propose collaborative and aligned actions;
- Managing the system network: Maintain momentum by developing the stakeholder network and an agreed action plan; and
- Reflect and refresh: Critically reflect on the process of undertaking a whole systems approach and consider opportunities for strengthening the process

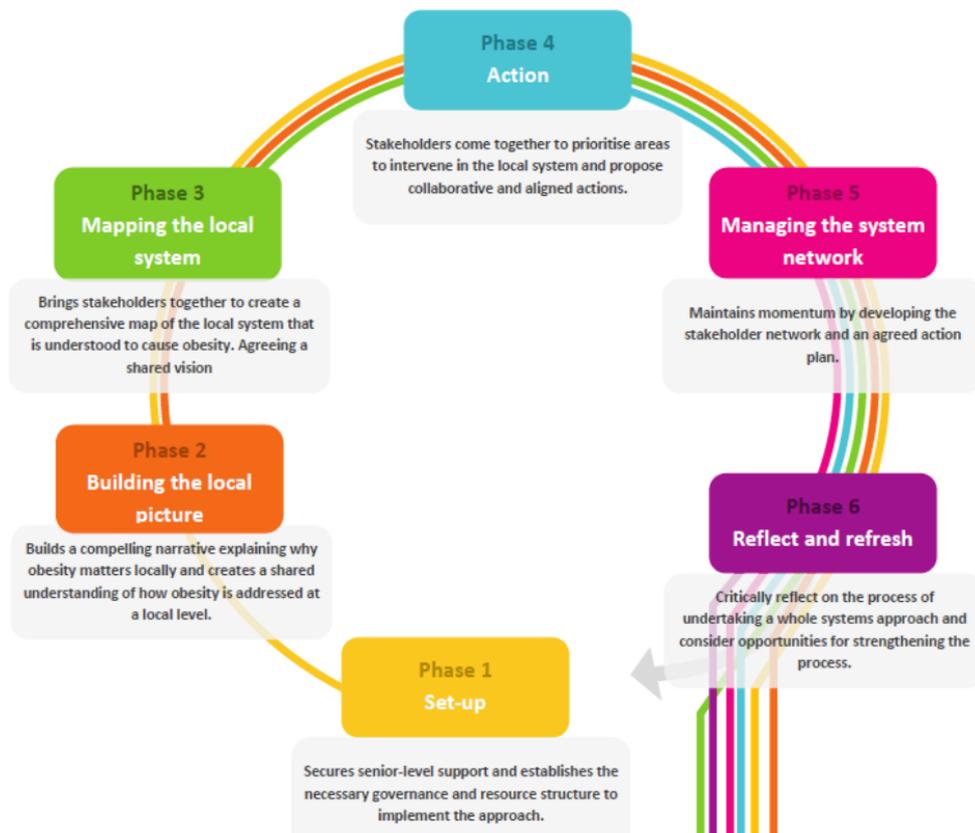


Figure 4: Six phases to develop a whole systems approach

4. Medway's Whole System Plan

4.1. PHASE 1 – SET UP

4.1.1. The first Medway Healthy Weight summit was held in 2014 and is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services. Becoming an annual event, the summit aims to bring representatives of the public, private, academic and third sector together to work collaboratively to tackle obesity. In 2016, the summit formed into a Healthy Weight network, who agreed a shared vision statement of *"Working together to support all Medway residents to adopt healthier lifestyles and achieve a healthy weight"*.

4.1.2. The network has representation from 40 local organisations who deliver or support a wide range of healthy weight interventions that are listed on the ['Action/Asset Mapping' directory](#). The directory includes a wide range of interventions from leisure, healthy eating, environmental and weight management activities. Many of these interventions were created as a direct

result of the network and individual partners' commitment to the obesity agenda.

4.1.3. In order to ensure the revised whole system approach has the required level of buy in from all senior leaders and to reflect the evolving nature of the health and social care system, support for this approach was requested and approved by the following boards:

- Medway and Swale Clinical and Professional Board: January 2020
- Patient Experience and Patient and Public Engagement Steering Group: January 2020
- Medway Health and Wellbeing Board: 18 February 2020
- Medway Council Cabinet: March 2020
- Medway Educational Leaders Association: March 2020
- Medway Council Corporate Management Team

4.2. PHASE 2 – BUILDING THE LOCAL PICTURE

4.2.1. The [Medway JSNA](#) provides an in depth overview of the levels of obesity for adults and children, which are summarised in the graphs on page 1 of this report. The [Public Health Outcomes Framework](#) also provides a tool that compares Medway's prevalence for related healthy weight indicators to the rest of England and other local authority areas. This includes data for:

- Breastfeeding rates
- Physical activity and sedentary behaviour
- Healthy eating levels

4.2.2. A prerequisite to developing a local whole system approach is having an overview of the current actions being undertaken by all local partners to tackle obesity. Collating actions into one tool demonstrates the breadth of the current approach. Medway Public Health team have maintained a directory of known actions and interventions that aim to reduce or prevent obesity since 2014. This '[Action/Asset Mapping](#)' directory can be found on the Medway JSNA website.

4.2.3. If Medway is to be successful in tackling obesity, new actions need to be taken forward and existing actions need to work more collaboratively to ensure all existing resource is used most effectively.

4.2.4. Network analysis is an essential step to creating a whole system as it helps to recognise:

- The main organisations and/or people within the current network
- Key organisations or people that are missing
- Where gaps might open up if a key person left the network

4.2.5. The network analysis is conducted by Medway Council's Public Health team on an annual basis, using a modified PHE Network Analysis template. Stakeholders involved in the network (and by default the whole system work) will be asked to complete a stakeholder survey every year, using the PHE

template. Results will be fed back to network partners at the annual Healthy Weight Network Summit.

4.3. PHASE 3 – MAPPING THE LOCAL SYSTEM

4.3.1. System maps are a key stage in developing a local whole systems approach to tackling obesity. It allows stakeholders to begin to see the bigger picture, how the parts of the system are interrelated, identify root causes of obesity and explore the factors, drivers and beliefs of the individuals and organisations that cause the system to function as it does. Reversing the language of the causes of obesity allows the identification of potential solutions to reduce or prevent obesity.

4.3.2. These obesity causes have been mapped at recent Healthy Weight Network events and are revisited each year to reflect the changing environment we live in.

4.4. PHASE 4 – ACTION

4.4.1. A wide range of stakeholders have the potential to positively affect the obesity whole system work. These opportunities can often be described as system levers, due to the opportunities and influence that individual organisations have to intervene. These opportunities to be proactive and to ultimately tackle obesity, have been identified in an opportunities matrix. The opportunities identified are based on evidence of best practice and evidence based recommendations from organisations such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). This evidence base is regularly revisited and the most up to date is available to network partners via the [‘Action/Asset Mapping’](#) directory, within the opportunities tab. The aspiration is for each stakeholder to understand the opportunities they have and to take forward additional actions.

4.4.2. A whole systems action plan will be produced each year. This will be completed by reviewing existing actions with the action/asset mapping directory and identifying new actions proposed by network members. At the next Healthy Weight Network Summit on 22 January 2020, it will be proposed that a core working group be established to represent the breadth of stakeholder groups, who will meet on a six monthly basis. This will include representatives of the public and the action plan will be developed using relevant public engagement feedback and insights work. One of the group’s objectives will be to develop a draft action plan that is shared with wider stakeholders for review and ultimate sign off by each partner organisation.

4.4.3. The action plan will consider:

- What system levers do stakeholders have access to?
- What are the anticipated outcomes for the action in the short, medium and long-term and for whom?
- How does the action impact on health inequalities?
- Does the action align with the best available evidence base?
- Is the action feasible to deliver?
- Who will take responsibility for delivering the action?

- Does the action align with other proposed or current actions?
- What could the unintended consequences of the action be, including how these may impact inequalities?
- What is the implementation timeframe for the action?
- How and when will progress be monitored?

4.4.4. Once drafted, the action plan will be presented to Medway’s Health and Wellbeing Board each year for their support. Any necessary approvals from the Cabinet will be obtained in accordance with decision-making rules set out in the Council’s Constitution. Once approved the systems action plan will be communicated to all partners and published on the Medway JSNA website.

4.5. PHASE 5 – MANAGING THE HEALTHY WEIGHT NETWORK and PHASE 6 – REFLECT AND REFRESH

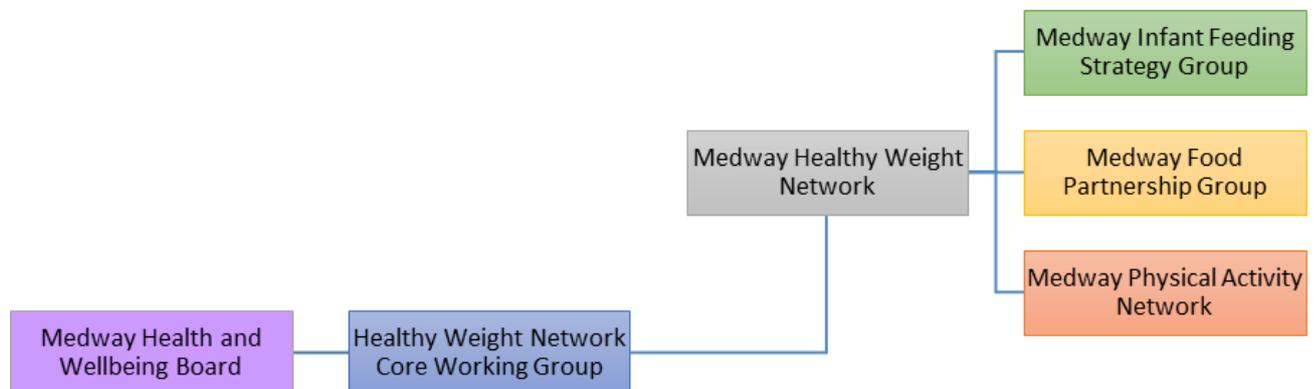
4.5.1. The healthy weight network is an inclusive forum which brings stakeholders together to promote systems working. This phase ensures the network is up and running and the structure of the network is sustainable for the long-term commitment needed to effectively tackle obesity.

4.5.2. The network will meet on an annual basis. The Healthy Weight network is chaired by the Chair of the Medway Health and Wellbeing Board and co-ordinated by Medway Council Public Health Team.

4.5.3. A number of sub groups will feed into the overall network group, including:

- Medway Infant Feeding Strategy Group
- Medway Food Partnership Group
- Medway Physical Activity Network

These sub groups are all established and are currently meeting on a quarterly basis, as they are the more operational and delivery aspects of the network, so need to meet regularly.



5. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Lack of partner support	Sufficient partners do not engage with Medway Council to allow the development of a whole systems approach	Develop an effective and well linked partnership of providers that have a shared ambition	C2
Lack of priority	Competing council priorities do not allow sufficient resources and focus to be on obesity agenda	Work across council services and directorate and identify areas for joined up working	C2

6. Financial implications

6.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7. Legal implications

7.1. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

8. Recommendations

8.1. The Committee is asked to note the report.

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Appendices

None

Background papers

Whole systems approach to obesity guidance
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whole-systems-approach-to-obesity>

Medway Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – Whole Systems Obesity dashboard
<http://www.medwayjsna.info/wso/>

Medway Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

<http://www.medwayjsna.info/jsna-appendices.html>

Public Health Profiles

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/obesity#page/0/gid/1/pat/6/par/E1200008/ati/202/are/E06000035>

Action/Asset Mapping tool

<http://www.wholesystemobesity.uk/medway/>