

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

14 APRIL 2022

### WHOLE SYSTEMS APPROACH TO OBESITY PRIORITIES FOR 2022/23

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Whole Systems Obesity Officer

#### Summary

Following the Medway Healthy Weight Summit on 28 February 2022 and participation from the Network members, this paper provides some context around the Medway obesity data and a summary of the Council's priorities for the coming year.

#### 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 include 'supporting residents to realise their potential'. Tackling obesity specifically links to the aspiration of creating 'healthy and active communities'.

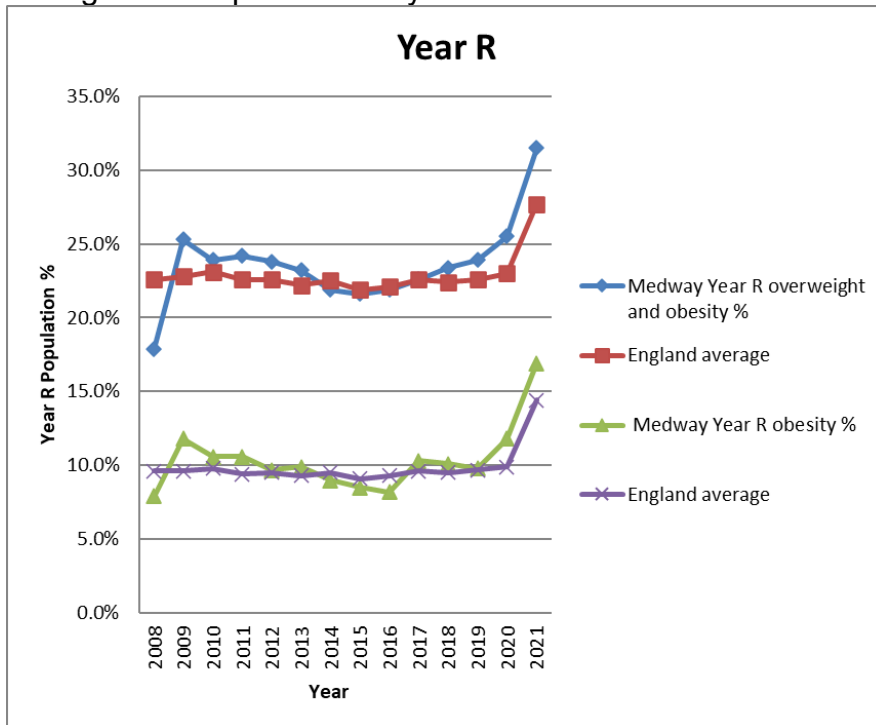
#### 2. Background

2.1. With the majority of adults in England overweight or obese, and a substantial number of children on the same trajectory, particularly those living in the most disadvantaged communities, national and local actions continually needed to address this serious challenge to the public health. Tackling such an ingrained problem requires a long-term, system-wide approach that makes obesity everybody's business.

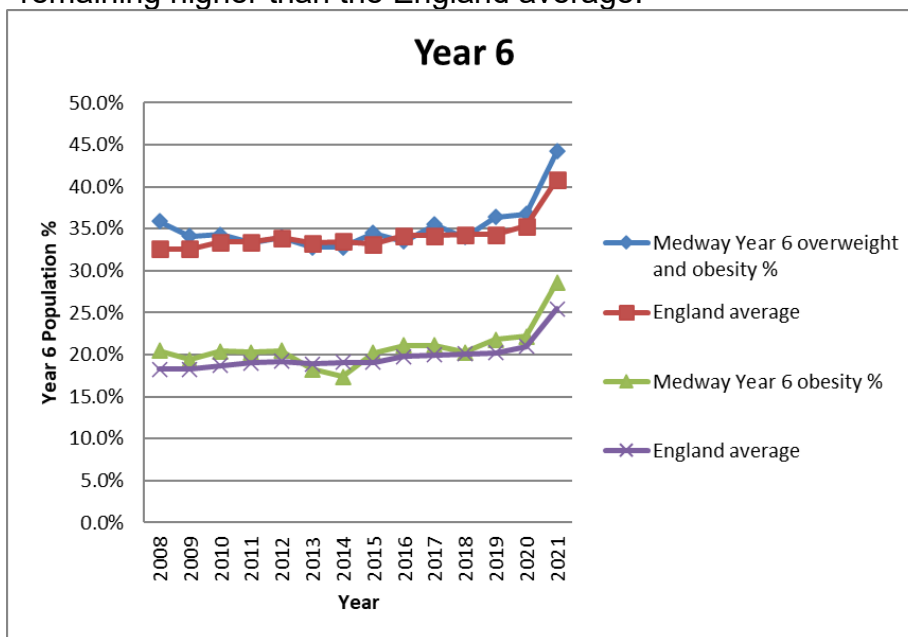
2.2. The following graphs highlight the challenges for Medway.

2.3. **Figure 1:** Year R (4-5 year olds) overweight and obesity rates in Medway compared to England average. The 2021 data highlights a deeply concerning increase in the overweight and obesity prevalence for this age group. Although rates have risen across England, Medway is showing a much higher

rate than that of the England average. 2021 has seen a 5.6% increase in obesity levels from last year compared to the 0.2-1% rises that we have been seeing over the previous 12 years.



2.4. **Figure 2:** Year 6 (10-11 year olds) overweight and obesity rates in Medway compared to England average. Medway's levels have increased alarmingly by 5.6% and are above the England average. Both rates reach an all time recorded high for year 6 children. The national picture suggests a similar percentage increase in these rates for England as a whole, with Medway remaining higher than the England average.



- 2.5. The most recent National Child Measurement data shows that nationally children living in the most deprived areas were more than twice as likely to be obese, than those living in the least deprived areas.
- 2.6. The Medway's whole systems approach builds on the last eight 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 continued 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 their 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 increase their focus and attention on the whole systems problem, that is obesity. A whole systems approach is necessary to lower prevalence and meet the government's ambition of halving childhood obesity by 2030.

### 3. Medway's Whole Systems Plan

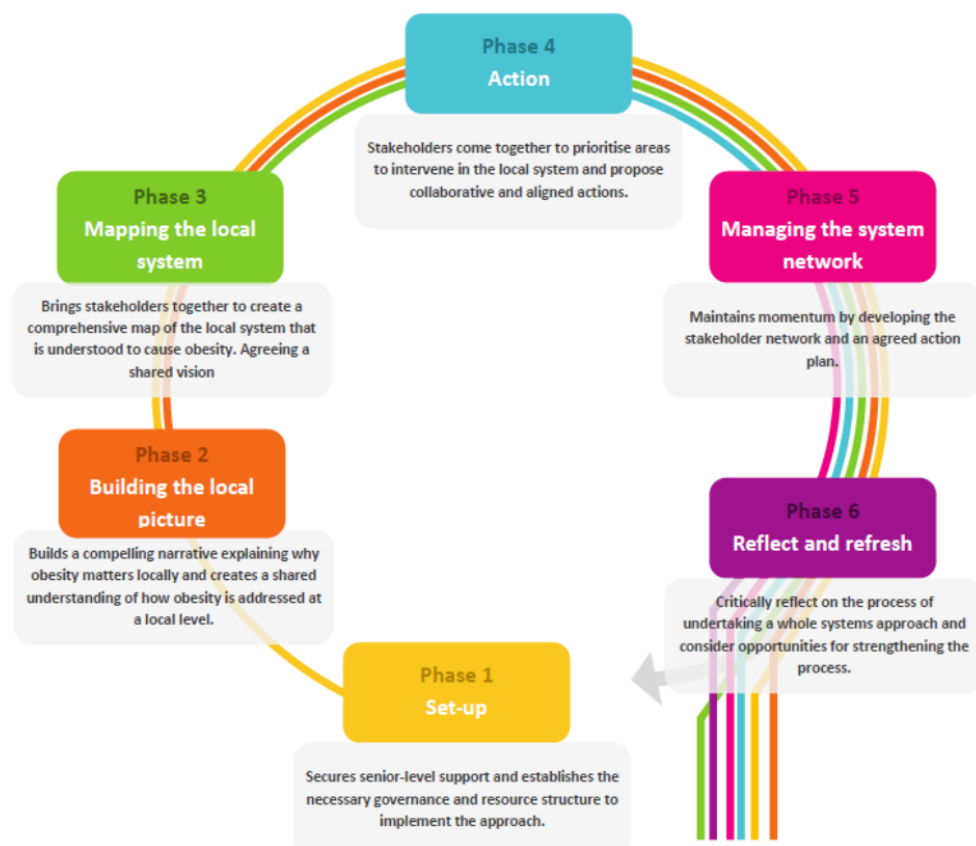


Figure 3: Six phases to develop a whole systems approach

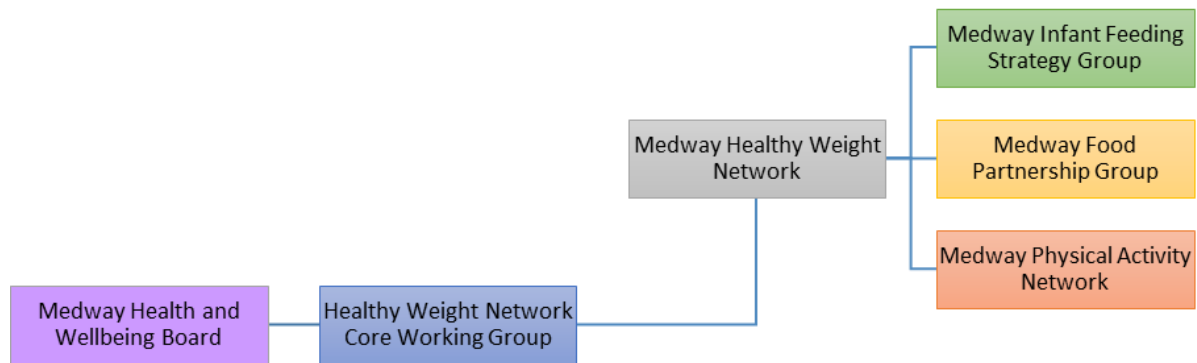


Figure 4: Structure of the Healthy Weight Network supporting the Whole Systems Approach to Obesity

### 3.1 PHASE 4 – ACTION

3.2 This report focuses on phase four of the whole systems cycle and relates to our annual Healthy Weight Summit which brings together a wide range of private, public, voluntary and academic sector partners with major contributions from the following subgroups of the Healthy Weight Network

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

3.3 The sub-groups and networks were in place in 2021, and they produced a list of priority actions which were endorsed by the Health and Wellbeing Board in April 2021. The 2021 priorities are outlined below with a progress summary:

- *Increase awareness and engagement with existing and new infant feeding social marketing campaigns (i.e. Grow my Brain and Beside You)*

Social media interaction has increased. The initiation of a bespoke campaign, survey and targeted posts have seen rises in engagement. Current figures show there are over 5,000 followers of Beside You across various channels with Facebook, with reach of about 15,000 monthly, and average annual reach of 126,000.

- *Restoring numbers of peer supporters on maternity wards and in the community, increasing the number of community drop-ins available for breastfeeding support.*

While it was not possible to have peer supporters on hospital wards due to COVID-19, there are 6 peer support venues across Medway with bookable appointments. Drop-in coffee mornings with trained peer supporters attending are due to launch in April 2022.

- *Work towards the next level of Baby Friendly Accreditation status for community, acute and neo-natal units, ensuring all new staff are trained on infant feeding skills.*

COVID-19 has prevented the assessment process from taking place due to visitor restrictions. Medway Maternity has evidenced its current practice and has committed to maintaining the current level of activity. There are also plans to progress to the next phase of accreditation over the coming year. Medway Community Healthcare have dates in place for assessments to take place in the spring months. Training requirements for new and existing staff have been maintained across the pandemic by all units in line with the Baby Friendly guidance.

- *Physical Activity Alliance members to promote each other's physical activity offer through all available channels and networks, encouraging members to work in partnership to generate opportunities for each other.*

The alliance has held 3 virtual meetings over the past year with over 30 organisations and individuals attending each meeting from a variety of settings. Attendees are invited to promote their activities to the group during the meeting and then enter their offer on the Every Day Active website. <https://www.everydayactivekent.org.uk/communities/medway/>

- *Understand residents' barriers to exercise and prioritise finding local solutions for groups with the lowest activity levels.*

There are many collaborations that have developed from the alliance between schools, local charities, organisations and businesses to promote physical activity. For example revival bikes have increased the supply of recycled bikes to children of all ages from families on a low income. This helps promote active travel. There has been a pilot project initiated with Medway Extra Care Schemes. This pilot promotes physical activity for people living in supported accommodation. This initiative has been well-received. It is planned to roll this initiative out to other sites in spring 2022.

- *Undertake local mapping exercise to identify needs for a 'Food Hub' pilot project in Medway.*

The Public Health Intelligence team presented the mapping for food deserts at the November Medway Food Partnership. This work provided an overview as to how food is accessed across all wards in Medway. This has generated a proposal with FareShare of Kent to develop a food hub central to Medway.

- *Develop culturally diverse Eatwell guidance and supporting information such as recipes/growing info.*

This task has been completed and guidance is now available for African Caribbean and South Asian Eatwell guides. If well utilised, further guidance for other ethnic communities will be developed by the food and nutrition team.

[https://www.medway.gov.uk/downloads/download/677/medway\\_food\\_partnership](https://www.medway.gov.uk/downloads/download/677/medway_food_partnership)

- *Develop and deliver cooking on a Budget Classes supporting local organisations working within the Medway community.*

Plans to redevelop the Adult Cookery Programme are underway to incorporate food and budgeting. Face to face sessions are set to launch in late spring 2022.

- *To support the education process to improve the whole school approach to providing healthy food options to all pupils of all ages.*

The Soil Association has been awarded a contract to deliver the Food 4 Life Programme to all schools in Medway over the next 3 years (2022 to 2024). Planning stages are in place with a launch date of 30 March 2022 where the programme will be presented at the Child health conference.

3.4 Following the 2022 Medway Healthy Weight Summit, the sub-groups and network produced a list of priority actions for 2022/2023 which are reviewed by the Healthy Weight Core working group. This year's summit saw an attendance increase of approximately 25 percent over the last year with attendance by 97 people across the public, private and voluntary sectors. The three-hour session included updates from our network partners, case studies from local organisations showcasing their work to create healthier environments for their staff and local communities, and the forming of these priorities for the year ahead.

- Increase uptake of antenatal education sessions and ensure breastfeeding and responsive feeding are included.
- Achieve highest level of BFI accreditation for acute and community settings.
- Physical Activity Alliance members to promote each other's services through all available channels and networks, encouraging members to work in partnership to generate opportunities for each other.
- Encourage promotion of the benefits of Physical Activity in primary and secondary care settings, providing relevant education and resources to facilitate positive conversations with inactive people.
- Increase the number of food related businesses that are engaged in the Medway Food Partnership.
- Promote and increase healthy vending machines and water refill across businesses in Medway.
- Deliver a high-profile healthy weight marketing campaign.

3.5 These priority actions will be taken forward by a large range of partners that make up the Healthy Weight Network and its sub-groups. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list of actions that all partners will be pursuing to tackle obesity. For example, this list does not cover the array of weight management interventions being delivered by the Medway Public Health Team. Instead, the priorities focus on actions that are largely dependent on partnership working.

#### 4. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Lack of partner support	Due to COVID recovery and resource constraints, partners may not have capacity to support new initiatives.	Develop an effective and well linked partnership of providers that have a shared ambition.	C2
Lack of priority	Education, health and business settings may not see enhancing food provision and physical activity as a priority on return from COVID restrictions.	Develop effective relationships with leaders to drive forward the uptake of healthy weight initiatives.	C2

#### 5. Financial implications

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The ongoing support for the network and sub networks is already funded by the Public Health grant. Individual partners engaged in network activity commit their own resource to any interventions they participate in.

#### 6. Legal implications

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

#### 7. Recommendations

7.1 The Board is asked to note the report and priority actions identified by the Healthy Weight Network.

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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

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

Public Health Profiles

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/obesity#page/0/gid/1/pat/6/par/E12000008/ati/202/are/E06000035>

Action/Asset Mapping tool

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