

# Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

BRIEFING NOTE – No. 04/18

Date: May 2018

Briefing paper to: All Members of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: At the Committee's meeting on 8 March 2018, officer undertook to provide the Committee with additional information relating to performance regarding childhood obesity in Medway.

## Childhood Obesity Levels in Medway

### Childhood obesity levels in Medway

- 93% of 4-5 and 10-11 year olds have their weight measured every year in schools
- The most recent data shows Medway is close to the England average for childhood excess weight
- Medway Year R data is 22.6% (exactly the same for England) and Year 6 is 35.5% compared to 34.2% for England
- The trend line for this data is a slight concern, as we had a number of years of steady decline from 2009, but in the last 2 years the levels have started to rise again
- As the Council aspires to improve the health of our children, the council plan measure was set at the start of the year to reduce the obesity rate below the 2016/17 baseline
- However the data showed a small increase, hence the reason for being 'significantly below target'
- This rise mirrored the increase seen nationally, highlighting the complex nature of tackling an issue such as childhood obesity
- Although obesity is effectively caused by a calorie imbalance with an individual's dietary intake and energy expenditure, the reasons for this imbalance are routed in a range of lifestyle and wider factors that linked to social and other factors within communities and families
- In order to effectively achieve a reduction in population levels of obesity, a long term, multifaceted plan of action needs to be delivered by a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector bodies at national and local level
- Medway Council takes its responsibility to tackle the factors that give rise to childhood obesity extremely seriously. The council plays a significant

leadership role and works with a range of organisations to ensure they play their part. The key actions the council is taking are set out further in this report.

### Evidence base of how to tackle obesity

There is a wealth of evidence based recommendation by many organisations, including the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), on how best to tackle obesity. These recommendations can be summarised under following headings:

- **Healthy environment** - Create a healthy environment that encourages people to be more active and make healthier food choices
- **Communication** - Engage, educate and empower residents through campaigns and communication to engage in healthy lifestyle behaviours such as being active and eating healthier foods
- **Specialist support** - Local areas should provide a range of specialist weight management, nutrition and activity support services for residents
- **Health professionals** - Educate and empower all health and care professionals to discuss obesity and healthy lifestyles within routine appointments
- **Contracts** - Embed obesity agenda into all public sector commissioned contracts and strategies
- **Leadership** - Local system leaders need to champion and promote the obesity and healthy lifestyles agenda. Local authority and NHS providers should act as exemplars within their own environments and contracts, to promote healthy lifestyles to their workforce, 'customers' and visitors
- **Workplace Health** - Local workplaces should encourage and support employers to make healthy lifestyle choices
- **Schools** - Schools and young people settings should encourage and support employers to make healthy lifestyle choices

### Examples of what Medway is doing to tackle obesity linked to the evidence base

#### **Healthy environment**

- Medway has had a planning guidance note in place for 3 years that restricts hot food takeaways within 400m radius of schools
- Medway is currently consulting on a new Local Plan, which we are aiming to be one of the most comprehensive in terms of promoting healthy lifestyles for all residents
- Medway promotes and provides access to parks, open spaces, cycling and walking routes, leisure and recreational facilities that enable local people to engage in physical and recreational activity
- Medway Public Protection Team work with local restaurants and caterers on standards for food hygiene and to promote the healthy choices and menus

## **Communication**

- Medway regularly promotes national local campaigns such as Change4Life and Beside You breastfeeding campaign. This year our main focus will be on SugarSmart Medway campaign. We work with a range of media organisations help us promote our campaigns and raises the issue of high sugary drinks and foods, and how small changes can help you avoid too much sugar

## **Specialist support**

- Medway has one of the most comprehensive range of family and adult support services for tier 2 and tier weight management. This essentially means we have free support services for people at varying levels of excess weight. Please visit the A Better Medway website or call the service if anyone wants to know more about these

## **Health professionals**

- Through our Better Medway services we provide a wide range of training to professionals and volunteers on subjects like healthy eating and obesity. Over 1300 people were trained last year, as it is essential we make every contact count and professionals take every opportunity to promote healthy lifestyles, we all have a role to play

## **Contracts**

- In Medway we look for every opportunity to include obesity in commissioned contracts, the most recent example is our new 0-19 child health contract, that has specific references, key performance indicators and targets focussed on obesity and healthy eating agenda

## **Leadership**

- The portfolio holder for Public Health and Social Care (Cllr Brake) chairs an annual healthy weight summit. This summit attracts local and national experts from the public, private, voluntary and academic sector to debate and take action to tackle obesity
- Medway has championed tackling childhood obesity within the Kent and Medway Transformation and Sustainability Partnership (STP). Reducing childhood obesity, is a priority for the Kent and Medway (STP).

## **Workplace Health**

- We have an excellent A Better Medway workplace programme, that essentially supports workplaces to create healthy workforces. This is a free support service. Any businesses within Medway can visit our website and get free support

## **Schools**

- We are actively engaged with more than 90% of schools in Medway, providing a range of services such as healthy eating education, growing

- projects, healthy assembly talks. We also support the school food catering companies to promote school meals
- School nurses (through the councils 0-19 childrens service) offer advice to parents, teachers and support to pupils to help them manage their weight.

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