

Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: six months on

FOREWORD

In January 2008, the Government published *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: A Cross-Government Strategy for England*. This laid out our ambition to be the first major nation to reverse the rising tide of obesity and overweight in the population, by enabling everyone to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Our initial focus is on children: by 2020, we aim to reduce the proportion of overweight and obese children to 2000 levels. The strategy sets out a vision of what this means for schools, the food industry, employers, health services and others, and commits the Government to play its part with "concrete action".

Of course, maintaining a healthy weight is the responsibility of individuals first and foremost. However, the responsibility of Government, and wider society, is to make sure that individuals and families have access to the opportunities they want and the information they need in order to make healthy choices and exercise greater control over their health and their lives.



The strategy sets out a framework for action in five main areas to help do just this: promoting children's health; promoting healthier food choices; building physical activity into our lives; supporting health at work and providing incentives more widely to promote health; and providing effective treatment and support

when people become overweight or obese. We also want to develop our knowledge base, and this document sets out progress in this area.

Tackling child and adult obesity is a huge challenge; and it is not a challenge that Government can take up alone. As Lord Darzi reaffirmed in his *NHS Next Stage Review*, we are committed to working in partnership with communities, businesses, third sector organisations and individuals in a national Coalition for Better Health.



In the six months, since the strategy was launched there has been good progress. We have announced more money to implement the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative in hospitals and community

settings, local authorities (LAs) have been invited to become Healthy Towns and we have laid out how we intend to develop the Healthy Food Code of Good Practice.

When we published *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives* we said that the strategy is the beginning of a sustained programme to support people to maintain a healthy weight, and sets out what could only be considered the first steps towards achieving the new ambition. We will deliver the first annual progress report in spring 2009, but this update on the first six months of delivery demonstrates that we have made solid progress along that road.

Dawn Primarolo

Dawn Primarolo
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Kevin Brennan

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People and Families

Children, healthy growth and healthy weight

Our vision for the future is one where every child grows up eating well and enjoying being active.

Pregnancy and early years

The Government is providing more support to help parents to promote the healthy growth of their child.

The Child Health Promotion Programme, which covers screening, health reviews, immunisations, parenting support and health promotion, has been updated to prioritise obesity prevention and physical activity. There is now a greater emphasis on promoting child health and positive parenting during pregnancy and the first years of life. This includes supporting those parents with particular risk factors that may cause overweight or obesity. The Government announced an extra £30 million to expand the **Family Nurse Partnership Programme**. This intensive, nurse-led home visiting programme aims to improve the health and well-being outcomes and life chances of vulnerable young parents and their young children. Early findings of the first year of evaluation look promising, with more clients initiating breastfeeding than expected for this age group. A randomised control trial starts next year and this will provide evidence on the outcomes of the Family Nurse Partnership in England.

As of April 2008 there were over 2,900 Sure Start Children's Centres providing access to services for more than 2.27 million children and their families – including health services and advice on staying healthy.

The HENRY (Health, Exercise, and Nutrition for the Really Young) project delivered by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, has developed and piloted training courses to enhance the knowledge and skills of pre-school practitioners working in Sure Start Children's Centres. Pilot sites have been chosen to promote and market the 5 A DAY fruit and vegetable programme through Sure Start Children's Centres.

Breastfeeding

A new National Helpline for Breastfeeding Mothers was launched in February 2008, providing practical support and advice to 450,000 breastfeeding mothers in England.

A breastfeeding campaign was launched in May 2008, to encourage young mothers from low-income backgrounds to breastfeed for longer. This provides practical support through schemes like the Breastfeeding Buddy initiative. The charity, Best Beginnings, has been awarded funding to produce a DVD to help increase the number of women breastfeeding. This will be distributed to pregnant mothers from summer 2008.



As part of *Health Inequalities: Progress and Next Steps*, published in June 2008, new resources have been committed for 2008/09 to implement the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative in hospitals and communities settings with low breastfeeding rates.

A **Breastfeeding Friendly Places initiative** was launched earlier this year to encourage shops, cafés and other retailers to welcome breastfeeding on their premises. This will provide a positive message to mothers that breastfeeding is welcome in public places, and is a good opportunity for retailers to support mothers in giving their baby the best start in life.

Children and young people

Latest figures from the 2007/08 local authorities survey, published in July 2008, show over three million children are eating school dinners daily, an increase of around 50,000 over last year. As part of our drive to improve school lunch provision, we made £150 million available so that all LAs and schools have the opportunity to build or improve kitchens and provide attractive dining areas. We recently confirmed that 15 LAs have already successfully bid for almost £50 million to build new kitchens in schools where currently there are none.

Going forward:

We are consulting young people, parents and key stakeholders about the development of a **Child Health Strategy**, to be published in September 2008. The strategy will clarify how health services, working with schools and other partners, can work better to improve children's and young people's health.

Draft guidance was published on schools' new duty to promote the well-being of pupils, defined in terms of the five Every Child Matters outcomes: be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic well-being. Later this year we will consult on draft indicators that will help schools assess their contribution and inform Ofsted judgements. As increasing numbers of schools develop extended services and gain accreditation as Healthy Schools, they will give more opportunities to promote healthy eating and physical activity.

From September 2008, all primary schools will have to meet new school lunch nutritional standards, which will become a statutory requirement. The School Food Trust aims to sign up 2,500 schools to its Million Meals campaign to improve take up of school lunches, with an extra £6 million to encourage healthy eating amongst children and young people.

Promoting healthier food choices

Our vision for the future is one where the food that we eat is far healthier, with major reductions in the consumption and sale of foods high in fat, salt or sugar, and everyone eating their 5 A DAY.



The Government is working with industry leaders and other stakeholders to support everyone in making healthier choices about food. The Department of Health (DH) and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) have issued a joint letter to stakeholders laying out how we intend to develop the **Healthy Food Code of Good Practice**. It covers issues such as a single, simple and effective approach to food labelling, and information on portion size and nutritional content of food that is consumed at places other than the home, e.g. take-aways, theme parks and restaurants.

The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit review of Government food policy endorsed the Healthy Food Code of Good Practice as well as setting out further work on 5 A DAY, integrated advice to consumers and the development of a Healthier Food Mark.

Going forward:

DH will shortly publish a report on emerging findings on the change in the nature and balance of advertising food and drink to children in broadcast and non-broadcast media since 2003.

DH and the FSA will hold an event in autumn to bring together progress on all seven elements of the Healthy Food Code, and outline expectations on goals and trajectories for each of the commitments in the Code.

Ofcom has started its review of broadcast restrictions on food and drink advertising to children. We will work closely with them as this review progresses. We will also bring stakeholders together to discuss what more can be done in non-broadcast media to help increase children's exposure to advertising, promotion, marketing and point-of-sale placement of healthier foods.

We will launch a project **working in partnership with the convenience stores sector** to increase the availability of healthier food, particularly fruit and vegetables in retail outlets in deprived areas. DH will also publish goals for increasing the consumption of fruit and vegetables by low-income families and young men by the end of September 2008.



Building physical activity into our lives

Our vision for the future is one where individuals and families are able to be physically active on a daily basis and to stay healthy and well throughout their lives.



Bristol is to be the flagship city out of the 12 winning bids for **Cycling Towns and Cities**, which will share funding of £42 million. The other winners are York, Stoke-on-Trent, Blackpool, Cambridge, Chester, Colchester, Leighton Buzzard, Southend, Shrewsbury, Southport and Woking.

The Government has invited LAs to bid to become 'Healthy Towns'

to lead the way in changing their communities' built environment to support people to be more active. We have received more than 150 bids offering a range of ideas and will announce the successful healthy towns in autumn 2008.

The 2012 Legacy Action Plan: (Before, during and after: making the most of the London 2012 Games) was launched in June 2008. It sets out an ambitious target to get two million people more active by 2012 and it's hoped that the games will help inspire everyone to become more active, whether through sport, active recreation or physical activity, including walking and cycling.

On swimming, the Legacy Action Plan (LAP) included plans for a new initiative to increase the number of people who swim and swim regularly. Further to the announcement in June, Government has now set out further details of the £140 million 3 year cross-Government scheme. It is designed to encourage as many local authorities as possible to participate in making swimming free for those aged 60 and over and those aged 16 and under in their local communities, but also to maximise and sustain uptake through other initiatives such as free lessons for adults who cannot swim, the introduction of swimming co-ordinators, and to provide incentives for the most ambitious move further towards a universal free swimming offer. Free swimming will contribute to the wider target of having at least two million people in England more active by 2012.

The LAP also outlined plans for two national campaigns, a **Schools Walking Challenge for 2012** and a **Walking Therapy project** for people with long-term health conditions. These campaigns will run from 2008 to 2011 and will draw upon and expand existing programmes such as the National Step-O-Meter Programme and the Youth Sport Trust's 'Schools on the Move'. Further campaigns will target employees and the NHS during 2009-10 and 2010-2011.

Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives announced our support for a programme of campaigns encouraging walking to and from work, with the aim of getting at least a third of England walking at least 1,000 more steps daily by 2012. We are investing £7 million between 2008 and 2011 in a programme of campaigns to encourage people to walk more each day.

We published *Fair Play: A Consultation on the Play Strategy* in April 2008. This sets out how Government departments propose to work both together and with partners, to create more and better opportunities for all children to play, building on the framework and investment laid out in the Children's Plan. As part of the £235 million Government investment on children's play, children across the country are to get an extra 3,500 play areas. By 2011 thirty local authorities will get £2 million each to build new adventure playgrounds.



Going forward:

In Autumn 2008, we will identify how we can best support built-environment professionals in delivering the aspirations of *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives* to ensure that opportunities for physical activity, including active travel, are considered in the development of Eco Towns, the Thames Gateway, Growth Areas and Growth Points.

The Government will announce details about its walking challenge in autumn 2008.

In June, the Government published its response to Tanya Byron's review of children in a digital world. *The Byron Review Action Plan* set out the Government's commitment to establishing a UK Council for Child Internet Safety. To be launched in September, the Council's remit includes taking forward the *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives* commitment to work with the entertainment technology industry in discussing how tools to allow parents to manage the time that their children spend online and playing video games continue to be developed.

Creating incentives for better health

Our vision is a future where all employers value their employees' health, and where this is put at the core of their business plans.



In June 2008, well-being pilots for 4,000 NHS staff were launched in 10 NHS Trusts across England. NHS staff are being offered confidential, online health assessments linked to personalised health advice and lifestyle management programmes. These will provide aggregated anonymised data on the health status of the organisation's workforce. The data will be used to inform targeted 'off-line'

health interventions, for example a nutrition and healthy eating programme or a physical activity programme. An example of the public sector leading by example, these types of programmes are shown to help improve employees' health and bring benefits through fewer absences and an engaged workforce.

Lord Darzi's NHS Next Stage Review published last month sets out the importance of commissioning prevention services. Every primary care trust (PCT) will commission comprehensive well-being and prevention services, in partnership with LAs, with personalised services to meet the specific needs of their local populations. Efforts will be focused on six key goals, including obesity. The Primary and Community Care strand of the review commits to developing the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) to reflect the objectives to promoting healthier lives. We want to see strong rewards and incentives for practices that achieve the best health outcomes for their local populations.

Business Health Check, a tool to help business understand the impact of investing in employee health and well-being was launched in July. The tool was developed in response to Dame Carol Black's review by Health Work Well-being in partnership with Business in the Community (BITC) and PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. The tool will help employers quantify the cost of illness to their business and the financial benefits of wellness programmes.

Going forward:

The first ever review into the health of the working-age population – *Working for a Healthier Tomorrow* – was published in March 2008. The National Director for Health and Work, Dame Carol Black, made a series of recommendations on keeping people healthy at work. The Government response will be published in autumn 2008 and will provide an opportunity to promote healthy weight in the workplace.



Personalised advice and support

Our vision is a future where individuals have easy access to highly personalised feedback and information to encourage healthy behaviours, and access to personalised services that can support them in reaching and maintaining a healthy weight.



We are working to ensure that a comprehensive package of support is in place for PCTs and their partners to help them commission services for their local communities.

This includes consulting regional and local colleagues in order to make sure that national efforts are focused in a way that will provide the most effective support to local areas.

At the national level, we are providing **more personalised advice**

via the **NHS Choices website** as an initial step to ensuring that everyone has access to information and support on healthy weight. The site already includes extensive information about healthy living, tailored to different age groups and to men and women. Since May 2008, people have been able to register for alerts about new articles and videos giving practical advice on eating more healthily, being more active and losing weight. The amount of personalised information provided on the site will increase further over the coming months.



As part of *Health Inequalities: Progress and Next Steps*, we have committed to testing a 'full service' model of local programmes and services, to prevent and tackle child and adult overweight and obesity. This will seek to ensure that all individuals and families have the information, support and services they need to make healthy decisions on food and activity from pregnancy through to old age. The Government will test this model in areas with the highest levels of child and adult obesity, with the aim of halting, and potentially reducing, the prevalence of obesity in these areas.

Going forward:

From September 2008, as part of the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP), some PCTs will routinely send parents their child's results (Reception and Year 6). Previously, parents had to request this information. Parents will also receive information about healthy eating and physical activity and details about local services. The Government sees providing all parents with their child's results as an important way of engaging with them about the importance of a healthy weight.

We are developing a comprehensive package of tools and guidance to support the local commissioning process, with the first tools to be published in autumn 2008. We are committed to reviewing and updating these tools and pieces of guidance on an ongoing basis.

The Change4Life Movement



Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives committed us to developing a three-year social marketing programme to help us all maintain a healthy weight. Development of this programme is now well under way and public communications will begin from the autumn. Our research has told us that people want help to live healthier lives and want to see that everyone – including government and commercial organisations – are helping them to do this. So our aim is to act as a catalyst for a societal shift in English lifestyles, helping bring about fundamental changes in those behaviours that lead to people becoming overweight and obese. Primarily, the campaign will support people to eat more healthily and be more active.

People do not want to be told how to live their lives, so this will be much more than a government information campaign. Instead, we will use social marketing to stimulate a movement, which people can join, and in which everyone can play their part in creating change. This movement will be called 'Change4Life', and we are working to build momentum behind it through an extensive stakeholder engagement programme, enlisting support from across the public, third and commercial sectors.

Over the next few months we'll be developing a lively programme of events, briefings and media activities that will engage grassroots 'activists' – the many people who are already running activities that help children eat well and be active. We will invite them to join the Change4Life movement, and by tapping into this existing energy and commitment we'll ensure that Change4Life is not just another healthy living campaign, but a hands-on, practical and supportive movement. It will be driven by ordinary people across society, who want to do something now to combat obesity and make lives healthier.

During the summer, the Secretary of State will meet some of the activists and founding partners of the Change4Life movement.

During autumn 2008, the Change4Life movement will begin to play a part in people's everyday lives. They will begin to see the brand, and a website, helpline and literature will be available. PR activity in conjunction with major non-governmental organisations will aim to change people's perceptions of obesity.

Additionally, in the autumn, we will hold a high-profile summit that will gather together community representatives and leaders from major charities, healthcare organisations, consumer brands, media groups and employers. The summit will discuss what practical solutions there are to help people be more active and eat better. It will invite organisations to make pledges about what they will do to help. From telethons to free frisbees, recipe cards, in-store promotions and activity days, we hope there will be a wide range of commitments that will demonstrate genuine commitment to helping people live healthier lives.



From January 2009, as people make their New Year's resolutions, we will begin a high-profile advertising campaign that will continue to raise awareness of the problems caused by our sedentary lifestyles and poor diets. This will introduce Change4Life to an even greater number of people, and then, from the spring onwards, we will be providing additional and direct support to key at-risk audiences to encourage them to take part in behaviour change programmes that will motivate and empower them to change their lifestyles.

Interested stakeholders should contact Natalie Weller-Cliff on 020 7972 6528 or at natalie.weller-cliff@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Delivering change

Facilitating a national dialogue

We will support stakeholders in business and the third sector in engaging with government and with each other on how they can meet the challenge of tackling excess weight in the population. The *NHS Next Stage Review* reaffirmed our intention to build a **Coalition for Better Health**. This will reach agreements on joint programmes, disseminate knowledge on what works and what doesn't, and challenge each other to go further. We will hold a launch event in early autumn.

Supporting local delivery



Obesity is now a priority for many local areas following the Local Area Agreement process. This process of setting targets is helping to increase the dialogue between local partners. The Local Area Agreement National Indicator Set now includes two childhood obesity indicators. 122 local areas have chosen a child obesity indicator

(either Reception or Year 6) as one of their designated 35 targets. Around 876,000 children participated in the 2006/07 NCMP, an 80 per cent coverage rate. The publication of the headline results in February 2008 showed that PCTs had made great strides by increasing the number of children weighed and measured.

In order to support local areas, in March 2008 the Government published information on what programmes and policies PCTs and LAs can put in place to help them set and meet their local targets on healthy weight: *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: Guidance for Local Areas*. Practical tools to help local areas will be available in summer 2008 with the publication of *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: A Toolkit for Developing Local Strategies*.

The Government has committed to providing new funding to local areas over the next three years, with an initial £65.9 million in the NHS allocations for 2008/09 to support PCTs in taking action on overweight and obesity.



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Investing in our knowledge

We are committed to developing better data to identify at-risk individuals and families and to building the evidence base, for effective interventions.

The new National Obesity Observatory for England was established to provide a single point of contact for wide-ranging and authoritative information on data, evidence and practice related to obesity, overweight and underweight and their determinants. The Observatory is already making an important contribution and has recently published both an in-depth technical analysis of the 2006/07 NCMP (to complement the headline results report from the NHS Information Centre) and detailed guidance to support further analysis of the NCMP. A range of other reports will be published in the coming year.

An Expert Advisory Group has now been established to provide strategic advice to the cross-government obesity policy programme on a range of scientific and technical issues. This includes critical appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence base, emerging evidence and strategic opportunities. The group will also help to facilitate links with the wider academic community and professional networks.

Going forward:

A cross-government research strategy will be published in autumn 2008. This will focus on research and surveillance activity on obesity and overweight and their determinants in England. The strategy will act as a starting point for achieving co-ordinated action across government departments and key agencies to deliver an evidence base for national policymakers.

Over the next few months, the Observatory will also produce tools to support PCT and Public Health Observatories' analyses of the NCMP data; a report on approaches to defining childhood weight status; further analysis of the complex issues around childhood weight status and ethnicity; and a standard evaluation framework for weight management interventions.

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