

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Health & Wellbeing Board
Date: 20th February 2020
Report for: Decision
Report of: Director of Public Health

Report Title

Healthy Weight Declaration

Purpose

This report outlines the purpose and process of signing up to the Healthy Weight Declaration.

Recommendations

To progress Trafford Council's adoption of the Healthy Weight Declaration.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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1. Introduction

Trafford's Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2019 – 2029) identifies seven priority areas, of which healthy weight is one. The aim is to increase the number of people within Trafford who are a healthy weight, and to improve nutrition and hydration across the borough.

Improved health and wellbeing is one of Trafford Council's corporate priorities, with the specific aim to reduce health inequalities between different communities in the borough. Obesity is strongly linked to deprivation in both adults and children, and the people living in our most deprived communities have significantly shorter healthy life expectancy than those in our least deprived areas.

2. Context

Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight is challenging and complex, with more than 60% of adults in England being overweight or obese. Being overweight can be prevented, but it is a normal reaction to an abnormal environment, where it is very difficult to achieve and maintain a healthy weight given all the external factors and influences on our lives. We therefore need to look at the whole system of social, economic and environmental factors that impact on weight.

Overweight and obesity can have serious implications on health, with increased risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, vascular dementia and cancer and significantly reduces life-expectancy.

Diet and obesity-related ill-health has a huge financial impact on the NHS with estimates that it costs the UK around £6 billion each year, before we consider the economic and societal impacts due to reduced productivity and obesity-related illness that make people unable to work. This brings the wider cost of obesity to society to around £27 billion per year.

In Trafford, an estimated 57% of adults (18+) are overweight or very overweight which equates to approximately 135,000 people. By the age of 11 (Year 6), nearly one third of children are overweight or very overweight, with higher prevalence of excess weight being strongly associated with increasing deprivation.

3. Current work

Trafford has a multi-agency Healthy Weight Steering group which is overseeing the development of a new healthy weight strategy and whole system approach to tackling excess weight. This approach looks at the system of factors which combine to influence excess weight and where changes can be made within this system to have the greatest positive impact.

One action which has demonstrated positive outcomes in helping to change the system in other local authorities is to adopt and sign up to the Local Government Healthy Weight Declaration.

4. The Healthy Weight Declaration

The Healthy Weight Declaration has been developed to support local authorities to demonstrate commitment at a leadership level to develop and implement policies that promote healthy weight and improve the health and well-being of the local population.

There is no one size fits all solution to obesity; it will take action at many different levels before we see any significant progress. However, local authorities have an important role to play. We control planning, public and environmental health, leisure and recreation and

regeneration and this declaration is a vehicle to take the sort of whole-systems approach needed to tackle this complex issue. The declaration can have an impact across local authority departments, making sure the council works as one to achieve maximum impact and, ideally by working with other local partners, will have an impact far beyond council controlled areas.

The declaration includes fourteen standard commitments with the opportunity for local authorities to add local commitments relevant to our needs and aspirations. The standards have been developed through consultation with an expert stakeholder group and are based on robust evidence. The commitments are:

- Engage with the local food and drink sector where appropriate to consider responsible retailing.
- Consider how commercial partnerships with the food and drink industry may impact on the messages communicated around healthy weight to our local communities.
- Review provision in all our public buildings, facilities and via providers to make healthy foods and drinks more available, convenient and affordable, and limit access to high-calorie, low-nutrient foods and drinks.
- Increase public access to fresh drinking water on local authority controlled sites.
- Consider supplementary guidance for hot food takeaways, specifically in areas around schools and parks.
- Advocate plans with partners to address the causes and impacts of obesity.
- Protect our children from inappropriate marketing by the food and drink industry such as advertising and marketing in close proximity to schools, giveaways and promotions within schools, at events on local authority controlled sites.
- Support action at a national level to help local authorities reduce obesity prevalence and health inequalities in our communities.
- Ensure food and drink provided at public events include healthy provisions, supporting food retailers to deliver this offer.
- Support the health & wellbeing of local authority staff and increase knowledge and understanding of unhealthy weight to create a culture that normalises healthy eating.
- Invest in the health literacy of local citizens to make informed healthier choices
- Ensure clear and comprehensive healthy eating messages are consistent with government guidelines.
- Consider how strategies, plans and infrastructures for regeneration and town planning positively impact on physical activity.
- Monitor the progress of our plan against our commitments and publish the results.

These actions do not all need to be done at once, or prior to signing up to the declaration – we will prioritise and work systematically through the standards, identifying those where work is already being undertaken. This work will be led by Public Health, linking into the new Healthy Weight Strategy and whole system approach, and guided by the healthy weight steering group. It will, by definition, involve a wide range of stakeholders, both internal and external to the Council in order to make progress.

5. Recommendations

We ask that the Board:

- agrees to progress with signing the Healthy Weight Declaration as a tool to gain leadership support and promote the Council's commitment to addressing poor diet;
- identifies an elected member Champion who will help to get the Declaration through the democratic process.