

LOCAL CONTEXT

- **Tackling Obesity in Children and Young People in County Durham and Darlington: A Strategy for Prevention and Treatment 2004**

The strategy developed by County Durham and Darlington PCT for the Local Strategic Partnership sets out why it is important to tackle obesity in children and young people as a priority specifically looking at measuring, prevalence, impact and causes of obesity. The strategy explains that prevention needs a multi agency approach and gives examples of when treatment should be considered.

The strategy references what was being done at that time and how this was monitored. The final part of the strategy sets out an action plan stating actions required organisations and their leads, outputs and a deadline for actions to be taken. The strategy is now in need of updating in line with national and local policies and to take account of structural changes in many of the organisations involved in the strategy.

- **DCC Sustainable Community Strategy 2010 – 2030**

The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is developed by the County Durham Partnership following significant consultation with residents, communities and key partners. It sets the long term vision of County Durham and identifies key priorities for change over the next 20 years and how they will be delivered. Performance against the priorities is monitored regularly. One of its key priorities is to reduce childhood obesity.

- **Council Plan 2012 – 2016**

The Council Plan 2012-2016 sets out the corporate priorities for improvements and key actions that the council will take in support of delivery of the long term goals in the Sustainable Community Strategy. It identifies the improvements that the council want to make and how it is managed. The actions are captured in the priority themes of the council.

Altogether Better, Altogether Wealthier, Altogether Greener, Altogether Safer and Stronger, Altogether Healthier and Altogether Better for Children and Young People.

The last two themes, Altogether Healthier and Altogether Better for Children and Young People identify the reduction of childhood obesity as a key priority.

- **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2011**

County Durham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) provides a detailed overview of the current and future health and wellbeing needs of the people of County Durham. As the name indicates the assessment is a jointly the responsibility of Children and Young People's Services; Adults Wellbeing and Health Services and Public Health.

To help achieve positive outcomes for the local population, the County Durham JSNA aims to:

- Highlight areas where there is a need to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for the local community.
- Aid decision makers in targeting resources to both areas and services.
- Act as a resource document to support health and wellbeing planning and commissioning.
- Help inform our plans and strategies to provide a basis upon which to plan for the achievement of local outcomes and targets.

The document covers the five thematic themes of the council Altogether Wealthier; Altogether Greener; Altogether Safer; Altogether Healthier and Altogether better for Children and Young People. Both of the last two themes highlight in their key messages the awareness of excess weight in children as this poses a major health challenge and a risk to future health and wellbeing of children and young people in County Durham.

The JSNA 2011 states in childhood, excess weight can directly cause mobility problems, hypertension and abnormalities in glucose metabolism (Department for Children Schools and Families and Department of Health 2009). In addition there may be emotional issues related to low self-esteem. The stigmatisation of obesity that is heightened in adolescence may lead to bullying or exclusion from the peer group. Obesity in adolescence is linked to poor social relations and educational disadvantage (Royal College of Physicians, 2004).

Very rapid weight gain in early childhood is also associated with later obesity independent of birth weight (Power C and Jefferis B, 2002 and Jones *et al*, 2007, p47). Overweight young people have a 50% chance of being overweight adults and, unless childhood obesity is addressed, this is likely to increase demand on the NHS and Adult Services due to the health problems associated with adult obesity.

In County Durham obesity rates are below the national average for children in Reception (9.5% in County Durham compared with 9.8% across England). However they are higher for children in Year 6 (21.6% in County Durham compared with 20.0% across England). Obesity rates have shown a similar when comparing over the four year period from 2007/08 to 2010/11.

In terms of supporting and educating children and young people to make healthy food choices, the take up of school lunches in both primary and secondary schools is measured. The take up of school lunches in primary schools in 2010 was significantly higher (83.9%) compared with secondary schools (49.6%).

Across County Durham the proportion of children classified as obese in Year 6 is around twice that in Reception. Levels of overweight children are similar

between Reception and Year 6. There is little variation within County Durham by Health Network in levels of overweight or obese children.

- **Altogether Healthier Delivery Plan 2012-2016**

The Altogether Healthier Delivery Plan sets out a major programme of partnership work to reduce health inequalities and bring about change in County Durham. The plan considers the impact of the wider determinants of health and proposes a range of partnership actions across three key priority areas:

1. Improve Life Expectancy
2. Reduce Health Inequalities
3. Improve Mental Health & Wellbeing

- **Health & Wellbeing Partnership**

The Health and Wellbeing Partnership brings together different organisations in County Durham to improve people's health and wellbeing. The partnership is focused on reducing health inequalities of the County and leading on the health and wellbeing targets and objectives set out the County Durham Sustainable Community Strategy.

- **Health Networks**

The Health & Wellbeing Partnership has developed and introduced five Health Networks across County Durham. The Health Networks will provide a vehicle for joining up local partnership planning, delivery, involvement and participation from local partners and communities. Health Networks maximise opportunities for 'joined up' working and partnership delivery at the local level. Five Health Networks are established in County Durham and consistent with the current geographies of the shadow GP Commissioning Consortia and Local Children's Boards (LCBs). Reflecting the direction provided by the Marmot Review, specifically its recommendation to strengthening the role and impact of ill-health prevention - the five Health Networks address health inequalities locally; recognizing that many of the health behaviours related to the development of diseases, such as heart disease and many cancers, follow a social gradient. The Health Networks take into account the concept of proportionate universalism, focusing on wards with the most significant inequalities. The five health networks are located:

- Dales including Teesdale and Weardale
- East Durham
- Sedgefield
- Derwentside
- Durham and Chester le Street

- **Children, Young People and Families Plan 2012 -2016**

The Children, Young People and Families plan developed by Altogether Better for Children and Young People states its intentions to provide support and promote healthy living from an early age. It aims to reduce childhood obesity and ensure more children maintain a healthy weight.

Altogether Healthier plan states that Childhood obesity is linked to diet and nutrition, physical activity, parenting and emotional health and wellbeing. The proportion of County Durham children in Year 6 classified as obese is above the national average.

As with a healthy diet, participation in physical activity is known to benefit overall health and is particularly linked to improved cardiovascular health, reduced levels of obesity and improved mental health. The council will be taking various steps to improve overall level of participation in physical activity, driven by the delivery of its Sport and Leisure Strategy.

- **Health Improvement Plan 2011-2013**

The Durham County Council Health Improvement Plan sets out how all service areas in the Council are working together and in partnership with other agencies to tackle the health challenges faced by our local communities.

Theme 3 of the Health Improvement Plan is physical activity, food and nutrition and asks the question why the take up of physical activity and diet is a problem in County Durham. It sets out the risks associated with obesity and gives the childhood obesity rates as they were reported by NCMP 2007/08. The plan sets out what it wants to achieve and how it will go about it using current strategies such as the local play strategy.

- **Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)**

A report was received by Cabinet on the MTFP and how changes to Public Health service delivery from April 2013 would impact on this. A report to Cabinet in July 2012 advised on the changes to Public Health Service delivery from April 2013 and its impact on Medium Term Financial Plan. A consultation document, Healthy People, Healthy Lives: Update on Public Health Funding has been published and proposes significant change to the way in which the national health budget is allocated to local authorities. Initial analysis carried out by Association of North East Councils (ANEC) suggests:

- a. The north east would lose £53.6 million if the proposals were accepted whilst the south east, east of England and south west would gain.
- b. County Durham would lose £19.7 million i.e. 46% of current funding.

Given the scale of the funding reductions that the proposals would mean for the county and the region a robust response is being developed with partners to the consultation.

- **Transfer of Public Health Functions to Durham County Council**

During 2012 Cabinet has received reports on developments related to public reforms and sought agreement on public health transition arrangements between NHS County Durham and Darlington and Durham County Council. A single 'Receiver' plan exists, which outlines the tasks and milestones to be achieved by Durham County Council and NHS County Durham prior to and including the date for transfer of public health functions to Durham County Council.

A due diligence exercise is to be completed, coordinated by Adults Wellbeing and Health, with Internal Audit and Risk providing assurance that the necessary controls and evidence are in place for the transfer of public health functions to Durham County Council. Work is also being undertaken to prepare 'handover' documents (known as a legacy document) for the transfer of public health functions and responsibilities from NHS County Durham to Durham County Council by 1st April 2013.

The development and delivery of the local public health vision is being led by the Director of Public Health County Durham, in collaboration with a wide group of stakeholders, including the Portfolio Holder for Safer and Healthier Communities, Durham County Council's Chief Executive and the Corporate Director of Adults Wellbeing and Health. As the local leader for public health across County Durham, the Director of Public Health will ensure that the vision and delivery model enables the council to deliver the new statutory functions from 2013. An update on the public health vision will be included in the next quarterly update report to Cabinet in October 2012.

- **Review of Fixed Play Provision**

The Council recognises the value of play as an essential part of a child's life. It allows children to develop a sense of wellbeing; it develops their emotional responses and helps them to manage risk. It improves their interpersonal skills, develops their learning capabilities and increases their ability to interact with other children in their community. It can help prevent obesity, can increase resilience to mental health problems and can make children feel more independent. The main objectives of reviewing play provision across the County are to:

- Ensure the County provide equal and fair access to quality fixed play provision for children and young people
- Provide safe and accessible fixed play provision for all children and young people, including safe access routes to play
- Provide a sustainable offer within current resources
- Ensure that County Durham also provides an attractive offer for visitors to enjoy a diverse and quality play experience through destination sites.