

MERCIAN 1

WSA Roadmap event

13th May 2026

10:00-15:45

Welcome to the WSA Roadmap Event and housekeeping

#WSARoadmapEvent



DCMO Keynote Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy

Setting the Scene to collectively
tackle obesity

Parallel Session 1

10.55am-12 noon

Involving businesses and the food system: overcoming barriers to levers which support healthier food environments

Facilitated by: Jackie Chin (OHID London)
and Prof Katherine Brown (UH/PHIRST)



Healthier Food Environments - Working with Food Business

Faith Eddleston

Health Improvement Lead – Whole Systems Healthy Weight and Diet Quality - Hertfordshire County Council



Purpose and development of the scheme



Purpose

- Work with food sector locally to offer **healthier** food and drink and operate **sustainably**
- Focus on businesses in areas of higher deprivation and High Takeaway density areas

Development

- Reviewed the available evidence on HCS.
- Reviewed other schemes (great input and advice from Healthier Catering Commitment, Recipe4Health and Bristol Eating Better).
- Consulted with Herts based food businesses – survey, telephone interviews and in person through focus groups.
- Consulted with the public through surveys.

“There is a cost to trying to be good.”

Engaging food businesses - approaches

- Launch Event with Guest Speakers
- HRFA Webpage
- Targeted ads through social media
- In person visits with flyers
- Direct email communications
- Social media posts
- Local events
- Online newsletter articles



HERTS RESPONSIBLE FOOD AWARD

Do you own a food business in Hertfordshire?

Join the Herts Responsible Food Award now to enhance your business

You're invited to join the Herts Responsible Food Award, which has been created in collaboration with local food businesses.

Signing up sets your business apart as one which values local health and supports sustainability through everyday good practice.

Sign up today by visiting www.Hertfordshire.gov.uk/HertsResponsibleFoodAward or by scanning the QR Code.

*Full eligibility criteria can be found in the self-assessment details.

Contact the team by email at: HealthierCatering@Hertfordshire.gov.uk

Hertfordshire



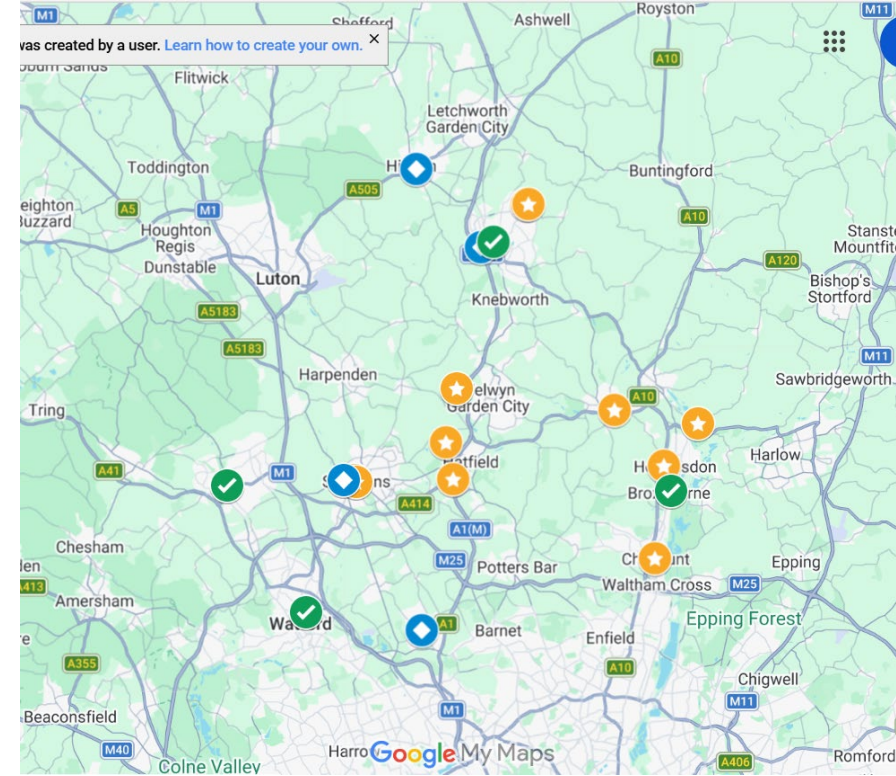
Engaging food businesses – challenges

- Ad campaigns - high costs
- Engagement from officers e.g., Environmental Health, Communications and Economic Development
- Businesses online presence and use of ICT to apply
- Hesitant or resistant to engage with council officers
- Language barriers
- Difficulties with speaking to owner/manager of high street businesses
- Higher potential to gain interest from 'easy win' businesses than target businesses
- Time it takes from start to finish of application average is 71 days (up to 301 days).



Engaging food businesses - Facilitators

- Less formal approach both in person and via email
- Short opening pitch focusing on the benefits with a clear message/action
- Concept of free promotion (online map, case studies).
- Use case studies and examples of good practice from other businesses in the area
- Utilise existing relationships/contacts stakeholders have with businesses
- Regularly update comms materials



Finally...

- Wider issues - Continued engagement from food business signed up
- Reputation (when a food business then changes operation model and starts selling more unhealthy food)
- Future? Continued momentum, expansion to new settings.





Contact us: WholeSystemsObesity@hertfordshire.gov.uk



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What's in it for you?

Hertfordshire businesses helped shape the Food Award, business support and incentives through survey and focus group responses.

What did they say?

- **Health and sustainability** shouldn't come at any extra cost for businesses
- Businesses would like opportunities to **upskill and network locally**

What will we do:

- **Provide free Level 2 Food Hygiene Courses**
- **Work with local suppliers** to provide exclusive discounts for award holders
- **Provide free advertising and promotion** from your local council
- **Offer a package of support** on profitability and sustainability from Herts Business Support Services
- **Offer networking opportunities** for awarded businesses

Sign up today to grow your business, network and build a healthier, more sustainable Hertfordshire.



Visit www.Hertfordshire.gov.uk/HertsResponsibleFoodAward or by scanning the QR Code.

Contact the team by email at:
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Case Study 1. Pizza Wow, Broxbourne

Award Tier: Standard

Business Type: Pizza Takeaway

Challenges/Barriers: Small Business, less healthy cuisine

Healthier Practices

- Reduced salt in their pizza dough by 50%
- Began only adding salt to fries on request
- Produced a new menu advertising healthier changes and gluten free options
- Replaced some full sugar drinks with diet options
- Prepares chicken products fresh, in store
- Swapped to using a healthier oil for frying



Case Study 2. Inn on the Park, St Albans

Award Tier: Silver

Business Type: Cafe

Challenges/Barriers: Very busy, requiring fast service

Healthier Practices

- Swapped to using a healthier oil for frying
- Introduced and promoted 'Lighter' food options
- Increased promotion of healthier snacks across menus
- Improved the healthiness of their kids' meal deal
- Improved vegetarian and vegan labelling
- Added a wider range of salads to menu

Sustainable Practices

- Introduced a No Vehicle Idling Policy
- Swapped to sustainable and ethical cleaning products





‘Living Well’

A Whole Systems Approach and our food system

*Rose Dunlop – Consultant in Public Health
Tim Howells – Head of Public Health*

LIVING WELL

THE LIVING WELL AIM:

Making it easier for everyone, everywhere, every day
to live healthier and more active lifestyles

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Enabling behaviour change through facilitating physical changes to our environment that make it easier to live a healthier lifestyle

Highways; Planning; Parks,
Active Travel; Play Streets;
School Streets;

COMMUNITIES & ORGANISATIONS

COMMUNITIES & ORGANISATIONS

Enabling behaviour change through facilitating adjustments to policies and practices in schools, businesses and community settings that make it easier to live a healthier lifestyle

Living Well... Takeaways;
Health & Care Settings;
Libraries; Markets;
Workplaces; Communities;
Schools; Faith Settings

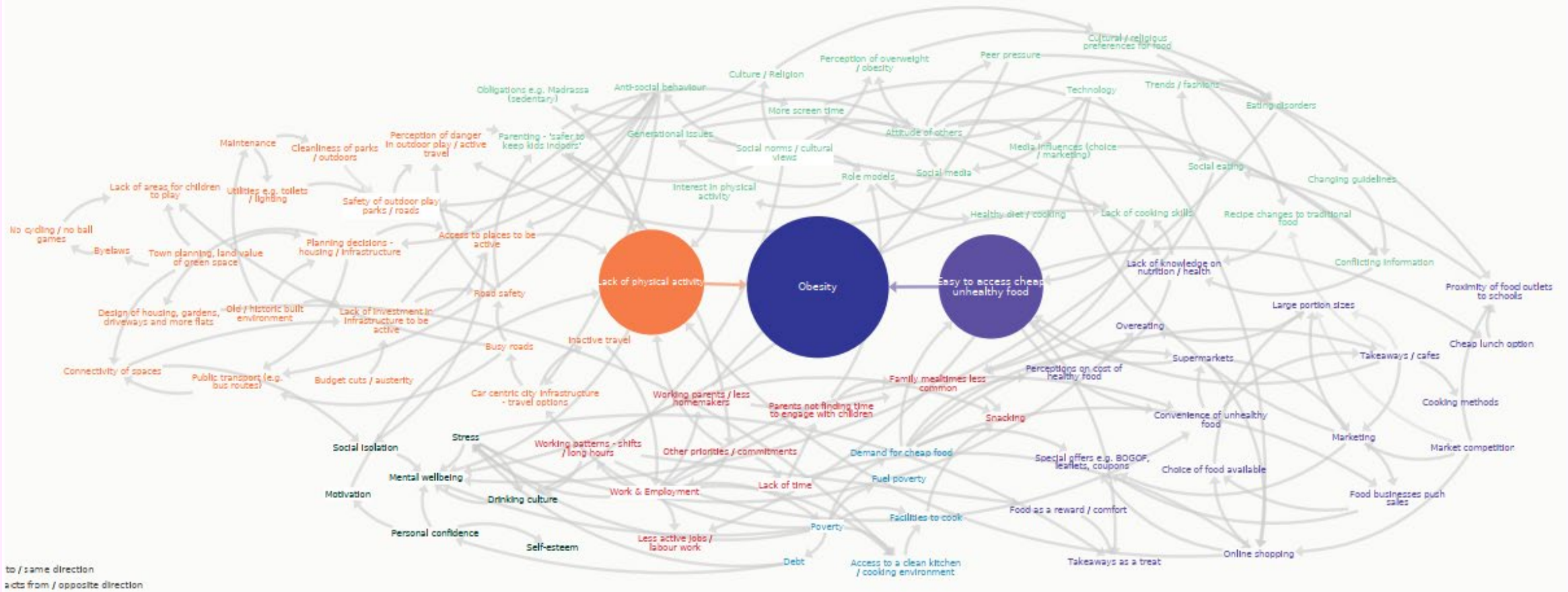
INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES

INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES

Enabling behaviour change through provision of accessible personalised support services that makes it easier to live a healthier lifestyle

Living Well Service:
behavioural change support
for adults, children & families

Bradford Obesity Causal Mapping Output





“Sociocracy”

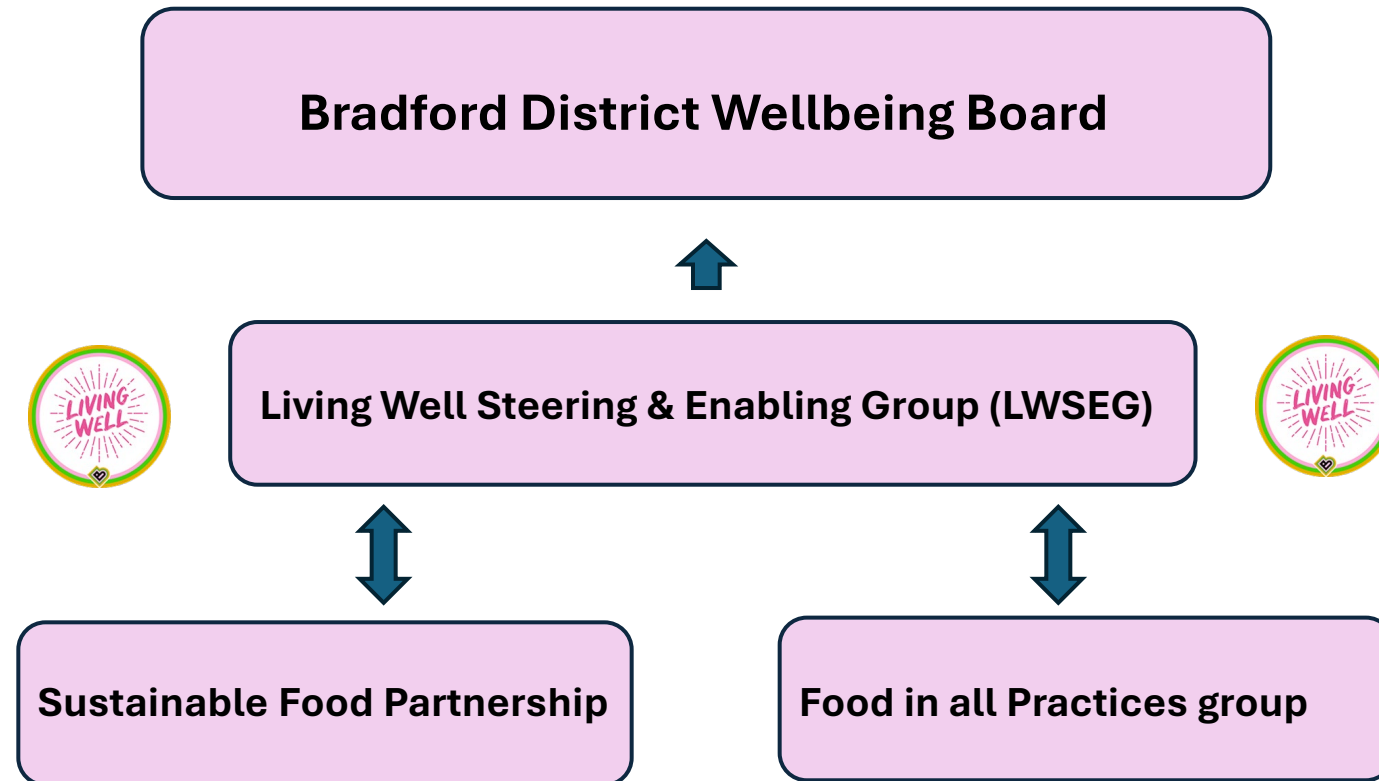
- Our new model for governance aligned to the foresight map

What is it?

- A more horizontal method of governance for working in complex whole systems
- **Values-based governance system centred on the concept of equal voice, decentralised decision making and distributed leadership.**
- Live, flexible and an organic method of governance.

Benefits

- Improved ownership, accountability and oversight. Opportunity to better ‘empower’ the system.
- Better flexibility and collaboration.
- Sociocracy provides a framework for building organisations that are not only efficient and effective but also equitable and responsive to the needs of all stakeholders, aligning well with the principles of whole systems thinking.



A whole-systems approach to healthy weight — reframed for every audience

Politicians & Government

"Obesity costs the economy £98bn a year."

Preventable illness drains workforce productivity, overloads the NHS and widens inequality. A food and activity strategy isn't a health project — it's an economic growth lever and a levelling-up mandate.

→ Champion cross-departmental obesity strategy in the next spending review.

Employers & Business

"Poor health costs UK employers £77bn in lost productivity each year."

Obesity-related absence, presenteeism and staff turnover hit your bottom line directly. Investing in active workplaces and healthy food environments delivers measurable ROI — and becomes a talent differentiator.

→ Adopt a Workplace Wellbeing Charter and join the Healthy Workplace Network.

Educators & Schools

"Hungry or inactive children learn less. It's that simple."

Food insecurity, sedentary habits and poor sleep undermine attainment, behaviour and mental health. Schools that embed food literacy and daily movement close the gap — and lift outcomes for every pupil.

→ Integrate food education and active travel into your school improvement plan.

Planners & Local Gov.

"The built environment is one of the biggest drivers of obesity."

Where people live shapes how they eat and move. Planning decisions on green space, walking routes, food retail mix and housing density are de facto health decisions. Embed health impact assessment into every major planning application.

→ Apply the Healthy Streets and Active Design frameworks in your local plan.

NHS & Clinicians

"Two-thirds of hospital admissions have obesity as a contributing factor."

Treating downstream consequences is unsustainable. Clinicians are uniquely trusted to make prevention feel personal — and to connect patients to community food and activity assets that no prescription can provide.

→ Prescribe social referrals alongside clinical treatment — and advocate publicly for upstream change.

Communities & VCSE

"Communities hold solutions that policy alone never will."

Lived experience, trusted relationships and local knowledge make community organisations irreplaceable. From food banks to walking groups to community kitchens — you're already part of the system. The ask is to connect, scale and be heard.

→ Join the local Food & Activity Partnership and help shape the strategy from the inside.

Sustainability & Environment

"The food system drives 30% of global greenhouse gas emissions."

A shift to more plant-rich, local and seasonal diets reduces both obesity and carbon footprint simultaneously. Active travel replaces car trips. Healthy food environments cut packaging waste. Obesity and climate are the same problem with the same solution.

→ Align your net-zero strategy with the Local Food & Activity Action Plan.

All audiences. One system. Every door leads to healthier lives.



LIVING
WELL





Achieving our vision – our four food outcomes:

Creating an Eating Well culture

Developing knowledge and skills, and access to healthy affordable food

Tackling Food Insecurities

Increasing access to, and availability of, healthy fresh low cost food.

Community-Led Food Growing

Sustaining and expanding local food production.

A Sustainable Food System For All

Creating a resilient and sustainable food system which protects bio-diversity and reduces impact on climate change.

<https://mylivingwell.co.uk/projects/bradford-sustainable-food-partnership/>

What are some of the main challenges?



Defining food/food strategy/food system.



Internal council “buy in” – completing priorities, lack of understanding, lack of ownership, austerity.



It’s a trap; only focusing on “piece meal” operational projects, rather than challenging the dominant food regime with transformative change.



Gaining **private sector engagement** on the food partnership



“too many chefs” – lots of interest (advocates), but not enough action – priorities, time, money

What lessons have been learned, what has contributed to success?

Co-production, Co-production, Co-production

Accepting that we're not actually taking a Whole Systems Approach, rather doing **systems thinking**

Accepting that we can't all be system "leaders"...**we're system diplomats**

Gaining the right level of **political buy in** (at the right time) – portfolio lead, partnership chair, food motion, annual accountability to scrutiny

Communicate and **celebrate** successes - newsletters, press releases, annual symposium

The food system **causal map** is very different to obesity

Useful steps or opportunities to engage food industry partners?

Working at scale – across local authorities, mayoral authorities, other regional footprints

Link up with **Sustainable Food Places**

Define your “offer” for your food strategy/partnership *(They’re often too ambiguous/complicated)*

Speak the right language *(which usually isn’t public health or local government)*

Bottom up and not always top down *e.g. local success on co-produced menu redesign of school food*





Thank you

Rose Dunlop

Rose.Dunlop@bradford.gov.uk

 Rose Dunlop

Tim Howells

Tim.Howells@bradford.gov.uk

 Tim Howells



A whole systems partnership approach to the
Right to Food

‘Involving businesses and the food system:
overcoming barriers to levers which support
healthier food environments’



Health and wellbeing is
at the heart of everything we do

Our values



Ambitious



Collaborative



Compassionate



Empowering



Innovative





Why businesses matter for healthier food

Businesses strongly influence what people eat through:

- **Availability** – what food is on offer
- **Affordability** – pricing and promotions
- **Marketing** – especially to children and families
- **Norms** – what is seen as ‘normal’ food

This makes businesses key partners for improving public health and whole systems approach to healthy weight



Food & Farming





Steps to Healthy Living (to reduce Tier 3)
&
Neighbourhood Health Pre-Diabetes

Policies

Cumberland Council
Healthy Weight
Declaration (HWD)
Commitments

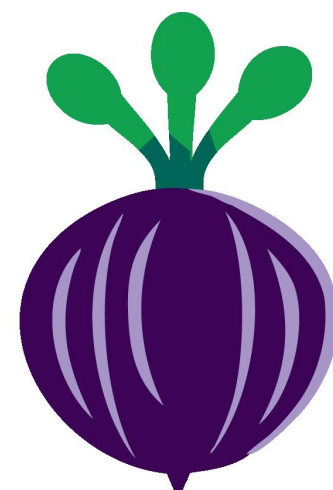
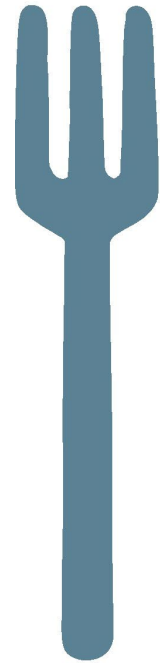


MECC for teams & for
businesses

Marmot principles & Cormac Russell

Change the Narrative
&
Relationships are Key





F^{OOD}

Cumberland

Any questions?

Val.Ayre@cumberland.gov.uk



**Health and wellbeing is
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Break and then
back here for
next keynote



Hungry for Change: How to get the policy and politics right on obesity

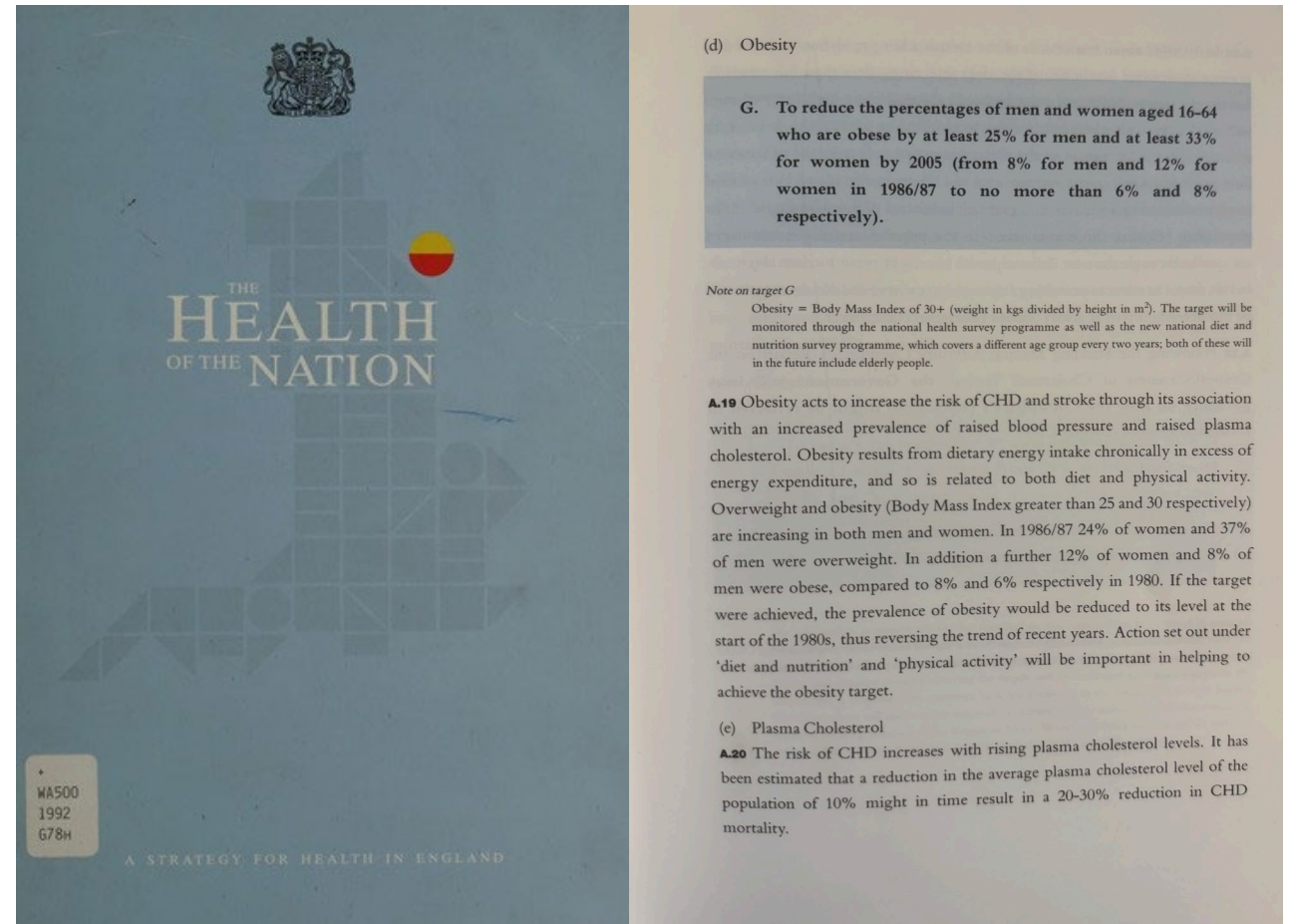
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Hungry for Change:
*How to get the policy and politics
right on obesity*

By Dr Dolly van Tulleken

The first obesity reduction targets for England

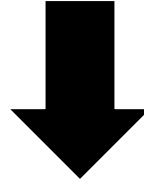
*Let's get back
to 1980!*



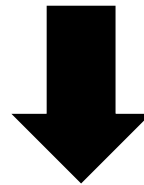


Health Secretaries William
Waldegrave and Virginia
Bottomley (1992)

1992: Target - “*By 2005, reduce proportion of obese men to 6% and obese women to 8%*” - Health of the Nation



2005: Proportion of men living with obesity was 23.1% and women living with obesity was 24.8% - Health Survey for England

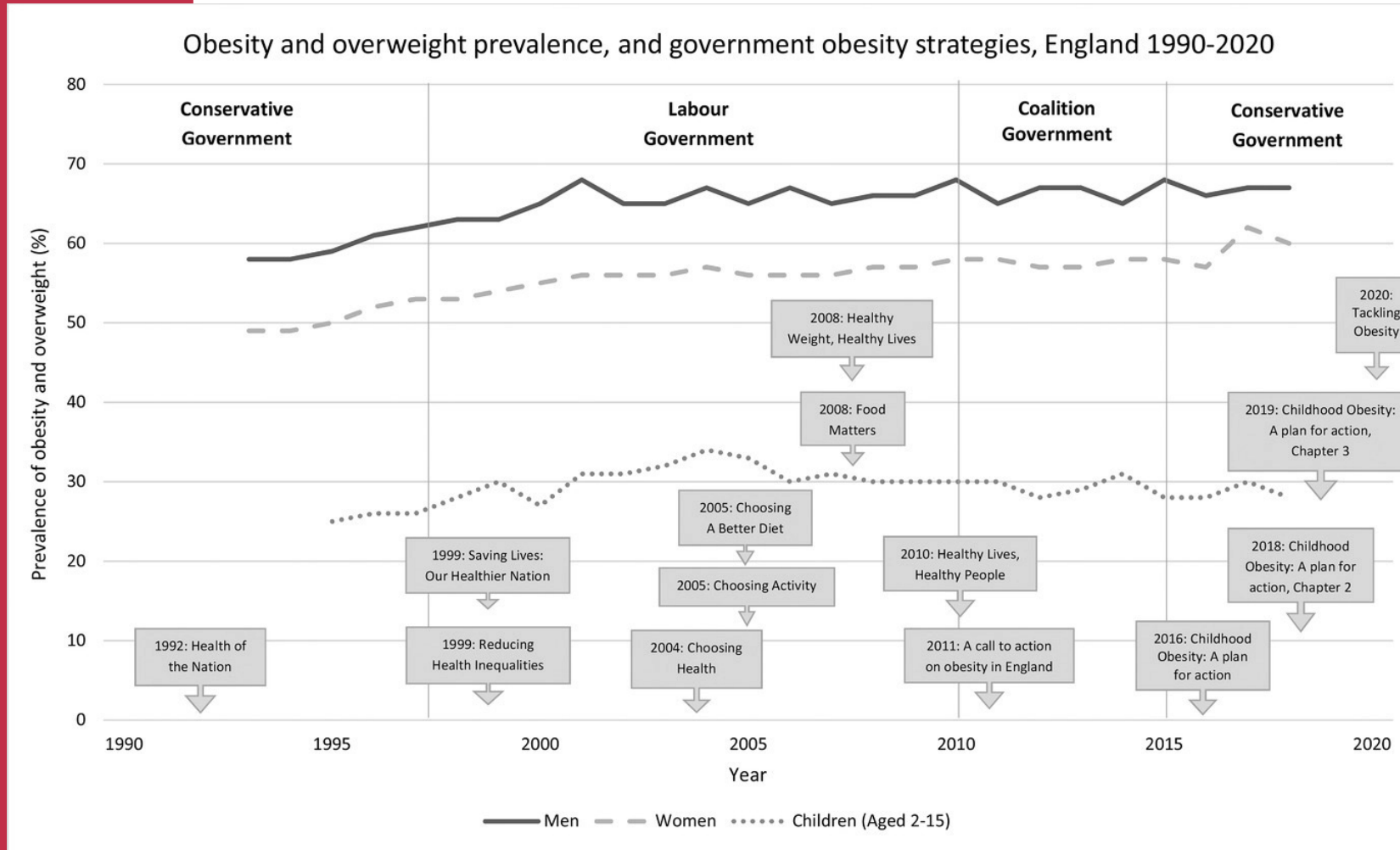


2026: Proportion of men living with obesity is 26.2% and women living with obesity is 26.9% - Office for Health Improvement & Disparities



Health Secretaries Patricia
Hewitt (2005) and Wes
Streeting (2026)

30 years of failed government obesity policy in England...



14 government obesity strategies

689 individual policies

NO reduction in obesity or related health inequalities

Source: Theis and White (2021)

Why has obesity policy failed in England?

- 1. Ineffective, inequitable ideas***
- 2. Voluntary rather than mandatory***
- 3. Lack of implementation***

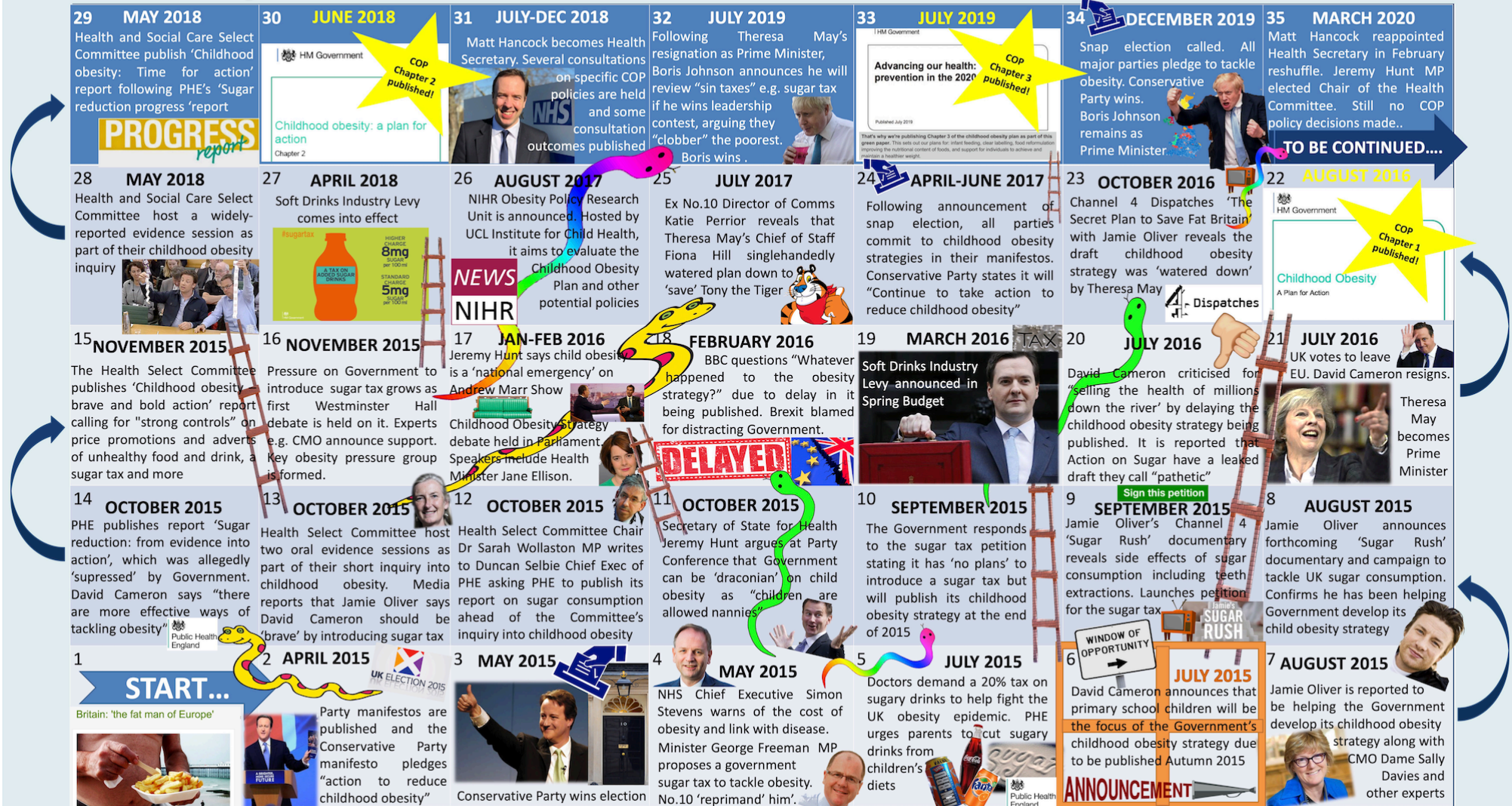
AND because politics is very very messy...

MULTIPLE PLAYERS!

What influenced the UK Government's Childhood Obesity Plans?

Dolly Theis, PhD Student | Professor Martin White, Supervisor
Centre for Diet & Activity Research, MRC Epidemiology Unit, University of Cambridge

NIHR | School for Public Health Research



Nourishing Britain

*A Political Manual for Improving
the Nation's Health*

How to keep a secret
George Osborne

They lobbied me hard
Andy Burnham

Jamie Oliver made me do it
Sir Tony Blair



By Dr Dolly van Tulleken and Henry Dimbleby
Edited by Jemima Lewis

***Why are the politics of
food policy so hard?***

Key: Name colour indicates political party

Who we interviewed

People in order of most relevant time in office



William Waldegrave
1990-1992



Virginia Bottomley
1992-1995



William Hague
1997 - 2001



Tony Blair
1997 - 2007



Alan Milburn
1999 - 2003



Patricia Hewitt
2005 - 2007



Alan Johnson
2007 - 2009



Andy Burnham
2009 - 2010



David Cameron
2010 - 2016



Nick Clegg
2010 - 2015



George Osborne
2010 - 2016



Andrew Lansley
2010 - 2012



Michael Gove
2010 - 2014, 2017-2019



Jeremy Hunt
2012 - 2018



Seema Kennedy
2019



Matt Hancock
2018 - 2021



Boris Johnson
2019 - 2022



Jo Churchill
2019 - 2021



Sajid Javid
2021 - 2022



Sadiq Khan
2016 - present

Nourishing Britain

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What we found...

All 20 politicians agreed:

- Food-related ill health was a big problem.
- The government had not done enough to tackle obesity and food-related ill health.
- The government can and should do more.



“[This] agenda is really, really, really ripe now.”

Sir Nick Clegg, former Liberal Democrat deputy prime minister

“What’s the point of occupying Number 11 Downing Street, or indeed Number 10 Downing Street if you’re not doing something with it?”

**George Osborne,
former Conservative chancellor**



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The four main barriers politicians face

1. Merrie England versus the Nanny State



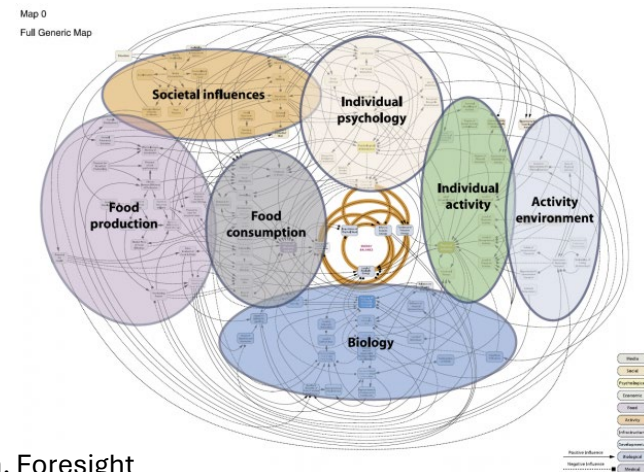
2. *Mixing Business with Politics*



3. The Struggle to Juggle



4. Whack-A-Policy





1. Merrie England versus the Nanny State

“Here was I, a middle-class, feminist woman with a southern constituency. And there was John [Reid], the working-class Glaswegian, who was adamant that people needed to be able to go to the pub after work and enjoy a pint and a fag and a bag of crisps.”

Patricia Hewitt,
former Labour health secretary

Nourishing Brito

Any political attempt to influence how people eat is attacked by libertarians in Westminster and the media as interfering, joyless and ‘nanny statist’.

Although the public does not tend to share this view and fear was greater than reality, the attacks are ferocious enough to generate considerable political anxiety.

Flaws in the nanny state argument were highlighted.

“Most Conservatives still say they believe in a smaller state, but there is very little prospect of a smaller state if we spend ever-escalating amounts on dealing with unnecessary ill health.”

Lord William Hague,
former Conservative leader



Sources: Guido Fawkes, Daily Mail

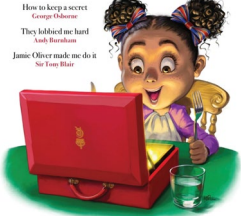


Class, food and politics

“It’s bound up with this weird thing we have about class [in Britain]... this myth that somehow fresh nutritional produce is a, sort of, middle class thing, it’s super weird, it just doesn’t exist in other societies.”

**Sir Nick Clegg, former
Liberal Democrat Deputy
Prime Minister**





By Dr Dolly van Tulcken and Henry Dimbleby
Edited by Jemima Lewis

2. Mixing Business with Politics

Government faces a conflict of interest in its relationship with industry, oscillating between champion & regulator.

Politicians see that obesity is commercially driven.

But often feel unable to legislate, due to lobbying and fears about the impact of policies on businesses and the economy.

*“The biggest one that I recall was commercial television... They lobbied me hard”,
Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester and former Labour health secretary*



“ Why do you want to undermine a commercial success in this country? British sugar is a huge success... why would you want to have not a single sugar beet grown in East Anglia and people losing their jobs in Docklands? ”

Michael Gove,
former Conservative secretary of state for education and for environment, food and rural affairs

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“[Future governments] are going to be as lobbied by the food industry as we were and the people before us were and the people before them were.”

Jo Churchill, former Conservative minister for public health



Example: Jeremy Hunt, Health Secretary then Chancellor

“I wish in particular we had made more progress with kids’ obesity, where most people are less sensitive to the ‘nanny state’ arguments”.

**Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt,
former Conservative
Health Secretary**



Brilliant news that [@PepsiCo_uk](#) are making their largest investment in 25 years - £58m into the Walkers factory in Leicester.

Great to see yet another company using ‘Full Expensing’ – a new capital allowance I announced at the Spring Budget to drive investment 👉

 **PepsiCo UK News** 🌟 [@pepsico_uk](#) · 6 Jun 2023
Four benefits of our £58million investment in Leicester:

-  A new production line to meet increased demand
-  Investing in more sustainable equipment...
[Show more](#)

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 69

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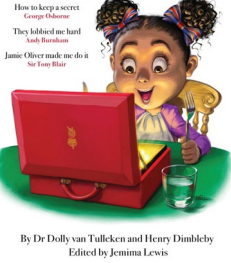
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3. The Struggle to Juggle

Since the problem of food-related ill health has occurred gradually, it's seen as "important but not urgent" and rarely makes it to the top of the political agenda.

With so many other pressing issues in the 24-hour news cycle, this one has not had the necessary focus and energy.

"You simply can't do everything at once."

Patricia Hewitt, former Labour health secretary

"You have to think, in an election especially, that it's taking air time from something else you could be talking about that could be more sort of impactful in terms of votes."

**Sir Sajid Javid,
former Conservative health secretary**

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4. Whack-A-Policy

Because the food system is such a complex, multifaceted and sprawling issue, tackling it can feel like a game of Whack-A-Mole.

Multiple actions are needed (outcomes not always predictable) and responsibility is spread across multiple government departments.

Collaboration and securing cross-government agreement is hard.

“Tackling obesity is a job for more than just the Department of Health. In this case, Treasury and Health ministers worked together to create a pragmatic, workable solution. This in fact is a job for the whole of government – Education, Business, Science, DEFRA, Work and Pensions – so many departments have a role to play in changing what we teach, the industries we back, the food we eat and the choices we incentivise.”

Lord David Cameron,
former Conservative prime minister

“It’s so complex, it’s so difficult, it’s so upstream, how do you get your arms wrapped around it?”

Alan Milburn, former Labour health secretary

Britain



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Ingredients for Success



Despite the challenges, the politicians were not at all defeatist.

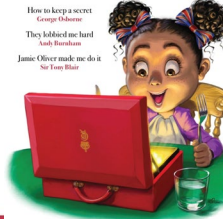
On the contrary, they were brimming with optimism, ideas and advice for future governments.

We identified four ingredients for success.



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“The first thing you have to try and do politically is to make sure that parliamentarians and others understand that this is not wishful thinking. That there is a solution to this problem, that it’s not too big to resolve.”

Alan Johnson,
former Labour health secretary

Nourishing B





1. Deploy a compelling argument

“Change begins with an argument.”

Alan Milburn, former Labour health secretary

*A powerful, persuasive argument is a political
superpower.*

*Combine robust evidence with careful framing and
existing policy ideas to make an irrefutable case.*

*No need to reinvent the wheel - there are effective policy
solutions ready to go.*



2. Build a movement

Support exists but needs marshalling in Westminster. The public already wants government to introduce strong action on the food industry and help people access healthy food.

Influential external people like Jamie Oliver and Henry Dimbleby help generate support a lot.

Nothing worth achieving can be achieved alone.

“Jamie Oliver’s School Dinners campaign was such a success... The significant media coverage, and the public’s engagement, underscored the urgency of the issue and made it politically viable to allocate funds and introduce new standards for school meals.”

Sir Tony Blair,
former Labour prime minister

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3. Enlist the prime minister (or mayor)

“If the Prime Minister isn’t onside, if the Prime Minister isn’t enthusiastic about the policy area, then one individual Cabinet minister who’s determined enough can kill it.”

Matt Hancock,
former Conservative health secretary

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Food-related ill health should be a prime ministerial priority.

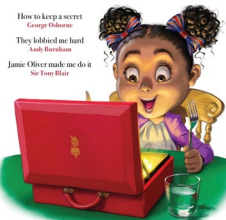
The PM has the power to unify government around a common goal, pushing it to the top of the agenda and authorising key departments to pull the necessary levers.

At a local level, mayors have the power to do this.

“Although I will continue to make it a policy priority, there is no guarantee that the next Mayor – whoever they may be – will do the same.”

Sadiq Khan,
Mayor of London





By Dr Dolly van Tulcken and Henry Dimbleby
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4. Be bold, act fast, no regrets

*Changing policy is hard,
especially on food-related ill
health.*

*But if politicians move fast and
aim high, they can leave a
lasting legacy with measurable
rewards reaped in single
parliamentary terms.*

*"It's hard, it's fucking hard, but the truth is there's
a series of levers that you can pull, ding-ding-ding-
ding-ding".*

Alan Milburn, former Labour Health Secretary

*"Stop faffing around, just get on
with it."*

**Seema Kennedy, former
Conservative minister for
public health**

*"The final lesson is that real
change happens when you're
bold – but that boldness must
be underpinned by a deep
understanding of the problem,
and specific, targeted policies to
address it."*

**Lord David Cameron,
former Conservative prime minister**

Nourishing





Political success story: Soft Drinks Industry Levy (2016)



"I would say it could easily have gone wrong with the sugar tax, and we knew that... But it was worth it. It was worth risking, trying."

"I phoned Jamie Oliver and said 'The moment I announce [the Soft Drinks Industry Levy], I need you out there publicly.'... He and others did come out in force, and fought off an attempt by the drinks industry to either get rid of it or water it down."

**Rt Hon George Osborne, former Conservative
Chancellor of the Exchequer**

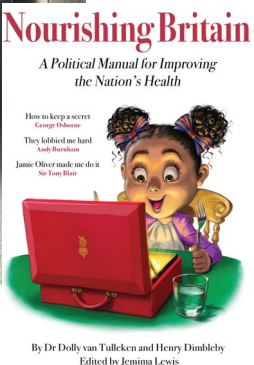
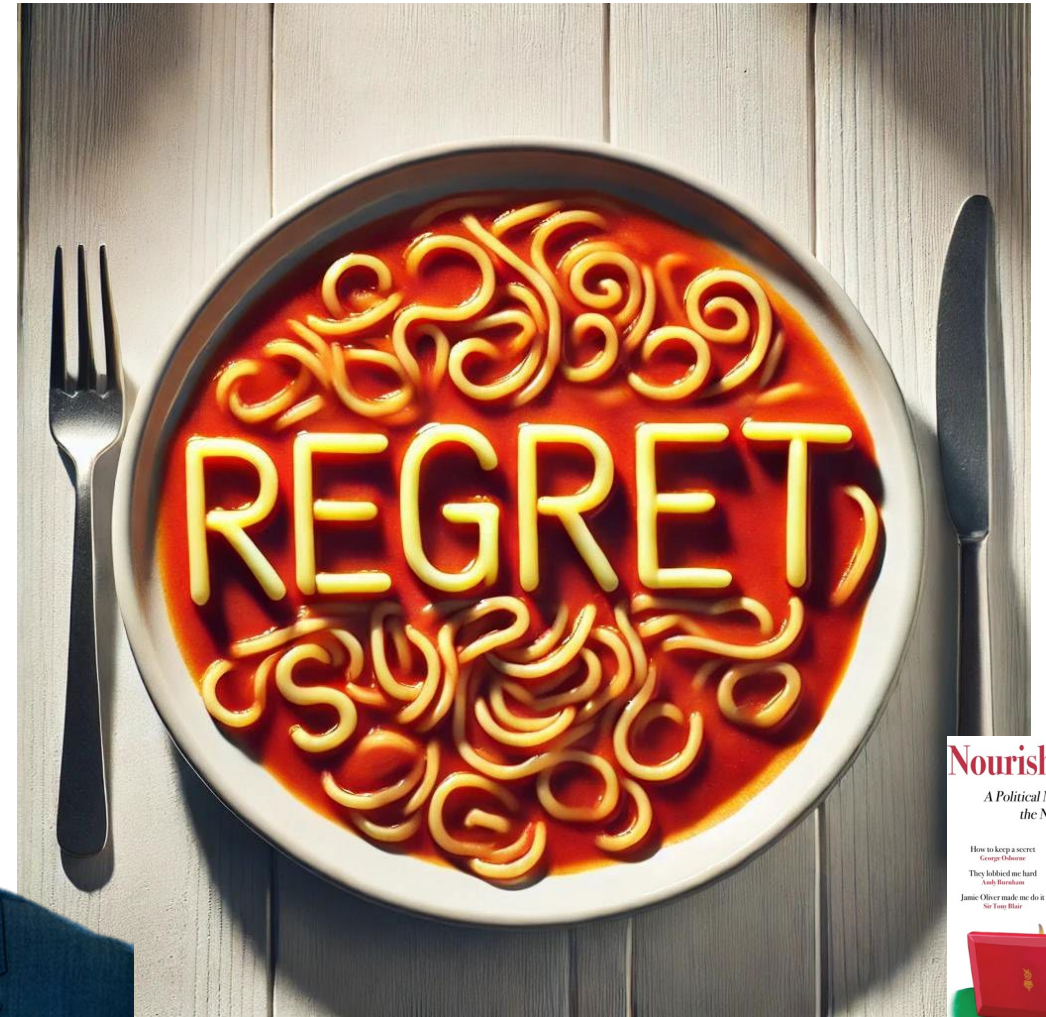
Don't leave office eating regretti spaghetti

Politicians urged their successors not to leave office wishing they'd done more.

Some talked about not being bold enough when they were in office, while those who did a lot said they were immensely proud.

"We were pondering on [a sugar tax], but we were never really bold enough to do it."

Alan Johnson, former Labour health secretary



Three points to leave you with

1. Politicians and government should go for it! Their predecessors say act now, be bold and don't leave office regretting you hadn't done more.
2. Everyone in this space can help make this a positive agenda and build support that politicians can feel.
3. Politicians CAN make the politics work and they can see positive results in politically short periods of time.

Nourishing Britain

*A Political Manual for Improving
the Nation's Health*

How to keep a secret
George Osborne

They lobbied me hard
Andy Burnham

Jamie Oliver made me do it
Sir Tony Blair



By Dr Dolly van Tulleken and Henry Dimbleby
Edited by Jemima Lewis

Download the full manual and interview transcripts

www.nesta.org.uk/report/nourishing-britain/



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Nourishing Britain: a political manual for improving the nation's health

24 November 2024 | In [A healthy life](#) | 2 min read

Full report

Transcripts



Dr Dolly van Tulleken



Henry Dimbleby



Thank you for listening

Supported by

nesta

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Impact
on **Urban
Health**

Lunch

Enjoy!



Parallel Session 2

13.35-14.40

Linking up national 'plan' with local action

Facilitated by: Dr Gavin Breslin
(PHIRST/Queens University) and
Kate King (OHID South East)



Fit for the Future: 10 Year Plan Obesity Focus

- Aims to 'launch a moonshot to end the obesity epidemic' with bold, systemic interventions
- ✓ Restricting junk food advertising to children, ban high caffeine energy drinks under 16s, and giving local councils stronger powers to block new fast-food outlets near schools
- ✓ Uplifting the Soft Drinks Industry Levy rate and consulting on its reform to drive further reformulation (e.g., ending milk-based drink exemption, reducing sugar thresholds)
- ✓ Updating school food standards legislation, to ensure all schools provide healthy, nutritious food



Fit for the Future: 10 Year Plan Obesity Focus

- ✓ Restoring the value of Healthy Start (2026 – 2027) Pregnant women and children aged one or older but under four will each receive £4.65 per week, and children under one year old will receive £9.30 every week
- ✓ Extend entitlement to free school meals. From the start of the 2026/27 school year, DfE will extend entitlement to include all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit
- **New** mandatory health-food sale reporting and targets for all large food companies
- Expanding NHS access to breakthroughs in weight loss medication (e.g., GLP-1 receptor agonists), negotiating "pay for impact on health outcomes" partnerships with industry
- ✓ Building on the success of the NHS DWMP expanding this to 125,000 more people per year – doubling reach
- ✓



Physical activity in the 10 Year Health Plan

**FIT FOR
THE FUTURE**

10 Year
Health Plan
for England



New health reward scheme to incentivise healthier choices

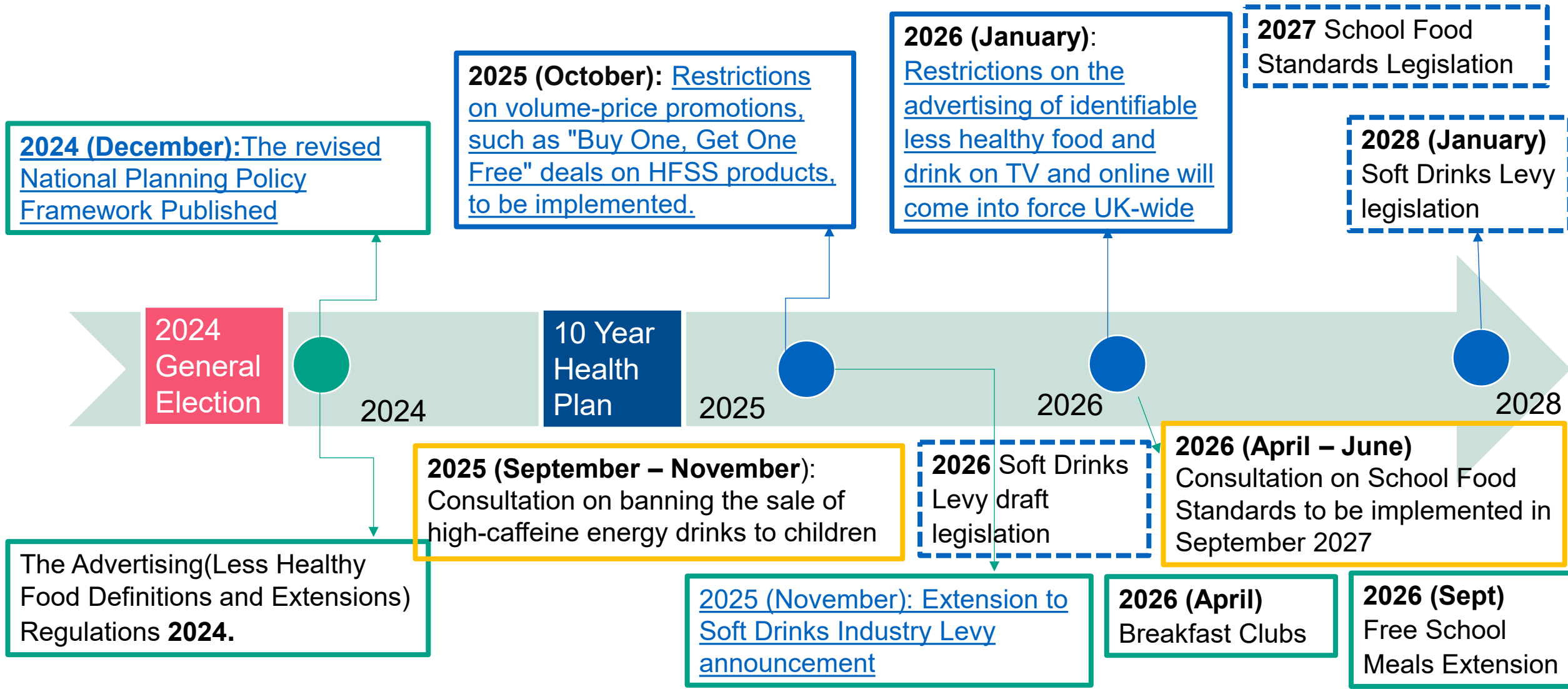
☒ Place-based approach to physical activity

☒ New partnerships on school sport and local health plans

Campaign to motivate millions to move more on a regular basis

☒ Support for active travel - infrastructure and initiatives

Legislation to improve the food and drink environment - Timeline



Questions for us to answer

- 1. What elements of the national 'Fit for the Future: 10 Year Plan' and related policy at the national level are viewed as a support to implementing a local WSA?*
- 2. Are there activities or actions that need more policy level support?*
- 3. Are there parts of government policy or action beyond DHSC that are currently missing?*
- 4. What might local authorities most usefully ask of our national policy makers to help drive real systems change?*

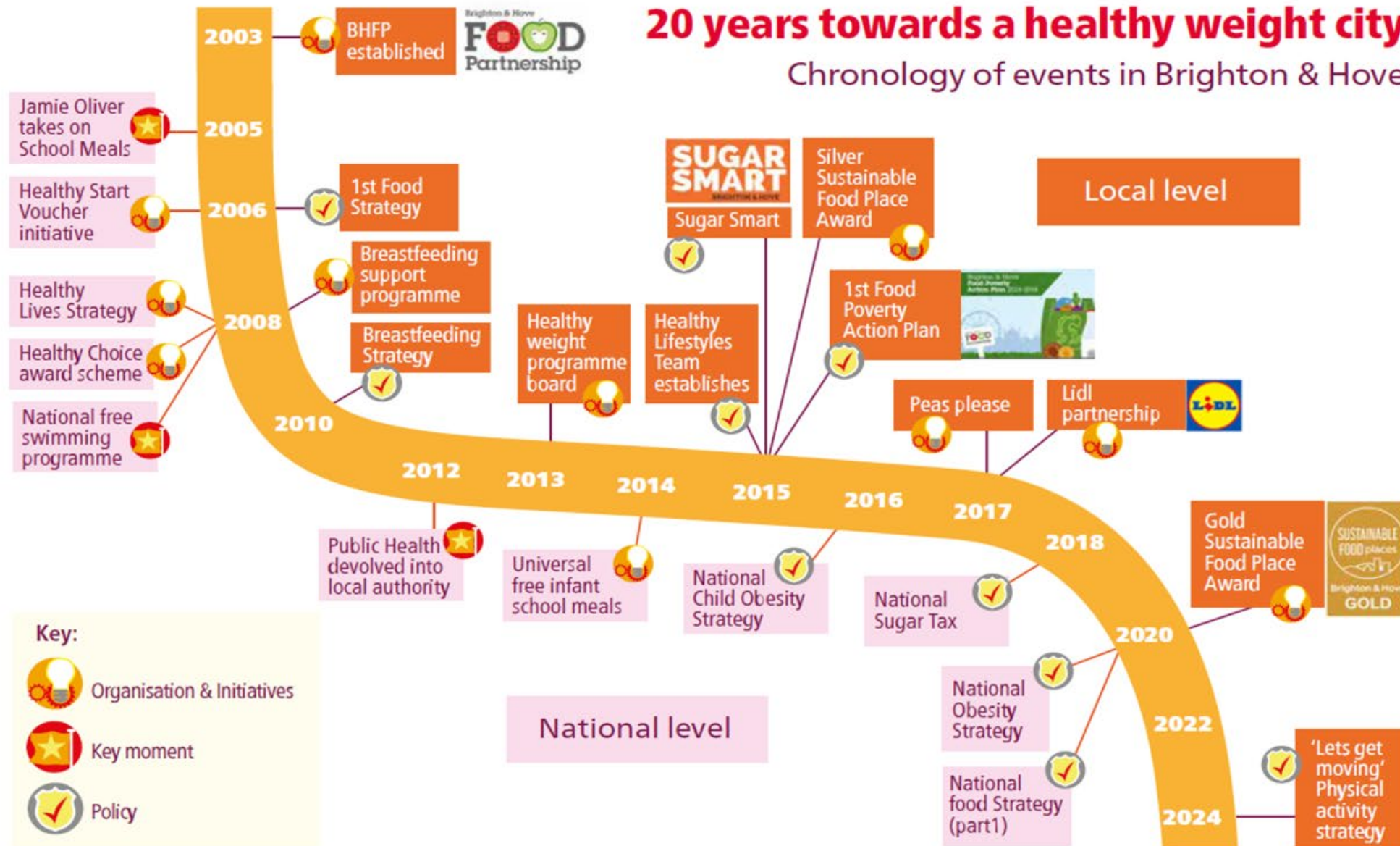


Brighton and Hove Whole City Healthy Weight

Katie Cuming and Martina Gregori, Brighton and Hove City Council

20 years towards a healthy weight city

Chronology of events in Brighton & Hove



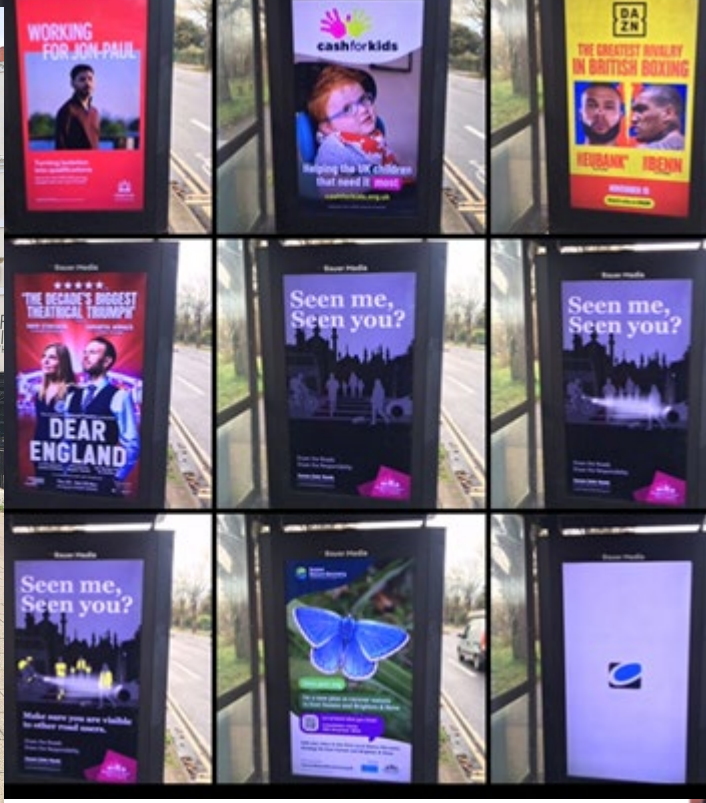
Local to National – achievements for a whole system healthy weight city

- Food
 - Brighton and Hove Food Strategies and Food poverty action plans
 - Silver and Gold Sustainable food city 1st nationally
 - Brighton and Hove Food Partnership key partner
 - Sugar Smart city and launched first voluntary sugary drinks tax nationally, SDIL announcement in 2016, now expanding SDIL and proposed ban on high energy drinks 10 YP
 - Veg and peas please – incl with LIDL



Case study: BHCC

A ban on advertising high energy drinks and fast food on council owned advertising space was voted on by council leaders in an all-party notice of motion in 2022. In December 2023, the council approved the introduction of a restriction on advertising of high fat salt sugar items on council bus stop and other advertising spaces.



Plans for McDonald's drive-through in Hove refused

6TH MAY BUSINESS PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT BRIGHTON AND HOVE

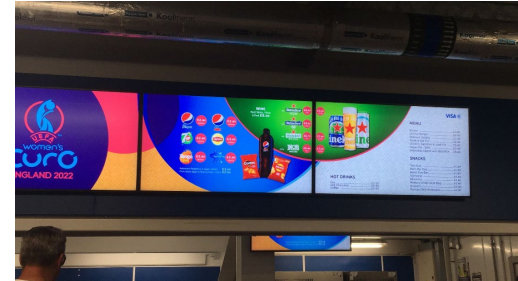


Proposed Mcdonald'S Old Shoreham Road From Planware Statement



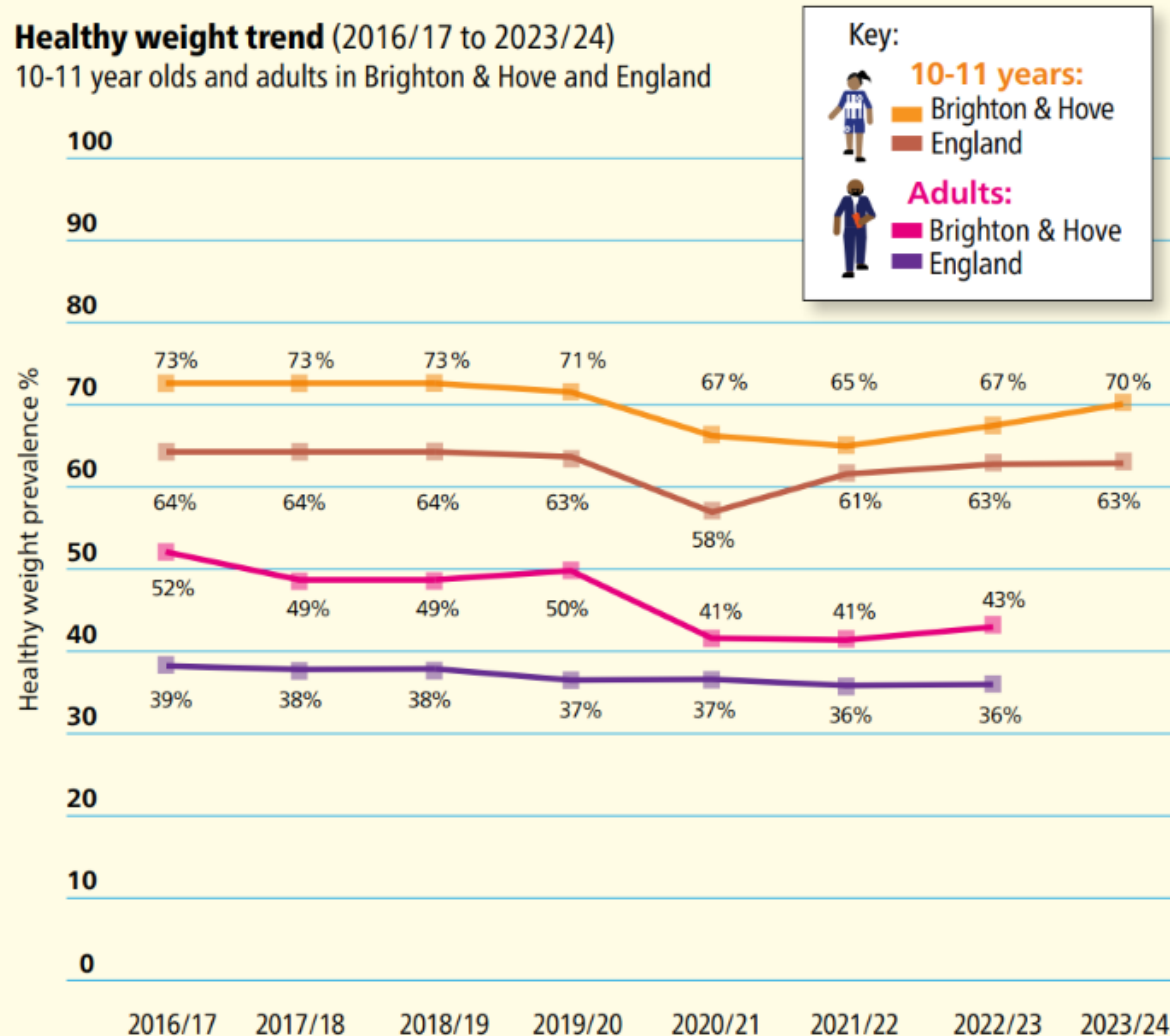
National policies to complement local needs and innovative action

- HFSS 10YP update NPM, *restriction in junk food marketing*
- McDonalds drive through unanimously refused this week / NPPF 10YP
- School food standards and early years – *10YP adds leverage – already have Good Food Standards developed with procurement and partners*
- National to local networks essential but have to recognise local ideas and solutions
- B and Hove pilot for DEFRA public sector food procurement
- Relationship with sponsorship / marketing incl WEUROS and WRWC need national action
- Challenge of healthy nutrition accreditation for >2000 food businesses – Healthy Choice, HAF, breakfast clubs and more...



Bucking the trend..

Healthy weight trend (2016/17 to 2023/24)
10-11 year olds and adults in Brighton & Hove and England



Healthy weight prevalence % ⁴



80% of 4 to 5 year olds are a healthy weight



70% of 10 to 11 year olds are a healthy weight



43% of adults are a healthy weight**

What have we achieved:

- Lower childhood obesity rates than many areas around the country over a number of years – in 2023 our year 6 children had the sixth highest levels of healthy weight in the country (70% compared to 63% nationally)
- The highest levels of physical activity and lowest levels of physical inactivity in the country for adults and the highest levels of physical activity for children according to the Active Lives Survey (2023)
- Silver and Gold Sustainable Food City award (the first in the country at both levels)
- Developed Sugar Smart as a concept in 2015, introducing a local voluntary sugary drinks tax, which influenced the introduction of the national sugar drinks industry levy, announced in 2016



- High levels of active travel, with one in three adults the highest proportion of residents travelling actively to work on at least three days a week nationally in 2019/20.
- One of the highest breastfeeding rates in the country with 75% of babies breastfeeding at 6 to 8 weeks, compared to 53% nationally in 2023/4.



Examples of our local work and report....

School environment

Parks and free swimming

Holiday Activities and Food programme
and Healthy Choice Awards



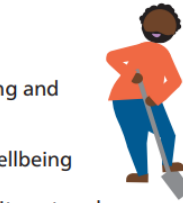
Free swimming



Key themes from the workshops

Starting well

- Education setting and learning
- Psychological wellbeing
- Social/Community networks
- Exercise/Transport/Infrastructure
- Family networks
- Lifestyle
- Food culture
- Sustainability
- Information sharing
- Life course



Healthy environments

- Food industry
- Health and social care industry
- Cultural assets
- Natural capital
- Accessible exercise
- Economically disadvantaged
- Transport
- Cost of living crisis
- Working conditions
- Housing



A Recipe for a Healthy Weight School:

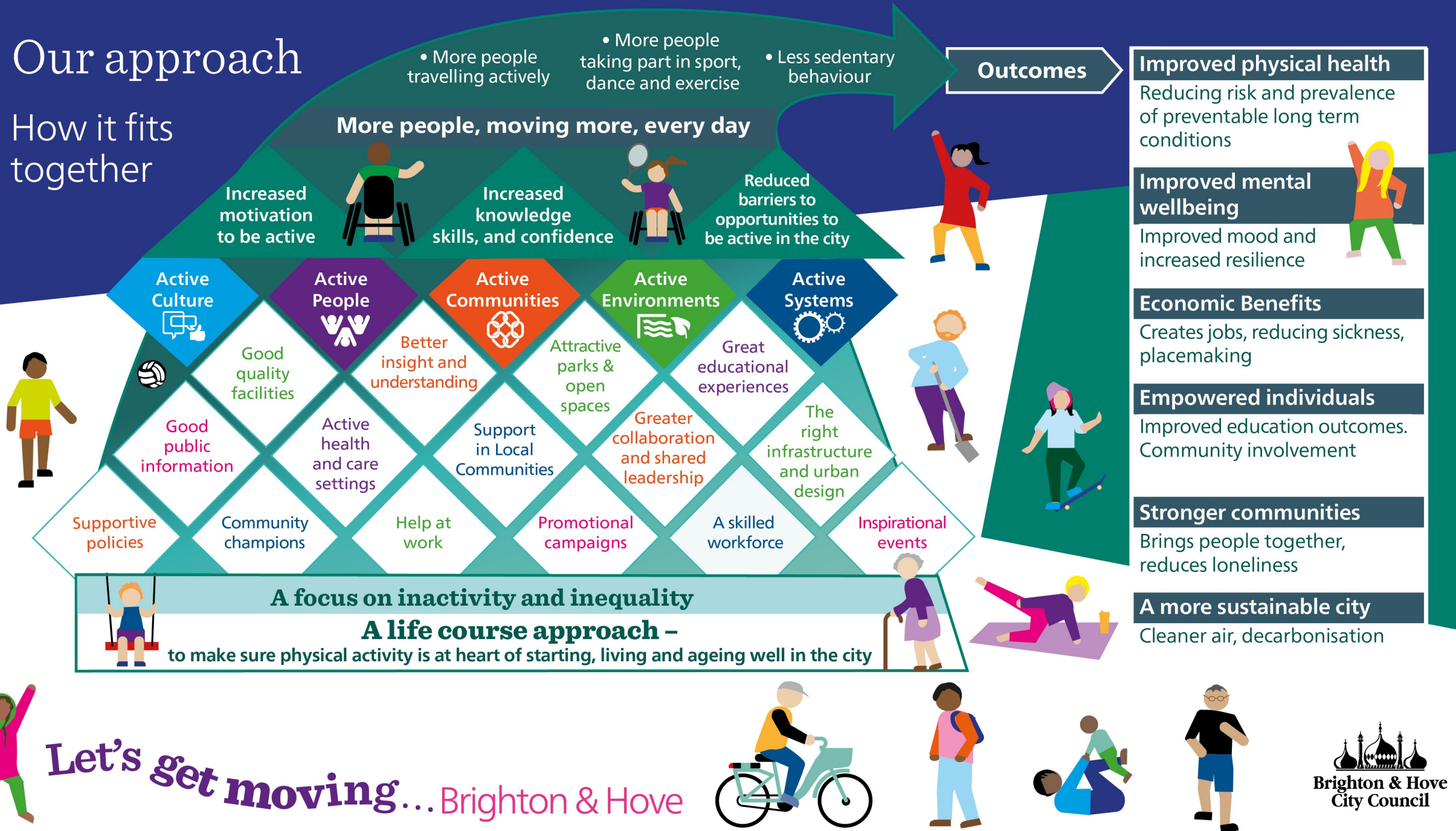
- ✓ Leadership from senior leadership team
- ✓ Active travel to and from school (school streets) and Bike Ability
- ✓ Active 60
- ✓ Active lessons, learning and teaching time
- ✓ Daily mile or equivalent
- ✓ Optimal school lunch environment – high free school meal take-up
- ✓ Water bottles and water fountains
- ✓ Healthy lunchbox and snacks policy – including after school clubs
- ✓ Healthy choice breakfast club with activities
- ✓ Play, playground equipment and activities including green spaces and
- ✓ Policies including fundraising and Parent Teachers Association (PTA)
- ✓ Consider the shops and businesses on the way home (include ice-cream vans outside school gates)



Primary schools

Our approach

How it fits together



Themes



- Not one size fits all but need national commitment and leadership
- Long term local commitment and WSA – 20 years +
- Committed partners including CVS and politicians, council teams
- Healthy Weight Programme Board and local leadership
- Waiting for the right moment and taking opportunity e.g. HFSS
- Level playing fields, not just local areas having to innovate, monitor and fight every battle
- Current financial challenge



Link to WSO Film

[Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2024 - Whole City
Healthy Weight](#)

Whole Systems Approach to Obesity in Medway



**Medway Physical
Activity Alliance**



HEALTHY WEIGHT NETWORK TIMELINE

2019

The structure of the Healthy Weight Network was formed to include infant feeding, food and physical activity.

During Covid, Medway Public Health provided emergency food support to 1000's of residents, from this the Medway Food Partnership was developed to address food across the system.

2021

The first online meetings of the Physical Activity Alliance took place. Today the alliance has over 400 members.

A three-year programme began in collaboration with the Soil Association to work with schools to adopt a whole school approach to food and achieve the Food for Life award.

2020

2022

2023

In 2023 the Medway Food Partnership were successful in their application to become a sustainable food place and went on to receive the Bronze award in October 2024.

A five-year Infant feeding strategy was agreed comprising of six goals to achieve to ensure every parent and child receive a seamless journey through anti natal and postnatal services.

Across the groups the Healthy Weight Network connects with over 550 people across the private, public, voluntary, education and healthcare sectors spanning over 200 separate organisations.

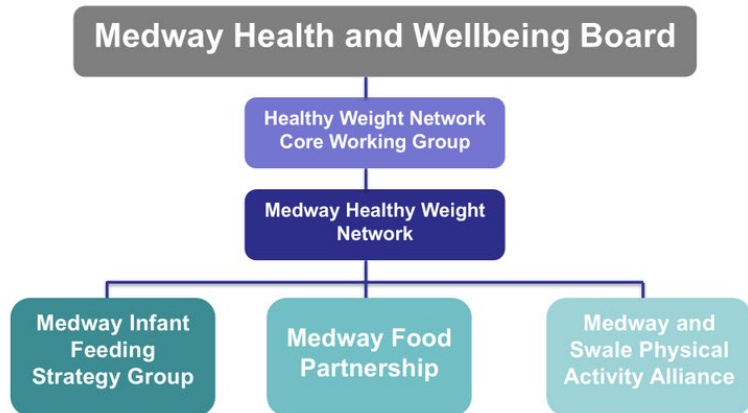
2024

2025

healthyweightnetwork@medway.gov.uk



Medway Accountability



**A BETTER
MEDWAY**
Easier ways to be healthy

Other work across the system includes

Medway Council adopting changes to their advertising and sponsorship policy to restrict the advertising of foods High in Fat, Salt and Sugar (HFSS)

Changes to Hot Food take away policy to restrict new openings in areas of 10% > Year 6 Obesity prevalence

Medway Food Strategy 2024 - 2030

5 Year Child Obesity Plan - 2024 to 2029

Research began in early 2026 into uptake of free and paid school meals

2026 Food Ladders initiative and commissioning of community pantry

Community Growing

School Streets

Medway Local Plan 2041

WSO Dashboard

Sport England Place Partnerships

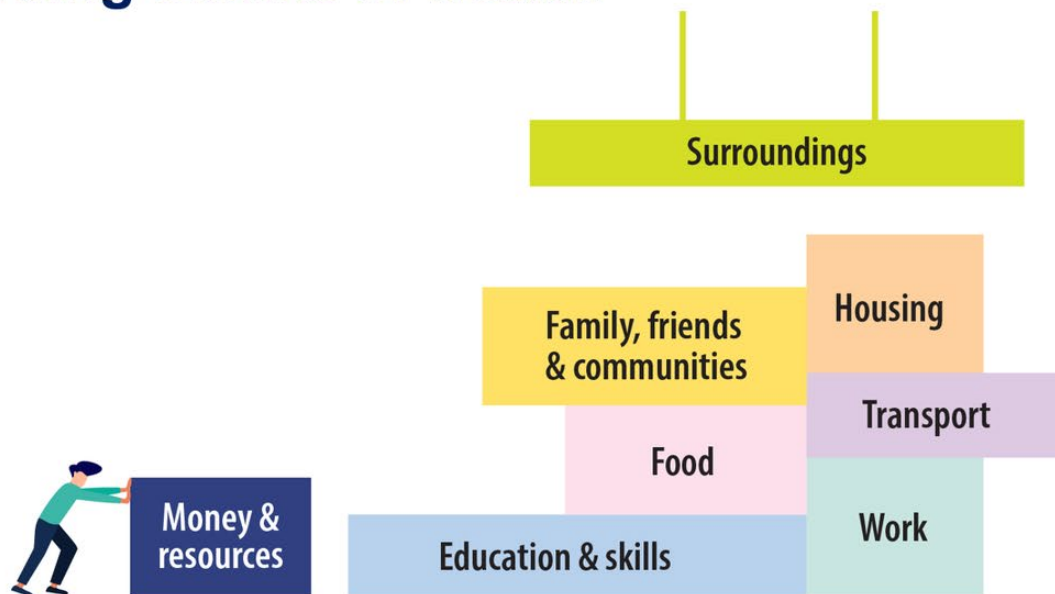


Whole System Obesity Officer Role



Wider determinants of Health
Healthy Places and Communities
Team

Building blocks of health



Source: The Health Foundation





Our 10-year ambition for Medway

In ten year's time, Medway will

- ▣ Halve the gap in life expectancy between Medway and England.
- ▣ Halve the gap in life expectancy between the best and worst-off areas in Medway.
- ▣ Halve the gap in healthy life expectancy between Medway and England.



In March 2026 the Institute for Health Equality (IHE) published a report setting out recommendations for how Medway can achieve its goal of becoming a Marmot Place.

NEET has been identified as first focus with first summit in April 2026

Marmot Places look to improve the health of their communities following the 8 principles. The 8 principles are grounded in over 4 decades of research from Professor Sir Michael Marmot.

The 8 principles are:

- give every child the best start in life
- **enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives**
- create fair employment and good work for all
- ensure a healthy standard of living for all
- create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities
- strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention
- tackle racism, discrimination and its outcomes
- pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.





Dr Justin Varney-Bennett

Whole System Approaches
to Weight in a Globally
Diverse World



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Whole System Approaches to Weight in a Globally Diverse World

Dr Justin Varney-Bennett
Regional Director of Public Health (South West)



England



Credit: Yvan Fabing



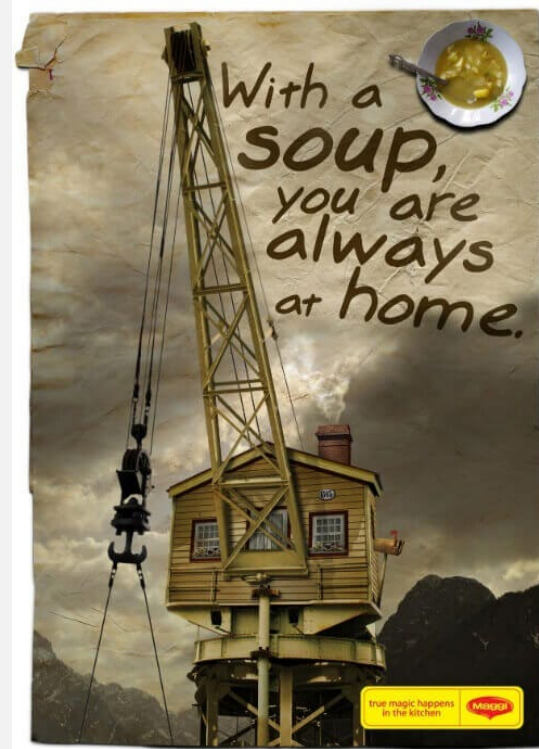
What is your favourite food?



What form of physical activity is 'normal' for you ?



What is your idea of a beautiful body shape?



Thinking about Equality & Diversity Communities

Place

Communities identified by the geographical place they live, work or study in, e.g. local authority

Identity

Communities identified by aspects of identity, e.g. protected characteristics

Experience

Communities identified by shared common experiences e.g. homelessness, in contact with justice system, sex workers, diabetics

Deprivation

Communities defined by levels of deprivation and poverty which may be linked and layered with other three communities



Culture context of dietary decisions

holiday food traditions from some European countries



Lebkuchen



bûche de Noël



Christmas pudding



turrón



pandoro farcito



bolo rei



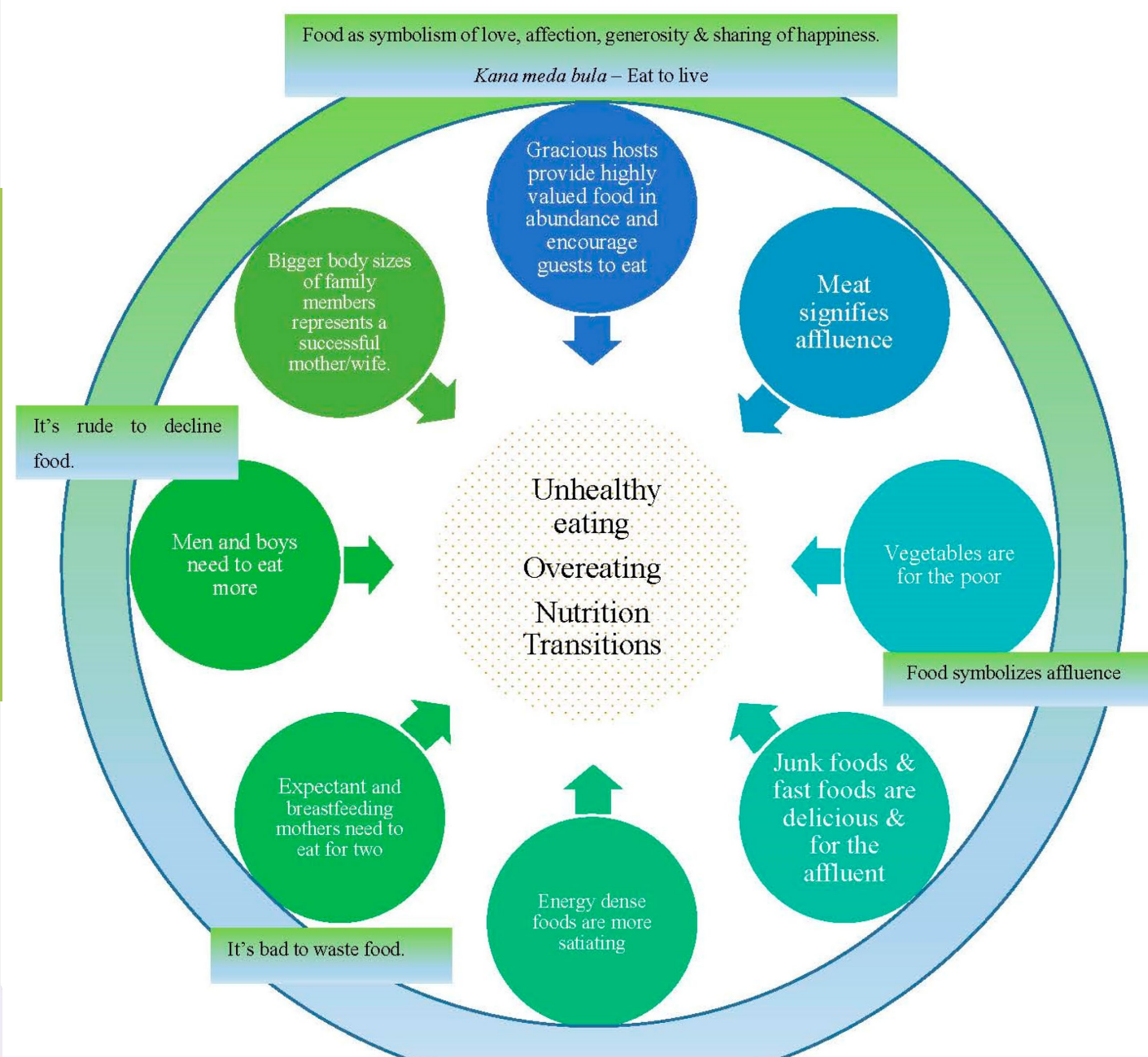
aguonų pienas
su kūčiukais



ris-à-la-mande



EUFIC - European Food Information Council



Buksh, S.M.; de Wit, J.B.F.; Hay, P. Sociocultural Influences Contribute to Overeating and Unhealthy Eating: Creating and Maintaining an Obesogenic Social Environment in Indigenous Communities in Urban Fiji. *Nutrients* **2022**, *14*, 2803. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu14142803>

Culturally Intelligent Eating Guidance

There are more than 100 food-based dietary guidelines available to view on the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) website from countries across the world including: 11 in Africa, 18 in Asia and the Pacific, 34 in Europe, 29 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 6 in the Near East, 2 in North America.

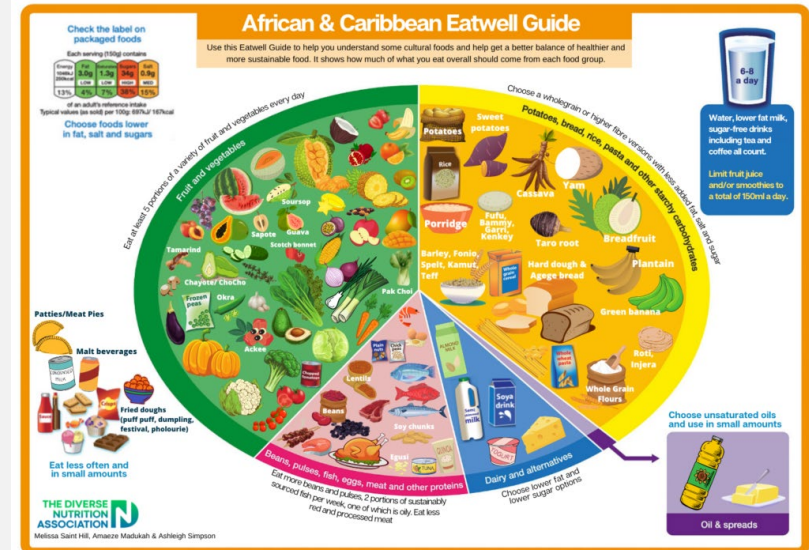
When exploring guidance from around the world, it was noted that graphics and visuals are often the most recognisable elements of national food-based dietary guidelines.

In a survey of 389 people in the West Midlands, commissioned by Birmingham City Council, and led by the Diverse Nutrition Association found that 31% of respondents ate food from their culture every day and a further 44% said 1-2 times a week. Further focus group exploration highlighted the need for guides to include culturally and religiously appropriate foods.

[Diverse, healthy and sustainable eating guidance | Food system projects | Birmingham City Council](#)



[The South Asian Eatwell Guide • MyNutriWeb](#)



[African and Caribbean Eatwell Guide - Welcome to The Dekeyser Group Practice](#)

Cultural Context of Physical Activity

Much of our health improving physical activity is through utility based every day activity, i.e. short trips for work, education or shopping and informal play/recreational activity.



Physical Inactivity In Jamaica

Introduction

Regular physical activity ("PA") can reduce health risks.¹ In 2020/21, only 55.1% of Black individuals did more than 150mins of moderate PA a week in England, compared to 67.9% of White British individuals.² This figure of 'Black' individuals encompasses multiple culturally-different communities with varying reasons for inactivity.³ As the West Midlands is home to 18.4% of all Jamaican nationals in England, this poster investigate the context of PA in Jamaica, in order to improve PH intervention for citizens in Birmingham with heritage and cultural links to Jamaica.

Aims

- To improve engagement with PH interventions
- To reduce and prevent inactivity in citizens with heritage and cultural links to Jamaica living in Birmingham

Objectives

- To understand rates and factors influencing inactivity in Jamaica
- To map and evaluate the relevant policies and PH interventions to promote PA in Jamaica
- To reflect on the implications for PA interventions direct at individuals with heritage and cultural links to Jamaica in Birmingham

Methodology

Identified key sources: GOV.UK, Jamaican Gov website, Jamaican Information Service, websites of relevant ministries, Regional Health Zones websites, Web of Science

Searched key terms: "physical activity", "inactivity", "exercise"

Included: Jamaican populations, non-

Key Statistics

	Jamaica 2016/17 ⁵	West Midlands 2020/21 ²
% inactive*	82%	46.9%
% overweight & obese †	54%	68.6%

*WOMEN are more affected by NCDs than men

In Jamaica, 8.4% are estimated to be dying because of inactivity⁶

Barriers to ↑ PA In Jamaica

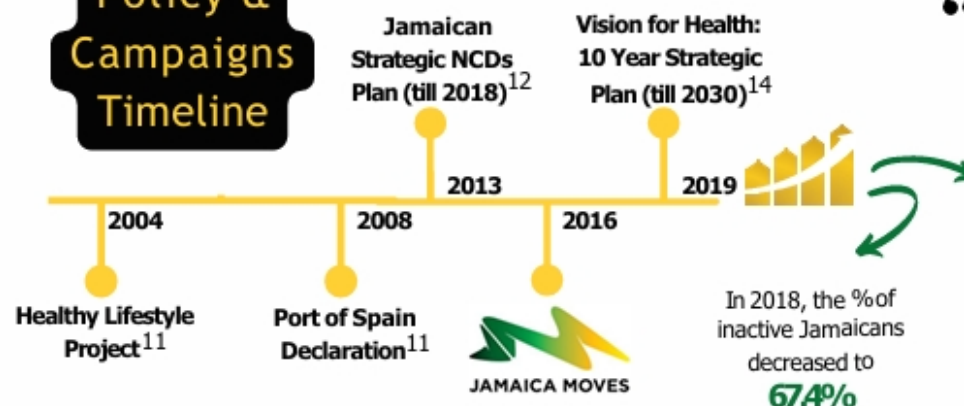
Cultural perceptions:

- Women are empowered by a societal preference for bigger, confident women (locally termed 'Fluffy') and may feel less compelled to exercise⁷
- Avoidance of sweating (women)⁸
- PA is an individual's responsibility⁵
- Health myths e.g. diabetes can't be prevented if you're already at risk⁵

Lack of accessible, active infrastructure:⁹

- political prioritisation of road development
- poor oversight of open space housing requirements
- risk of crime unfavourable for pedestrians
- unsafe cycling in traffic
- lack of shade as trees removed for roads
- low socioeconomic status lack political voice ∴ facilities far away or inaccessible
- lack of showering facilities at workplaces

Policy & Campaigns Timeline



Public Opinion of PH Interventions¹⁶

- 35% participation rate
- 144% said it positively impacted their lifestyle
- 51.6% said it had no impact on their lifestyle

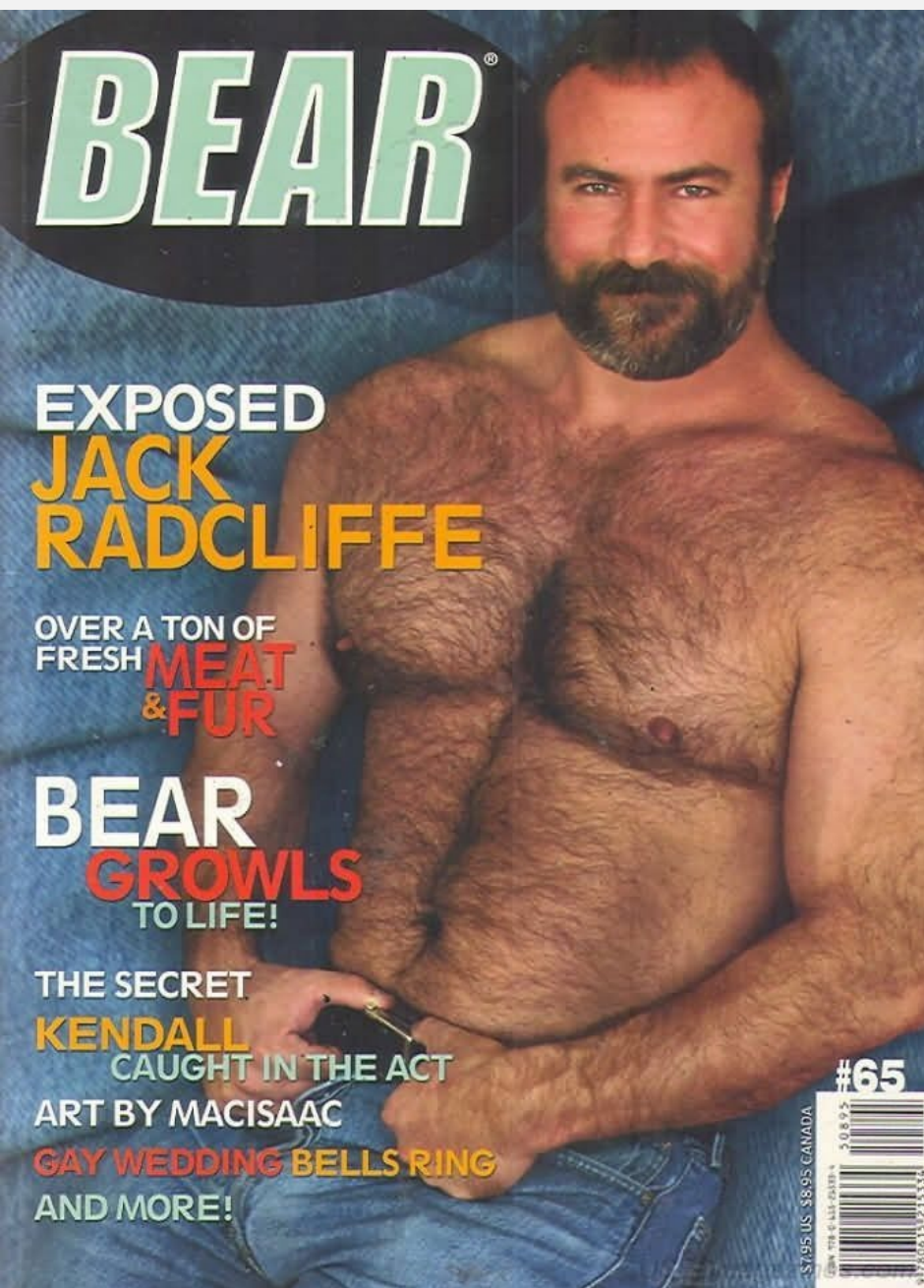
WHO Model of Interventions



A Successful Case Study: A Rural Jamaican Church Intervention¹⁸

- Faith leaders were supported & led a health needs assessment
- Community designed their own tailored interventions
- Trust & mutual understanding built over time
- Ownership of intervention built capacity & bred sustainability





Weight as an aspect of cultural identity & value

Bears have been an identified community within gay culture since the 1960s, typically gay or bisexual men with a large build and/or body hair. Bear culture is a well established sub-culture with dedicated social clubs, venues and media.



Taking a Community of Experience Approach

Inclusion Communities

These communities often share unstable life circumstances and significant multiple challenges and food insecurity is a common theme meaning individuals diets are based on charity, trades and with limited autonomy and choice. Unhealthy diet can compound existing health conditions and challenges leading to unhealthy weight.



Food Insecurity and Food Poverty creates significant physical and emotional impacts on individuals.

The stigma operates at both individual and structural levels and disproportionately impacts on vulnerable communities.

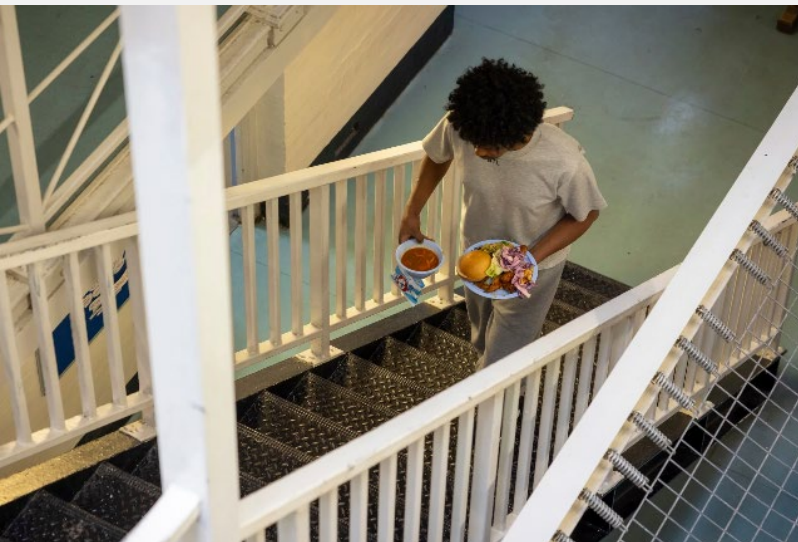
"The first essential component of social justice is adequate food for all mankind. Food is the moral right of all who are born into this world." — **Norman Borlaug**



Obesity & Prisons

The CMO report on the health of people in prison and on probation highlighted that

‘People in prison are at greater risk of being overweight and obese, a risk factor for CVD and many cancers. The exact prevalence of obesity in English prisons is not reported. A study in 1 male prison in Wales found that 81% were overweight or obese. People may arrive in prison overweight and also gain weight in prison as a result consuming excess calories and highly processed foods.’



Prison Rule 24 (1999) says that ‘food provided shall be wholesome, nutritious, well prepared and served, reasonably varied and sufficient in quantity’.

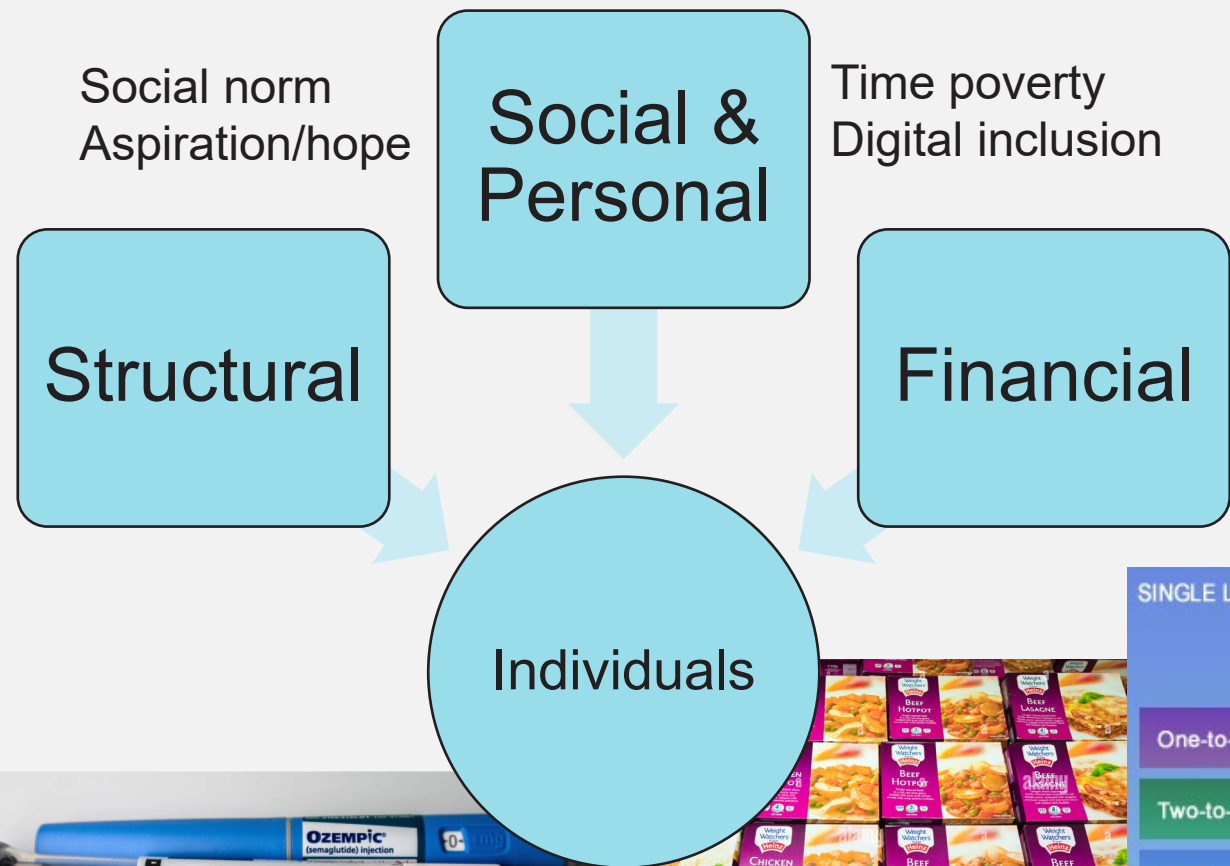
In 2026 a new Prison Food Policy framework came into effect across all prisons in England and Wales. The new framework sets out minimum standards including at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, limit on availability of unhealthy and ultra-processed foods and increasing use of beans and pulses, with a requirement for nutritional analysis and culturally inclusive, seasonal and sustainable menus.

Taking a Community of Deprivation Approach

Access to Healthy Weight Support

Taking a deprivation lens to healthy weight support is a useful perspective to consider equity of access and potential opportunities to overcome these.

Proliferation of high cost food
retail & fast food
Ultra-processed low nutritional
value cheaper food
Local service provision
Access to green space
Access to safe active transport
options



High relative food cost
Recreational activity cost
Transport/Access costs
Opportunity costs e.g.
childcare
Data costs for digital
options



SINGLE LESSONS - price per child	
	30-minute lessons
One-to-one	£55
Two-to-one	£35
Three-to-one	£30
Group	£25

Reflections on Whole System Approaches to Obesity through an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion lens

- Whole system approaches to obesity are not whole system unless they have thoroughly explored the equality, diversity and inclusion perspectives, there are **too many structural barriers** for many communities that have to be overcome without explicit intention.
- **Education is a key area for action** – how do really develop culturally competent approaches for policy makers and professionals?
- **Working with communities is key**, approaching with cultural humility and working with communities is fundamental to understanding how they make choices. **Lateral approaches keep doors open** e.g. workplace health and wellbeing can be a powerful route to some communities.
- **Focused approaches in narrow targeted way** may help explore methodology for consistency at scale

Feeding Chair
Jade de Monserrat



Plenary of parallel sessions



What comes next?



Thank you!