

Healthy weight strategy 2022-27

Improving residents health together

Health Improvement

Southwark Public Health Division

April 2022

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We want to increase opportunities for residents to be healthy and improve the environments we work, study and grow up in

INTRODUCTION

Southwark's 'Healthy Weight Strategy 2016-2021: Everybody's Business' focused on a life-course approach for prevention and treatment. The new strategy will build on the successes of the Healthy Weight strategy, and the work that has taken place regionally and nationally to reduce childhood obesity.

To improve the health and wellbeing of residents we need to address the **inequalities** and vulnerabilities that exist in the borough. It is now more important than ever that Southwark tackles obesity, with excess weight shown to worsen the outcomes from coronavirus.

Southwark's Healthy Weight Strategy is a **partnership** between Southwark Council and the South East London Clinical Commissioning Group (Southwark).

The strategy examines what we know about obesity and the associated inequalities, nationally and in Southwark. The strategy reviews the services and interventions within the borough and sets out ambitions for the next five years.

The strategy adopts a whole systems approach, working with partners across the borough's healthy weight network to deliver effective prevention and treatment services and interventions.

References

1. National obesity strategy. Gov.uk July 2020
2. London's child obesity taskforce vision. GLA. 2019

55 sites signed up to the Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme

Everybody's Business

Southwark Healthy Weight Strategy 2016-2021

*Data is from April 2016 to March 2020



1,954 residents completed an Exercise on Referral programme

Introduced nursery meals in April 2019, funded food for **2,817** children in the first year



1,152 Cook and Eat workshops delivered

104 schools registered with the Healthy Schools London scheme, **25** received gold, **70** bronze and **45** silver

12,650,200 Free Healthy School Meals delivered over the five years

Level 2 UNICEF

Breastfeeding Baby Friendly Initiative



Supported all schools to become **Water Only**



Our new **Advertising Policy**, bans adverts high in fat, salt and sugar



Launched the **Sport and Physical Activity Strategy and Movement Plan**



234 families completed the Alive N Kicking programme

Healthier **Dessert Policy**



Plans to prevent new hot food takeaways opening within 400m of schools



Fizz Free Feb has run for **3** years, international campaign, **25** councils across the country have supported it



Awarded the Good Food for London **Most Improved Borough** Award



463



signed up to the Online Healthy Weight training. Developed five different training programmes

Launched the food security action plan: **Fairer Food Southwark**

Adult Tier 2 and 3

established

124 professionals participating in implementation groups



3rd place in the London Food Link's Beyond the Food Bank

Southwark's Healthy Weight Strategy has been produced in consultation with partners, stakeholders and residents

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Southwark's new Healthy Weight Strategy is a partnership between Southwark council and the South East London Clinical Commissioning Group (Southwark).

The strategy and action plan has not been produced in silo, but through comprehensive workshops and conversations with:

- Residents (two engagement days at East Street market interviewing a total of 63 residents)
- NHS colleagues and partners
- The Healthy weight network
- The Southwark Food Action Alliance
- Council colleagues, including from Transport, Early Help, planning and Leisure
- Local organisations and charities, including Guy's and St Thomas' Trust, Impact on Urban Health and Bite Back 2030

The strategy reflects on the learnings and successes from the 2016-2021 Healthy Weight Strategy: Everybody's Business, and builds on national and regional approaches to tackling obesity and supporting residents to live healthier lives. This includes:

- The national obesity strategy
- The vision of London's child obesity taskforce

References

1. National obesity strategy. Gov.uk July 2020
2. London's child obesity taskforce vision. GLA. 2019

Obesity amongst children is falling, but Southwark still has one of the highest rates in London and England

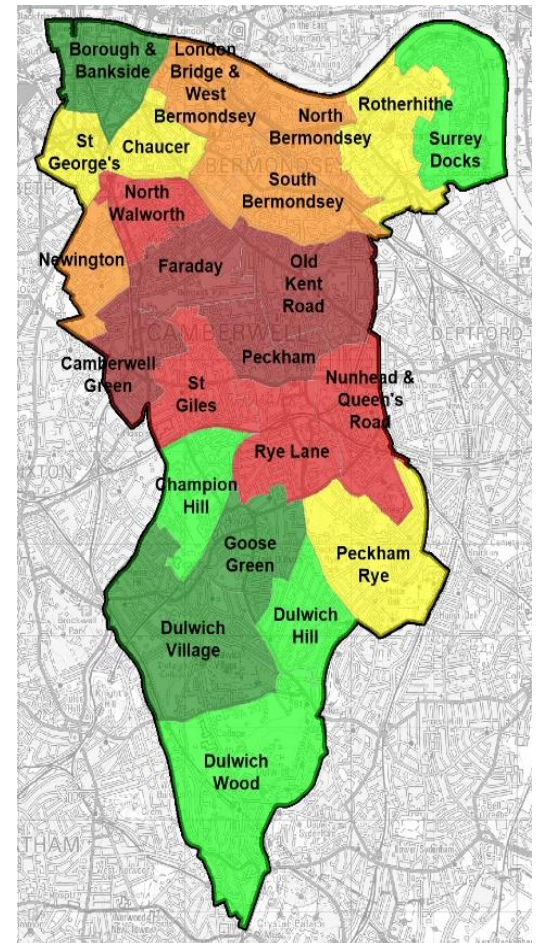
PREVALENCE OF OBESITY

In Southwark, 25.8% of children are overweight or obese by the time they start primary school. This increases to 41.8% by Year 6.

In Southwark, 51.1% of adults are overweight or obese. The rate of excess weight amongst adults in Southwark has remained fairly consistent over the last four years.

There are **inequalities** within obesity rates in Southwark which will be the focus for each of the 5 population groups selected to be prioritised in this strategy:

- **Ethnicity:** Children from black ethnic groups are significantly more likely to be obese compared to other ethnic groups. Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups are more likely to experience multiple socio-economic inequalities, all of which lead to greater challenge in healthy weight, and COVID-19 has exacerbated these long-standing inequalities.
- **Deprivation:** More deprived communities have higher levels of excess weight and obesity.
- **Geographically:** The highest levels of excess weight and obesity amongst children are consistently seen in Camberwell Green, Newington and Old Kent Road. Southwark's 'obesity corridor' has been mapped.



References

1. PHE Fingertips
2. Public Health England, 2020. Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups.

Residents have helped to inform the new healthy weight strategy and set actions for the next five years

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT [2/2]

The strategy is informed by extensive engagement findings from Social Life, Southwark Stands Together, South London Listens and various round tables. Specifically, there were two engagement days held at East Street market (September 2020 and November 2021), carrying out a total of 62 interviews with local residents and families.

Residents talked about their experiences of weight management and how we can create healthy environments locally and provide support for achieving a healthy weight.

Being a **healthy weight is important** to residents, recognising the impact weight can have on their quality of life, wellbeing and appearance, as well as listing many health conditions linked to obesity.

Demographics of the residents who participated:

- Ages from 16 – 75+ years old
- 79% of residents were women
- 54% of residents were Black African

The East Street work highlighted the importance of tackling language barriers and providing culturally sensitive services.

Biggest challenges to being a healthy weight that were highlighted by residents:

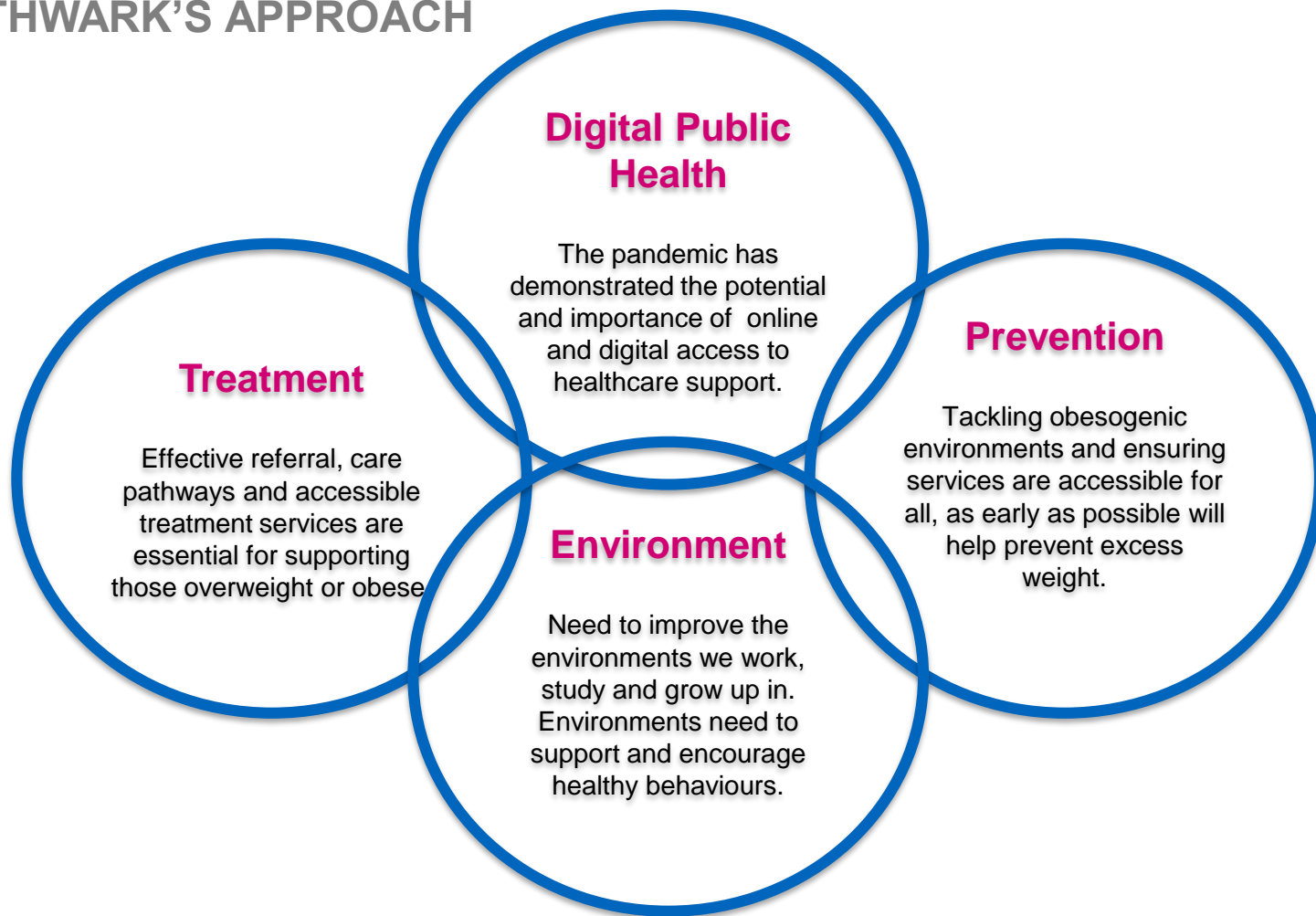
- **Access to food:** unhealthy food is cheaper and more accessible. *'Chicken and chips are everywhere'. 'You can buy a cheeseburger for only £1'.*
- **Physical activity:** Single parents, or parents with young children struggle to find the time

References

1. National obesity strategy. Gov.uk July 2020
2. London's child obesity taskforce vision. GLA. 2019

The strategy adopts a whole systems approach, working with partners to address inequalities

SOUTHWARK'S APPROACH



To address inequalities, five population groups in Southwark will be prioritised

PRIORITY GROUPS

To support a healthy weight for all residents and to address inequalities, the Healthy Weight strategy sets ambitions and actions for each of the following five population groups:

1. Maternity and early years
2. Children and young people
3. Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups
4. People experiencing food insecurity
5. Men aged 45 years and above

While there is limited data on disability and obesity, it is known that people with **disabilities and learning difficulties** are more likely to be obese and have lower rates of physical activity than the general population. Across the five-priority groups, additional consideration will be made to review the evidence locally and ensure that interventions and programmes of support are accessible and meet the needs of residents with disabilities and learning difficulties.

The Healthy Weight strategy will be supported by the Healthy Weight network, with over 100 members to date

GOVERNANCE

- **Southwark's Obesity Taskforce**
 - a small group of colleagues from Public Health and the CCG, who are leading on delivering and implementing the action plan;
 - will meet every eight weeks to review progress;
 - will report to the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- The Taskforce will replace the Healthy Weight Strategy Implementation group. Membership of the implementation group has grown over the last two years and therefore will become part of a wider network.
- **The Healthy Weight network**
 - Network meetings will take place twice a year
 - opportunity to showcase work across the borough, provide updates on the strategy and opportunities for networking across the different teams and organisations in Southwark.



The healthy weight action plan will be developed annually, to best meet the needs of residents

STRATEGY AMBITIONS & ACTION PLAN

The healthy weight strategy sets **key ambitions for the next five years:**

- Reduce excess weight amongst all residents
- Accelerate the reduction in childhood excess weight and obesity we have achieved in recent years
- Positively reduce the gap in obesity rates between lower-income and more affluent areas within Southwark.

The healthy weight **action plan will be developed annually, setting the next steps and key actions for meeting the strategy's ambitions.**

- Producing the action plan annually will ensure that actions are meeting the changing needs and priorities of Southwark's residents. Ongoing consultation and focus groups will inform the action plan.
- In April 2022, the new Healthy Weight strategy will be launched with the action plan for the first year (until March 2023). All proposed actions have been plotted on an impact and effort matrix to ensure that the actions are ambitious but achievable.

To address inequalities, five population groups in Southwark will be prioritised

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Appendix

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To address inequalities, five population groups in Southwark will be prioritised

1. MATERNITY & EARLY YEARS

The first few years of a child's life are fundamental for developing good physical activity and can set the foundation for life-long behaviours, preventing children from becoming overweight or obese as adults. Focusing on the early years supports the delivery of the Council's Fairer Future Commitment – **'a great start in life'**.

What is going well?

- Pregnant women and families with young children in Southwark can access healthy foods through the Rose vouchers and through the national Healthy Start vouchers programme
- Support is available to new families through Children's Centres, the Health visiting team and the Community Nutrition and Dietetics Service
- Breastfeeding is promoted across the borough through the Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme

Ambitions

- Increase the recording of weight and the knowledge and confidence of healthcare professionals in discussing healthy weight during pregnancy. By 2027, 75% of all professionals working in maternity settings will have completed the online healthy weight-training module, focusing on excess weight during pregnancy and early years.
- Within the first year of the strategy, the Community Nutrition and Dietetics service will support all children's centres to have adopted a healthy food policy. Over the coming years, the policies will be developed and improved in collaboration with local families and service users. This will ensure that all aspects of the healthy food policy are culturally appropriate and relevant to local families.

To address inequalities, five population groups in Southwark will be prioritised

2. CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Nationally childhood obesity has increased in the last four years, with Southwark having one of the highest rates of childhood obesity in the country. It is crucial that as a borough we put our children's health first and reverse this trend.

What is going well?

- There is a good National Child Measurement Programme offer for families, through the School Nursing team and the Children's weight management programme.
- School meals are improving with the healthier dessert policy and the water-only schools policy. Schools are supporting children to move more through the Daily Mile and engaging in initiatives, such as Beat the Street. Over 100 schools in Southwark are now signed up to Healthy Schools London, with 70 schools receiving the bronze award.
- Children and young people are encouraged to actively travel to and from school with School Street Closures.

Ambitions

- Ensure that a minimum of 90% of schools serving meals that are compliant with the School Food Standards by March 2025, through Southwark's School Meals Transformation Programme.
- Engage with secondary school pupils to gain greater insights into young people's experiences of healthy eating within the borough.
- Deliver insight led interventions and services over the course of the strategy that meet the needs of Southwark's young people.

To address inequalities, five population groups in Southwark will be prioritised

3. BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS

- **In Southwark, children from black ethnic groups are more likely to be obese compared to any other ethnic group. Such trends continue throughout the life course. Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups are more likely to experience multiple challenges, including socio-economic deprivation, poor housing conditions, poorer outcomes, and barriers to accessing services, all of which lead to greater challenge in healthy weight, and COVID-19 has exacerbated these long-standing inequalities¹. We are committing to addressing such inequalities and ensuring that all communities in Southwark are of a healthy weight.**

What is going well?

- The Council have good links with faith and community groups, including through Community Southwark and the Faith and Health network.
- The Community Nutrition and Dietetics team deliver cooking sessions across children's centres, using culturally appropriate recipes.

Ambitions

- Review the accessibility of health interventions for black, Asian and minority ethnic groups and engage with residents to gain greater insights into how best to support black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, including content of interventions and where within communities would be best to deliver healthy weight programmes.
- Increase the availability of health information within communities and in different languages, supported by digital opportunities and programmes, such as the Health Ambassadors. Develop a communications plan within the first six months of the strategy to be delivered throughout the course of the five years.
- Champion the learning from the Southwark Stands Together initiative and be an accelerator programme for inclusion and equality, servicing and representing our diverse residents in reaching and maintaining a healthy weight through culturally appropriate and flexible services.

References

1. Public Health England, 2020. Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups.

To address inequalities, five population groups in Southwark will be prioritised

4. RESIDENTS EXPERIENCING FOOD INSECURITY

Covid-19 has seen a rise in food insecurity, nationally and locally. The first four months of lockdown, March to June 2020, saw a four-fold increase in referrals to food banks in Southwark, compared to the same period in 2019. It is now more important than ever that we make healthy options and opportunities accessible to all.

What is going well?

- Free Healthy School Meals and Free Healthy Nursery Meals ensure that every child has at least one hot meal a day whilst at school.
- COVID-19 has strengthened local partnerships and awareness of food insecurity, with an amazing response from communities and local restaurants to support residents' access food. This has included over the school holidays.
- The Healthy Basket study, completed in February 2020, highlights areas of the borough where healthy food is limited or stocked at unaffordable prices, enabling interventions to be targeted in these wards.

Ambitions

- Increase the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers in Southwark from an average of 60% to 85%, exceeding the Mayor of London's uptake target (80%) for across the capital.
- Develop a nutritional tool for all food hubs to ensure that all food aid meets the Eatwell Guide within the first year of the strategy. Continue to develop and improve the toolkit in collaboration with families and residents, to ensure that the toolkit is culturally appropriate and relevant to food banks.

To address inequalities, five population groups in Southwark will be prioritised

5. MEN AGED 45 YEARS AND ABOVE

Nationally, the proportion of adults who are overweight or obese increases with age. In Southwark, the prevalence of excess weight amongst men aged 45 years and 74 years is the highest of any age group, at 78% of the population. Men in Southwark access less health services than women do. For example, less than 40% of residents referred to the Healthy Lifestyle Hub in the year 2019-20 were male.

What is going well?

- As a result of COVID-19, health programmes which now use an online delivery method, have experienced an increase in males over 45 years old participating.

Ambitions

- Engage with men over 45 years in Southwark to gain a greater understanding of support required, so that interventions and services can be insight led.
- Pilot three different weight management interventions for men over the age of 45 years, with alcohol advice included within all weight management programmes.
- Develop and target innovative online and digital health services to support programme uptake and adherence.