

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE Camden's Healthy Weight Acceleration Plan – Year 1	
REPORT OF Director of Health and Wellbeing	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee	DATE 11 th February 2025
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>Camden developed a Healthy Weight Acceleration Plan in 2024 in response to the health and wellbeing crisis linked to population levels of overweight and obesity. The Plan has a 5-10 year perspective and is overseen by a multi-agency leadership group from across the Council, NHS, Schools, and VCS organisations. The Health and Wellbeing Board is the key oversight group for this Plan, in line with its role in previous years overseeing action on healthy weight.</p> <p>This report sets out the scope, ambition, and progress for the Plan in its first year, drawing on an update that went to the Health and Wellbeing Board on 18th December 2024. The Plan has five starting workstreams, focusing on: Early Years; Schools; Organisations and Place Shaping, Weight Management Services; and Population Groups with greater needs. Significant progress has been made. The systems approach that Camden is taking has been commended by the regional Office for Health Improvement and Disparities.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Piers Simey Deputy Director of Health and Wellbeing London Borough of Camden piers.simey@camden.gov.uk 5 Pancras Square, London N1C 4AG</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>The Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee is asked to:</p>	

- a) Note and comment on the contents of the report; and
- b) Consider further opportunities to progress action on healthy weight in Camden

Signed:



Kirsten Watters, Director of Health and Wellbeing

Date: 30th January 2025

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Camden has an ongoing Healthy Weight Acceleration Plan developed in 2024 in response to the health and wellbeing crisis linked to population levels of overweight and obesity. This crisis continues to have major and sustained impact on residents, communities, health and care services, workplaces, and the economy. Reducing and reversing this impact requires ongoing local/national action on a range of factors, including environmental change, support for healthy behaviours, treatment, and promoting mental wellbeing, drawing together the collective action of a broad range of organisations and sectors. The Plan works alongside Camden's Food Mission which aims to make system changes to enable residents to benefit more from nutritious, affordable, and sustainable food.
- 1.2 Significant recent developments in weight loss drug therapy reinforce the importance of concerted and ongoing preventative action so that fewer people reach the point where treatment needs to be considered. A further challenge linked to these developments is to ensure that those starting treatment have the necessary ongoing support to help them reach and maintain a healthy weight without ongoing medication.
- 1.3 The Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee scrutinises matters relating to health, public health and adult social care, to help improve health and care services, reduce health inequalities and improve the health and care of local residents. The Committee also scrutinises the impact of the Council's own services and of key partnerships (including the Health and Wellbeing Board) on the health of the population. This report gives the Committee an up to date overview of Camden's partnership approach to promoting healthy weight, including action being taken by the NHS, Public Health, and Adult Social Care.
- 1.4 Camden's Health and Wellbeing Board remains the key oversight group for action on healthy weight due to its leadership role, membership, and ability to further drive cross-organisation action across Camden. Action progressed through the Healthy Weight Acceleration Plan takes a population health approach and is directly relevant to the life stages and priorities in Camden's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 1.5 This report includes the summary content of the plan, its five key starting workstreams, and progress made. Members are asked to review the report and to identify further opportunities to take the work further.

2. The population health impact of overweight and obesity – a growing crisis

- 2.1 **Health and Wellbeing Impact on individuals:** There is a growing epidemic of preventable disease and poorer quality of life linked to obesity. People living with obesity may die earlier, with life expectancy reduced by 3-10 years, depending on severity. They are also more likely to have fewer years of healthy life and more preventable health conditions, such as type 2 diabetes,

heart disease, musculoskeletal disorders, respiratory conditions. Obesity is also the second biggest cause of cancers. There are strong two-way links to poorer mental health and quality of life. Stigma and prejudice are also common experiences.

- 2.2 **Trends of prevalence, and impact on the most deprived individuals:** Nationally, levels of overweight and obesity are projected to deepen further, illustrated in analysis by Cancer Research UK. 71% of adults in the UK may be overweight by 2040, a rise from 64% in 2022. By 2040 more than a third of adults (36%) are likely to be obese, with the prevalence of severe obesity expected to double from 3% to 6%. Obesity affects people experiencing higher levels of deprivation the most, with inequalities set to widen further – almost half of people (46%) may be living with obesity by 2040.
- 2.3 **Costs – NHS:** The growing obesity pandemic is costly for services and the economy. For the NHS, in 2022/23 there were more than 1.23 million hospital admissions where obesity was recorded as the primary or secondary diagnosis, an increase of 8% on the previous year. Rates of obesity related hospital admissions in the most deprived areas are more than double those in the least deprived areas. In total the NHS spends around £6.5 billion treating obesity related ill health every year, and the Kings Fund have projected that these costs may rise to £9.7 billion by 2050.
- 2.4 **Costs – social care:** The costs of caring for people with obesity-related long term health conditions have been flagged by the Local Government Association as significant and likely to rise as people live more years in ill health, often with complex needs. Social care needs for people with severe obesity cost more, including housing adaptations, specialised equipment, and care support.
- 2.5 **Costs - workplaces and the economy:** The annual costs of adult obesity to UK society was around £54 billion in 2022, roughly equivalent to 3% of UK GDP. Reductions in workforce productivity and increased use of social care are estimated to cost around £7.5 billion a year.
- 2.6 **Levels in Camden – Children and Young People:** A comprehensive needs assessment has been completed to support the Healthy Weight Acceleration Plan. Among children, data from the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) (2022/2023) shows that nearly one in five (19.1%) pupils in Reception Year were overweight or obese, and this increased to more than one in three (35.9%) by the time pupils reached Year 6. NCMP data also shows that pupils living in the most deprived areas, or those from Asian and Black ethnic groups are more likely to be overweight or obese. Camden's Health-Related Behaviours Questionnaire has highlighted opportunities to improve the nutrition and physical activity levels of young people in Camden, particularly among secondary school aged pupils.
- 2.7 **Levels in Camden – Adults:** Healthy Weight is also of major concern for Camden adults. More than one in three (36%) adults living in Camden are overweight and 17% are living with obesity (Active Lives Survey 2022/2023).

Evidence shows that those from Asian and Black Caribbean backgrounds are more likely to be overweight or obese. Additionally, adults living with learning disabilities are also at higher risk. It is important to note the issue of malnutrition among adults aged over 65, as this can lead to low body weight, impact on long term health conditions, changes in mobility, longer hospital admissions, and can compromise the ability to live independently.

3. Key influences shaping Camden's response to the ongoing obesity crisis – building on previous action and national learning

- 3.1 Camden's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy in 2016 included "Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives" as one of its five priority areas, signalling the need for collective action across the borough to address the complex and widespread causes of obesity. This priority focus enabled progress, for example in early years settings, schools, businesses on the Healthier Catering Commitment, and for local weight management support/prevention programmes, such as the Families for Life healthy eating, physical activity and healthy cooking programme which has grown to benefit around 200 families per year.
- 3.2 In 2019, a series of "Camden Can" conversations were held with partners to further accelerate progress on Camden's whole systems approach. A key aim was to identify realistic and meaningful additional actions across four themes - early years, schools, businesses, and places/housing. An updated action plan was then reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The COVID-19 pandemic and the national response both halted this new drive for further collective progress, and directly contributed to increased levels of overweight and obesity during lockdown and beyond, with further impact on inequalities.
- 3.3 In addition to learning in Camden, a national set of whole systems obesity pilots in local authorities was commissioned in 2013 and completed in 2019. The clear value of local action on obesity was demonstrated through these pilots, alongside national action. A key recommendation of this work is the need to maintain strong partnerships across local organisations over the medium to long term, working to a comprehensive plan featuring a range of effective interventions, with regular feedback on progress and learning. The following six key recommended themes from the national programme have been embedded into Camden's Healthy Weight Acceleration Plan
 - Senior Leadership giving ongoing support
 - Resources identified
 - Set out the local picture with a compelling and up to date narrative
 - Convene stakeholders, understand the system, develop a shared vision
 - Stakeholders prioritise action areas
 - Reflect on progress every year and refresh accordingly
- 3.4 The Plan is informed by a population health prevention approach, supporting action across our population for all to benefit, through to action that can be taken by frontline services to support individuals. It also builds on work initiated by the Health and Wellbeing Department, such as removing

advertising of foods high in fat, sugar, and salt from future advertising contracts for the Camden estate, and stronger stipulations in Camden's planning guidance to resist future fast food takeaways both in school catchments areas and where takeaways are already concentrated.

4. Camden's Healthy Weight Acceleration Plan

- 4.1 In 2023 a renewed collective focus on addressing the obesity crisis in Camden started, developed by the Health & Wellbeing Department alongside the emerging work of Camden's Food Mission. This was to galvanise action on the full breadth of issues linked to healthy weight, across partner organisations, demonstrating Camden's commitment to drawing on all available resources and levers to support residents to have and maintain a healthy weight.
- 4.2 A Healthy Weight Driving Group was convened in January 2024 involving clinical and senior lead/Director representatives from across the Council, NHS, Schools, voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations, and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. Development and implementation of the Healthy Weight Acceleration Plan is overseen by this Group. The Group has met four times, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care.
- 4.3 Camden's Plan has three Aims and two Population Health Goals:

Three aims for the Healthy Weight Acceleration Plan

- To set out the most up to date picture on the obesity crisis, its impact, and the most effective actions
- To support people of all ages to reach and maintain a healthy weight, through a combination of whole system preventative working across the population, and targeted support for individuals
- To ensure greater collective action through organisations and citizens in addressing this growing issue locally, and identify the key areas where concerted national action is needed

Two population health goals

- Increase levels of healthy weight across different population groups, with a priority first focus on early years and primary school aged children
 - Narrow the gap in overweight and obesity between the most and least deprived citizens, by focusing on addressing this inequality in everything that can make a difference
- 4.4 The Plan aligns with a number of key strategies and guidance. These include:
- Camden's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2030

- We Make Camden, Camden’s Food Mission, Camden’s Estates Mission
- Camden’s Education Strategy
- NHS Major Conditions Strategy
- NICE – updated weight management guidance

4.5 Key aspects of the plan include enhancing the environment and services to further support healthy behaviours (such as eating well, being active, and drinking alcohol in moderation), enabling settings such as Family Hubs and schools to make further progress, targeting support for populations with greater needs, providing treatment and support options where clinically needed, and linking to action on addressing the wider determinants of health, including poverty experienced across our communities. The plan will be iterative, experimenting on promising areas of action and building further on successful interventions and policy changes.

4.6 The plan aims to build on progress supporting residents to gain and maintain a healthy weight. But initiatives can have deeper impact and can be better connected. The graphic below shows a range of relevant topics where there has been significant progress already.

Building on what we have – themes & examples

<p>Borough wide food initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant financial support to extend the VCS led Food Partnership into food poverty support & healthy food • Community cooking initiatives onto estates • Food growing opportunities 	<p>Moving more programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive offer for schools & young people – targeted & universal programmes • Leisure centre venues • Behaviour change programmes linked to NHS • Rehab programmes 	<p>Healthy Weight Treatment services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS Low Calorie diet programme • Medication (developing area) • NHS led tier 3 multidisciplinary support (developing) • Bariatric Surgery (tier 4)
<p>Action in the early years & wider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Hubs development work • Breastfeeding support • Little steps to Healthy Lives • Staff training on effective support • Families for life programme • Childrens centres 	<p>Whole School Approach to Food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending Healthy Schools • Nutritious Food at school – Breakfast, Breaks, Lunch – free school meals to all at primary school • Holiday Activity & Food Programme 	<p>Tackling Poverty – underpinning theme</p>
<p>Action on the environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resisting fast food takeaways • Advertising of food high in fat, sugar and salt • Active travel improved routes • Developer contributions • Parks for Health 	<p>Behavioural Support Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiered services for CYP • More Life for adults • Arsenal in the Community for men • NHS Digital programme • NHS Health Checks • Diabetes Prevention Programme 	<p>Mental Health & Wellbeing – underpinning theme</p>
<p>Food Manufacturing & Marketing - national advocacy</p>		

Camden

4.7 The Healthy Weight Driving Group reviewed options for workstreams, followed by a survey to members. Considerations included the importance of the issues/needs, if key leads could be identified, resources in place, and working across organisations. Five workstreams were agreed in April 2024:

Workstream 1 - Early Years

- including training all frontline staff to enable effective support, and clear onward pathways to access further support

Workstream 2 - Schools

- substantial capital improvement programme for school dining/eating areas in secondaries
- further progress on Healthy Schools, improving food & nutrition in schools, and whole school approaches to physical activity

Workstream 3 – Organisations & Place Shaping

- healthy weight reflected in place shaping (e.g. action in neighbourhoods; healthy convenience stores; stronger food partnership working); Camden's food buying standards; population health in all policies
- meaningful healthy weight support programmes in place within Camden Anchor institutions

Workstream 4 - Weight Management Services

- Increasing access to services, connection between services, and new services (tier 3 developed by the NHS)

Workstream 5 – Population Groups – Year 1 Starter

- Starting focus on support programmes for people with learning disabilities, people with Asian ethnic backgrounds, older people, people with long term conditions - building on work started

5. Progress implementing the plan since April 2024

- 5.1 **Benchmarking with London boroughs.** All London boroughs are taking action on healthy weight, but this ranges from working on separate initiatives, through to ongoing systems approaches involving key leaders. Informal feedback from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities is that Camden's whole systems approach is comprehensive with no obvious gaps. Camden has been invited to share progress with London's Obesity Leads.
- 5.2 **Deep Dive on progress for Workstream 2 – Schools.** November's Healthy Weight Driving Group discussed progress in the following six themes.
- 5.2.1 **Improving food and nutrition in schools** – nearing three quarters of Camden's schools (71%) are actively engaged as Healthy Schools, with all schools meeting some elements of the programme. A whole school approach to food is a key part of the programme, including meeting curriculum requirements, a positive culture and environment of the school around food, and promoting healthy choices at break and lunch time.

Magic Breakfast is provided in 21 of Camden's most deprived schools, with more schools signing up this term, and 3,340 children had a free breakfast through the scheme every day in the summer term. All but one of Camden's schools offer a free breakfast to those eligible for free school meals.

A new school meals service will be provided from April 2025 with an updated specification focusing on pupil engagement, Camden's enhanced school food standards, and providing more climate conscious meals. Free school meals have been provided to all pupils in primary schools since September 2023, enabling those in low-income households above the threshold for free school meals to benefit. In secondary schools a test and learn initiative led to free fruit and vegetable offers at breaktime, and auto-enrolment for free school

meals for all those eligible is being progressed. The Holiday Activity and Food Programme supported more than 2,500 children and young people over the summer, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

- 5.2.2 Healthy weight and nutrition support at key points.** Every year families receive information on healthy habits and services after the National Child Measurement Programme is completed in the Spring. We are working to further develop this offer, and to share the results with primary care to enable further follow up support where appropriate.
- 5.2.3 Investing in the Secondary School eating infrastructure.** £500k capital spending is available through the Community Infrastructure Levy to improve the eating infrastructure across Camden's ten secondary schools. Proposals are in development for six schools currently, broadly covering three themes: improving convenience (more Grab and Go kiosks), redesigning/overhauling the dining area, and providing all weather cover for queues. These changes are complementing the developments set out in section 5.2.1.
- 5.2.4 Food and Health Student Champions.** This student advocacy programme is returning at Hampstead School in 2025, after the last programme at Regent High in 2019. Health Champion students are trained and supported to run a campaign that aims to improve healthy eating behaviours among students. The school and the Health and Wellbeing Department work together on this.
- 5.2.5 Children and Young People Physical Activity Strategy.** A range of new approaches to promoting physical activity through schools are being considered, including how to best address the drop off in physical activity levels typically seen among teenagers, and particularly among teen girls. The Healthy Schools programme (section 5.2.1) includes a focus on a whole school approach to physical activity. Physical Education (PE) is a key part of this, with a standard to aim for 2 good quality hours per week. Camden primary schools receive c£750k per year through the national PE and Sport Premium, and we are looking to develop a menu of options drawing on good practice for schools to consider in their future plans.

Schools have developed their own programmes, such as Hawley's Year 5 offer to girls focusing on enjoyable participation, and Torriano's sessions for girls in Years 5, 6 and 7 (after they've left the school). There are also schemes running across schools, such as The Daily Mile held year-round in 14 primaries including Edith Neville, Rhyl, and Holy Trinity, and the Street Tag gamification initiative now being held for a second round.

Schools have flagged a range of opportunities to support their students to be more active, including supporting pupils as they transition between primary and secondary school, ensuring a range of opportunities for enjoyable activity at secondary school for pupils of all abilities, follow up support for those not reaching swimming competency standards, and promoting access to local physical activity assets.

5.2.6 **Healthy Travel Camden – behaviour change initiatives.** Three key active travel behaviour change initiatives are run with schools. 24 schools are signed up to the “Travel for Life” sustainability programme, 21 schools received bikeability sessions, and 774 children received pedestrian skills training in 2023/24. The Council’s Transport Planning team are reviewing capacity to enable a more widespread offer to more schools.

5.3 Selected progress highlights from the other workstreams

5.3.1 Workstream 1: Early Years

- **Weight management pathways** for children and young people are currently being updated, considering issues with access, translators, transport, and taking a whole family approach. The early years pathway will be split into under 2 years and 2-5 years with more detailed guidance for early years staff and Health Visitors to improve early identification and healthy weight support. Clinical pathways will function across North Central London.
- A **community healthy weight toolkit** is being developed including the range of support available in Camden to help parents and families find what could be helpful for them
- Increasing uptake of the **Healthy Start** scheme supporting parents on low incomes to buy healthy food through tailored messaged and training staff
- A **comprehensive health improvement training offer for all early years staff** is being developed following review of training needs, including a focus on healthy weight. This builds on the Healthy Conversations training which 200 early years staff have received.
- The **Healthy Movers programme for Family Hubs and Nurseries** has been funded through the Youth Sport Trust. 11 early years settings are in the first cohort receiving training in November. A second cohort will run in the spring with the 13 other settings who have registered interest so far.

5.3.2 Workstream 3: Organisations and Place Shaping

- Long term funding has been secured to develop **Camden’s Food Partnership** through Camden’s Food Mission to enable food system change
- Environmental Health have been funded to re-start the **Healthier Catering Commitment** in Camden for businesses in 2025
- **Adult Social Care’s Food and Healthy Weight plan** for 2024/25 includes training staff, identifying and supporting residents at risk of malnutrition at hospital discharge, optimising food available through Camden’s Day Services, and connecting the VCS food offer to residents to promote their independence

- **Camden Council's Food Buying Standards** have been completed to guide purchasing of nutritious and sustainable food across the Council. The standards can be shared with other organisations.
- The Health and Wellbeing Department can review and work with leads on the **health and wellbeing offers for staff in anchor organisations**

5.3.3 Workstream 4: Weight Management Services

- **Children and Young People:** new weight management pathways are being developed across different age groups. The potential for an enhanced offer for those identified as overweight in the National Child Measurement Programme is being reviewed, including more of a whole family approach
- **Adults:** existing services are being promoted through partners to reach more of those who can benefit. There have been good responses to texts by general practices to those identified as overweight on their systems, and new approaches to reach parents through schools are being piloted.
- The Integrated Care Board is reviewing possible models of care needed to support the provision of new weight loss drugs, which includes review of multi-disciplinary **tier 3 and tier 4 specialist weight management services**

5.3.4 Workstream 5: Populations with greater needs – first year focus

- **Residents from South Asian ethnic groups:** the Healthy Weight needs assessment and a separate physical activity needs assessment identified greater levels of need within these communities. A tailored and more culturally competent version of the adult weight management service is being piloted and co-produced with Kings Cross New Brunswick Association, with 12 Bangladeshi women enrolled. Significant funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy has also been secured to extend the Community Champions programme into Kings Cross ward, and healthy weight support will be one of the focus areas. Tailored physical activity sessions are also being developed through the Council's leisure centres.
- **People with Learning Disabilities:** the Learning from Lives and Deaths (LeDeR) report into the causes of avoidable deaths among people with learning disabilities flagged the impact of higher levels of overweight, as well as opportunities to promote healthy living. The Community Learning Disability Service have developed a healthy weight action plan this year which includes creating active communities, influencing the food environment, and rolling out training to all staff on hydration and nutrition.
- **Older adults:** Many older people are not benefitting fully from enjoyable activities that fit within their daily lives. Camden's Active for Life Campaign in 2024 promoted the range of free and low-cost activities available to all, and gave 12 weeks support to 600 residents who signed up. Lack of social support was identified as a key factor influencing physical activity behaviours. Residents

found the campaign gave them the confidence to try new activities, to meet people through these activities, and provided clear messaging. A physical activity movement for adults aged 60+ has been set up with VCS organisations to progress further opportunities.

6. Next steps

- 6.1 In line with the national evidence on whole systems working, the Healthy Weight Acceleration Plan needs to operate over the medium to longer term, creating an environment for change borough-wide, and across organisations. The continued contribution of members of the Driving Group is a key part of making this happen.
- 6.2 The Plan started in April 2024. While there has been significant progress as set out in this report, some work has taken longer to develop. As an example, the Health and Wellbeing Department are looking to support workplace health improvement offers (including healthy weight) for staff in Camden Anchor organisations, starting with health related organisations. Any key leads identified from these organisations would be welcomed.
- 6.3 Opportunities for progress have emerged since the Plan started. A good example is Nesta's call out for expressions of interest on healthy weight systems working. Nesta is an innovation agency for social good, and is partnering with national retail outlets, restaurants and takeaways. NCL Integrated Care Board developed a joint proposal with the Royal Free Hospital and Camden Council to progress healthy weight across organisations in NCL. Camden's Healthy Weight Driving Group was instrumental in shaping the bid.
- 6.4 The Healthy Weight needs assessment has set the baseline for the Healthy Weight Acceleration Plan. The first year of the Plan will be reviewed in March, looking into effectiveness of initiatives, completion of outputs, learning, and organisation involvement. Population healthy weight related metrics for Camden will be drawn on over time – for example data from the National Childhood Measurement Programme will help track whether our ambition to move to "best in class" compared to similar areas is realised.
- 6.5 An annual update report will be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board. This will include emerging plans for the next year of the Plan.

7. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services

- 7.1 The Executive Director of Corporate Services has been consulted on the contents of the report and has no comments to add to the report.

8. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor

- 8.1 The Health and Social Care Act 2012 places a duty on the Local Authority to take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of the

people in its area. This includes providing information and advice, services to promote healthier living and services to prevent illness.

9. Environmental Implications

9.1 The Healthy Weight Acceleration Plan has no negative environmental impacts. Parts of the Plan, such as support for the further promotion of active travel over car use, as well as action in schools to reduce packaging and promote climate conscious menus will have a positive impact on the environment.

10 Appendices

Appendix A - Healthy Weight Acceleration Plan July 24

REPORT ENDS