

Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: Tackling overweight and obesity in North Yorkshire 2016 – 2026

Summary, July 2016 DRAFT

Introduction

The Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives Strategy has been developed by North Yorkshire County Council to help deliver the aims and ambitions of the North Yorkshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The overall aim of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy is that ‘People in all communities in North Yorkshire have equal opportunities to live long healthy lives’. The aim of the Health Weight, Healthy Lives strategy is to help achieve this by “Inspiring a healthy weight generation”.

Background

In Britain today two thirds of adults, a quarter of 2-10 year olds and one third of 11-15 year olds are overweight or obese. Excess weight in adults is expected to reach 70% by 2034.

For adults, the most common method of measuring obesity is the Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI is calculated by dividing body weight (kilograms) by height (metres) squared. An adult BMI of between 25 and 29.9 is classified as overweight and a BMI of 30 or over is classified as obese.

Assessing the BMI of children is more complicated than for adults because a child’s BMI changes as they mature and the patterns of growth differ between boys and girls. When working out whether a child’s BMI is too high or too low, both the age and sex of the child need to be taken into account.

Once a child’s BMI has been calculated, its ‘centile’ figure can then be checked to see whether it is above or below the expected figure for the child growth reference used.

In the Healthy Weight Healthy Lives Strategy, the terms 'excess weight', 'overweight' and 'obese' are used. 'Excess weight' is used when referring to both overweight and obese: BMI of 25 (adults) or above or above the 91st centile (children). The term obese is used for any adult with a BMI of 30 or above or any child on or above the 98th centile.

The causes of obesity

Obesity occurs when the energy intake from food and drink consumption is greater than energy expenditure through the body's metabolism and physical activity over a prolonged period, resulting in the buildup of excess body fat.

Tackling obesity however, is not straight forward. There are many complex reasons that combine to cause obesity. These include:

- physical make up (biology);
- lack of physical activity;
- the influence of the media, education, peer pressure or culture;
- individual mental make-up (psychology);
- food choices; and
- food consumption.

The effects of obesity

Obesity reduces life expectancy by an average of three years, or eight to ten years in the case of severe obesity (BMI over 40). This eight to ten year loss of life is equivalent to the effects of lifelong smoking.

An obese man is:

- five times more likely to develop type 2 diabetes;
- three times more likely to develop cancer of the colon; and
- more than two and a half times more likely to develop high blood pressure – a major risk factor for stroke and heart disease

An obese woman is:

- almost thirteen times more likely to develop type 2 diabetes;
- more than four times more likely to develop high blood pressure; and
- more than three times more likely to have a heart attack.

Risks of other diseases, including angina, gall bladder disease, liver disease, ovarian cancer, osteoarthritis and stroke, are also increased for those who are obese compared with those who are not.

Estimates of the direct costs to the NHS in England for treating overweight and obesity and its associated illnesses range from £479.3 million in 1998 to £4.2 billion in 2007. Estimates of the indirect costs from the impact of obesity on the wider economy such as

unemployment, early retirement and welfare benefits) over the same time period range between £2.6 billion and £15.8 billion.

The Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives Strategy

The **vision** of the Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives Strategy is to inspire a healthy weight generation and it has six overall ambitions to achieve by 2026:

- reducing the number of adults with excess weight;
- reducing the number of children starting school with obesity;
- halting the rise of obesity in school age children;
- increasing physical activity levels;
- improving access to weight management services; and
- creating a culture and supporting environment to help people make positive changes to their behaviour.

The Strategy has six **priority areas** to help achieve its ambitions:

- supporting children's healthy growth and healthy weight;
- promoting healthier food choices;
- building physical activity into peoples' daily lives;
- providing the right personalised weight management support at the right time;
- ensuring people have access to the right information and resources to make healthy choices that support weight loss; and
- building healthier workplaces that support employees to manage their weight.

Examples of **proposed actions** include:

- supporting local organisations, including health care providers;
- increasing markets for local food producers;
- increasing access to food growing opportunities;
- ensuring a network of routes for walking, cycling and using other modes of transport involving physical activity that is safe and attractive and accessible from the workplace, home, school and other public facilities;
- commissioning health services that prevent or treat conditions such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and stroke, or improve mental health
- ensuring children and young people, and their parents or carers have access to a publicly available up-to-date list of local lifestyle weight management programmes; and
- ensuring local employers and public sector organisations receive co-ordinated, consistent levels of support for the development of workplace health and welfare policies and services.

There are eight proposed **strategic outcomes** to be achieved over the lifetime of the Strategy:

- reduced health issues arising from overweight and obesity;
- greater community engagement when planning, commissioning and delivering weight management programmes;
- a stronger local economy as a result of reduced demand on health and social care services; improved workplace health schemes; and improved offers of healthy food provision from local businesses;
- better quality of life as a result of reduced health risks associated with excess weight;
- less discrimination and bullying associated with overweight and obesity;
- fewer people with long term conditions as a result of excess weight; and
- improved food and activity choices.

Partner and specialist organisations will work with North Yorkshire County Council to deliver the Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives Strategy, reporting to the North Yorkshire Health and Wellbeing Board.

The full Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives Strategy can be downloaded from www.northyorks.gov.uk/hwhl