

## CHILDHOOD OBESITY

### Summary of Key Issues:

- The government's current target is to halt the year on year rise in childhood obesity by 2010 and reduce the proportion of overweight and obese children to 2000 levels by 2020.
- Within the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and National Indicator Set (NIS) we have one indicator which focuses specifically on childhood obesity, NI 56 – Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6. This indicator is monitored through the performance sub-group and the PCT takes responsibility for commissioning the National Child height and weight programme which provides the data.
- Tackling childhood obesity is multi-faceted and includes healthy eating, physical activity and creating built or natural environments to support this. Leadership for each rests with different agencies.
- Evidence for what works and who should take action is published by the National Institute for Health and Clinical excellence and includes public health guidance on:
  - Maternal and child nutrition
  - Physical activity and the environment
  - Promoting physical activity for children and young people

### Current Performance

The National Child Measurement Programme allows us to understand the prevalence of child obesity in Oxfordshire and inform local planning and delivery of services for children. The data for the past 2 years of measuring is given below. It is important that recording levels (coverage) remains high, so that we can be confident of the results. In 2007/8 coverage was 91% in reception year and 87.5% in year 6.

	Overweight		Obese	
	Reception	Year 6	Reception	Year 6
<b>2006/7</b>				
National	13%	14%	10%	17%
Oxfordshire	12%	13%	8%	15%

<b>2007/8</b>				
National	13%	14%	10%	19%
Oxfordshire	11%	14%	7%	15%

**What works and who should take action (extracts from the quick reference guides available at the websites identified)**

Maternal & Child Nutrition ( [www.nice.org.uk/PH011](http://www.nice.org.uk/PH011) )

Recommendations for health & health commissioners:

- Ensure practical tailored advice on eating healthily throughout pregnancy
- Pregnant obese women should be offered a programme of support
- Women should be encouraged to breastfeed antenatally and postnatally
- Encourage mothers with a BMI over 30 (obese) to lose weight

Recommendations for public, community, voluntary and private sector organisations:

- Ensure mothers can feed their babies in public areas
- Develop initiatives which aim to make a balanced diet more accessible to people on a low income
- In childcare and pre-school settings:
  - offer mothers the opportunity to breastfeed and encourage them to bring in expressed breast milk
  - ensure food & drink offered during the day reinforces healthy eating
  - encourage children to handle and taste a range of healthy foods
  - ensure carers eat with children whenever possible

Physical Activity and the environment ( [www.nice.org.uk/PH008](http://www.nice.org.uk/PH008) )

Recommendations for those responsible for strategies, policies and plans involving changes to the physical environment including transport planners:

- Ensure planning applications for new developments always
  - prioritise the need for people to be physically active as part of their everyday life
  - ensure facilities are accessible on foot and by bicycle
  - ensure children can participate in active play

- Ensure pedestrians and cyclists are given the highest priority when developing or maintaining streets and roads
  - Create safe routes to schools
- Plan & provide a comprehensive network of routes for walking and cycling offering convenient, safe and attractive access to schools and play and green areas.
- Ensure public open spaces are easily accessible, safe, attractive and welcoming.

Recommendations for children's services, school sports partnerships, governing bodies and head teachers:

- Ensure school playgrounds are designed to encourage varied, physically active play

Promoting physical for children and young people ([www.nice.org.uk/PH017](http://www.nice.org.uk/PH017))

Recommendations for children's trusts, LSPs, DPH and Directors of Children's services:

- Ensure the following explicitly address the need for children and young people to be physically active
  - Children and young people's plans
  - Joint strategic needs assessments
  - Local development and planning frameworks
  - Sustainable community plans and strategies
- Ensure there is a co-ordinated local strategy to increase physical activity among children, young people, families and carers. This should help achieve LAA targets. What the strategy should include is in the guidance.

Recommendations for Local Authorities and other agencies responsible for physical activity facilities including voluntary, community and private sector providers:

- Identify, involve and consult with children and young people and use the information to design, plan and deliver physical activity opportunities.
- Remove locally identified barriers to participation, such as lack of privacy in changing facilities, inadequate lighting and poorly maintained facilities

- Ensure physical activity programmes are run by people with relevant training

#### Recommendations for LSPs, Governors and heads of schools, CDRPs:

- Make school facilities available to children & young people before, after and during the school day, at weekends and during school holidays.
- Actively promote public parks and facilities as places to be physically active
- Set up family fun days
- Identify educational institutions willing to deliver multi component physical activity programmes and identify community members and organisations willing to contribute

#### Recommendations for those responsible for local transport plans:

- Make sure transport plans and school travel plans are fully aligned with other local authority plans which impact on physical activity e.g. play strategies, LAA and healthy schools plans
- Continue work with schools to implement and promote travel plans
- Review any transport policies which may discourage children and young people from walking or cycling e.g. policies to prevent traffic congestion.

#### Recommendations for children centre staff, early years providers:

- Provide opportunities for indoor and outdoor physical activities including unstructured play
- Tailor activities to the child's developmental age
- Help children identify activities they can enjoy by themselves and those they can enjoy with others

#### Recommendations for groups and individuals who have regular contact with children, young people, their parents and carers:

- Ensure parents and carers are aware of the government advice that children & young people should undertake a minimum of 60 minutes moderate to vigorous activity a day
- Provide information and advice on benefits of physical activity and examples of local opportunities

- Encourage parents and carers to get involved in physical activities and complete at least some local journeys using an active mode of travel.
- Act as a role model e.g. regularly use the stairs

### **Current Activity in Oxfordshire**

Many partners are already actively involved in delivering activities which support the recommendations given above, but it is important to have a co-ordinated strategy which informs the refresh of the children and younger people's plan. Examples of initiatives are provided for information in Appendices 1 and 2.

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