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Consensus statement: supporting professionals to have healthier

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Introduction and purpose

Childhood obesity is a widespread problem in England. In recognition of the need to manage and work towards preventing the increasing prevalence of childhood obesity, a shared commitment has been agreed with collaborating partners to use our collective influence and resources to support the public health workforce to have healthier weight conversations.

This consensus statement describes the intent to work together to maximise support for population behaviour change and includes a core set of principles which outline how professional organisations can support the public health workforce to help individuals and communities significantly reduce their risk of obesity in order to support the national ambition to halve childhood obesity rates by 2030 [1].

This joint approach will support the commitment in the NHS Long Term Plan [2] to ensure nutrition has a greater place in education and training for continuing professional development (CPD) and will assist the public health workforce to utilise their skills to contribute to the NHS Five Year Forward View [3] commitment to ensure every child and young person has optimal health.

Headline message

Professional organisations for the public health workforce commit to work with collaborating partners to promote the practice of healthier weight conversations through the collective and targeted use of resources, skills and knowledge to:

- raise confidence in having healthier weight conversations by upskilling and continuously supporting professionals through education and training
- increase awareness through promotion of relevant evidence-based resources

Background

Childhood obesity can have serious implications for the physical and mental health of a child, which can then follow on into adulthood. Almost 1 in 4 children are overweight or obese when they begin school and 1 in 3 children are overweight or obese by the time they leave primary school [4].

Obesity is associated with health inequalities. There is a clear relationship in child obesity prevalence and social deprivation and a growing gap between the most and least deprived deciles of the population [5].

Research shows an intergenerational effect with higher risks for children whose parents are above a healthy weight. Babies born to women with obesity have a higher risk of fetal death, stillbirth, congenital abnormality, shoulder dystocia, macrosomia and subsequent obesity. Obesity in adults increases the risk of developing serious health conditions including type 2 diabetes, certain cancers and ultimately increases the likelihood of premature death [6]
children will have a shorter life expectancy than their parents [7].

Evidence suggests that on average, all children are exceeding calorie intake recommendations and children are not active enough with only 18% of children and young people meeting physical activity recommendations [8].

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healthy eating and physical activity
collaboration with community organisations to deliver whole-systems
approaches to tackle excess weight and reduce drivers of excess calorie intake
and sedentary lifestyles
national resources including [Childhood Obesity: applying All Our Health;](#)
[Promoting a healthier weight for children, young people and families: consistent](#)
[messaging and](#) [-by-step guide to conversations](#)
[about weight management with children and families for health and care](#)
[professionals](#)

We commit to supporting professionals within our scope of influence by promoting resources such as the [Everyday interactions childhood obesity impact pathway](#) to encourage evaluation of programmes of work relating to a healthier diet, physical activity and healthier weight, in order to support capacity and capability building around outcomes and evaluation.

We commit to supporting professionals within our scope of influence by promotion of national parent, child and family-facing resources to members to support families to take action in relation to healthier weight and diet. Resources include:

[Start4Life](#)
[Change4Life](#)
[Rise Above](#)

[Act as exemplars](#)

We commit to act as exemplars in promoting healthy behaviours to support healthier weight through:

our policies and procedures, procurement practices, catering provision and messaging supporting healthier diet, physical activity and healthier weight
promoting positive workplace wellbeing practices for our staff

List of partners

This consensus statement was co-produced by a number of professional organisations for the public health workforce and is supported by:

British and Irish Orthoptic Society
British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists
British Dietetic Association
College of Podiatry
Institute of Health Visiting
Institute of Osteopathy
Royal College of General Practitioners
Royal College of Midwives
Royal College of Nursing
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists
Royal Society for Public Health
School and Public Health Nurses Association
Society and College of Radiographers

References

1. HM Government (2018) Childhood obesity: a plan for action, chapter 2. Available at:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/childhood-obesity-a-plan-for-action-chapter-2
2. NHS England (2019) NHS Long Term Plan. Available at:
www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-long-term-plan/
3. NHS England (2014) NHS Five Year Forward View. Available at:
www.england.nhs.uk/five-year-forward-view/
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