

**Progress Report for the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel Report -
Childhood Obesity in Bolton February 2007**

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1. Introduction

The focus of this review is on action undertaken to achieve the recommendations stated in the original report, declaration of any actions outstanding and timescales for addressing outstanding actions.

2. Response to the findings and recommendations to specific stakeholders

Recommendation 1:

Increase the strategic support and advocacy given to the healthy Schools Programme by the LEA.

The membership of the Healthy Schools steering group has been reviewed and now includes senior level representation from Children's Services. Work is on-going to ensure the Healthy Schools programme is integrated into the work of Children's Services.

Recommendation 2: Influencing and enabling schools to make provision for children to have access to drinking water during lessons.

Access to clean and palatable drinking water (not in toilets) is a requirement for achieving National Healthy School Status. To date 40 (primary, secondary, special and nursery) schools have achieved this, and another 84 schools are working towards achieving this status. Most primary schools have access to water during lessons.

All schools have been given £1200 to support various aspects of food in schools (not school meals). This funding is recurrent for a further four years. The Healthy Schools team have worked closely with the School Meals Service in the production of a catalogue of healthy eating items to support utilisation of this funding. One available item is the provision of a 'plumbed in' drinking water system. To date there are no figures on how many primary schools have used their grant to purchase water, but the water system has been a popular option with secondary schools.

Recommendation 3:

Explore the potential for the 'Building Schools for the Future' Programme to assist in improving dining facilities and eating environments in schools.

Bolton is in a late wave of Building Schools for the Future funding and does not expect to be considered until 2011, however the Council is exploring options for putting together a schools capital submission which will link together health, school improvement and regeneration. Healthy eating and community engagement will be a feature of any schools investment strategy. During 2005/6 there has been £214K investment in school kitchens, with over 90% of our primary schools engaged in healthy eating programmes, through the Healthy Schools programme, and 30% of the secondary schools.

Recommendation 4:

Ensuring that all pupils have the option of choosing well-balanced school meals.

From September 2006 Bolton's schools embraced the nutrition legislation relating to prescriptive healthier menus which directed food type, minimum levels and frequency of content. Known as the *food based standard*, Bolton can report compliance at all levels in the primary sector schools. Further research and development in key areas relating to ethnic dietary provision is underway.

At secondary level, although school menus comply, students in 90% of schools have free choice and currently rarely opt to take a balanced option. The fixed choice/fixed price model 'Spectrum' is still performing well from a healthy eating and meal balance perspective. Implications for cost are still under debate.

The early impact of the legislation showed a downturn in meal uptake, only slightly in primary schools but more so across the secondary sector where an average 12% drop in school meals income was reported. By January 2007 there had been some improvement but it is expected that a net reduction in spend will be reported at year end. The impact of fewer chips sales is marginal, replaced by noodles, filled jackets, pasta and rice dishes; however the removal of high sugar drinks has seen the single biggest negative effect with many students still bringing in drinks from elsewhere.

The paying tariff for both sectors is due to increase by a further 2p (primary) and 5p (secondary) per meal in April and September to reflect increased food costs.

Recommendation 5:

Continue to evaluate and develop new menus.

Menus are being continuously researched and developed for a 3 week cycle with a twice yearly seasonal change. The new Demonstration Kitchen (funded through Part A Grant) assists Environmental Services in showcasing new test recipes with the school meals service dedicated *Menu Development Group* made up of kitchen managers and senior staff. School heads, students, Members, staff and other stakeholders may test and contribute. Children and student feedback and surveys are critical in providing valuable feedback and many new dishes are rejected and exchanged.

Menus are being prepared to be scientifically measured in September 2009. 'Nutmeg' software is now able to cost menus and measure 13 nutrients provided per week. This software is being developed and modified continuously.

Transition is not speedy but much positive progress is being made with wholesome, fresh ingredients in wide use and a reported significant reduction in frozen food procurement. In secondary schools a considerable increase in the sales of speciality sandwiches is reported.

Part A funding now in year 2 is governed by the Strategic Steering Group for School Meals to agree spend across the sectors to improve areas of electronic monitoring, extensive training, marketing and promotion of the healthy menus. In addition, schools have received direct investment in commercial blenders, additional refrigeration and more attractive service ware to support fresh production and improved presentation of dishes.

In year 1, 30% of the grant was allocated to schools to support increased meal costs, in year 2 this has increased to 50 %. This aims to support the sustainability of the service in future years.

Recommendation 6:

Consider a wider marketing and promotion strategy of new school menus, possibly in conjunction with other healthier eating initiatives in schools.

Since September 2006 there has been a huge increase in the focused promotion of the primary menus using the *Future 5* Cartoon Characters – a visually stunning team of characters relating to healthy lifestyle and including menu board, competitions and newsletters etc. (For example “Aqua” who promotes water consumption and “Brains” who supports oily fish intake etc.) This campaign links to Healthy School projects and the networking with Healthy Schools staff and school food clubs and projects. School Meals works with the Food in Schools Toolkit and supports the Healthy School Award.

Elsewhere, radio, leaflets and media articles have supported profile-raising. The secondary sector have enjoyed a road-show with local radio and are soon to receive an age-appropriate magazine about health issues.

Parents need to be convinced to buy a healthy, value-for-money school meal and school heads and health professionals need to assist the School Meals service in this endeavour. Plans to focus on parents are underway.

Recommendation 7 Maximise the beneficial health impact of food consumption in schools.

All eligible schools (primary schools) are participating in the national School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme.

National Guidance for Food in Schools has lead to the removal of ‘fizzy drinks’ and chocolate in schools.

New school meals standards were introduced from September 2006, with nutritional standards to be introduced in future for all schools.

All schools are required to have a food policy as a Healthy Schools standard.

Whilst new guidance for food in schools other than school meals is still awaited (it was due to be released in January 2007) many primary schools already have a healthy snacks or fruit only policy, as part of their food policy.

Recommendation 8:

Maximising the achievements of the 5 a-day scheme.

Strengthening the schemes links with schools

Food Access Bolton is a programme which aims to make healthy food accessible and affordable in environmentally sustainable ways. Food growing schemes have been established at a number of allotments and within school grounds involving, for example refugees, local residents and school children. A larger scheme is under development in partnership with Lever School to develop a large piece of land in the school grounds for local food production. Volunteers are being trained and supported with the view to them being able to set up a social food growing enterprise at the school and engage in mentorship programmes with Lever School pupils. In the longer term, it is hoped these schemes will be able to support the van delivery scheme and

playground markets.

The van delivery scheme is being piloted in a number of deprived areas including Deane, Great Lever and Farnworth. This is proving popular particularly with residents of sheltered housing schemes. The van runs on bio-diesel.

Playground markets are being established within local schools to enable parents to purchase fresh fruit and vegetables at the end of the school day when collecting their children. The project is currently being run with the use of short-term grants. Long term, mainstream funding will be required to progress the project further.

Recommendation 9: Universal participation of schools in the National Healthy Schools Programme and National School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme.

Bolton has 128 schools and units. 124 are participating in NHSP, 40 have accredited National Healthy School status, and a further 15 are awaiting accreditation. The target for achievement of National Healthy School status is 55% of all schools by December 2007.

Healthy Schools team support offered to schools includes 1:1 with a designated teacher, network meetings, theme specific meetings, programme folder, website, termly newsletters etc. A new post has been created within the Healthy Schools team to work specifically with secondary schools to support achievement of NHS status. The staff member is now in position and has started to work with schools.

4 schools are not participating in the Healthy Schools Programme. These are regularly contacted and invited to participate, and they continue to receive newsletters and invitations to events.

All eligible schools are now participating in the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme.

Recommendation 10:

Practical cookery skills to be made a compulsory part of the national curriculum at Key Stage One and Two.

Whilst there is no sign at present that cooking is to be made compulsory at primary school level, the Government has announced a consultation period for the curriculum for secondary schools which could lead to the introduction of healthy eating and cooking and greater emphasis on PHSE on the curriculum.

Recommendation 11: Schools to be encouraged to explore ways of introducing basic cooking skills and addressing healthier eating in their lessons:

Healthier eating is a curricular component which requires demonstration for schools to achieve Healthy Schools status.

As a core Healthy Schools theme, healthy eating will continue to be actively promoted via the Healthy Schools team and key partners.

Locally, the Healthy Schools team has provided, in partnership with a local secondary school, a basic Food Hygiene course which was undertaken by 15 school staff with a view to supporting implementation of cookery clubs including

the 'Let's Get Cooking' initiative which is to be offered nationwide from September 2007.

The national School Food Trust website (www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk) now provides information for teachers, parents and carers on a range of aspects from the standards for the new school meals to tips and ideas on healthy packed lunches and provides direction to other sources of advice.

In addition, it has been recognised that high quality Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE provision) is a vital means of tackling important problems including childhood obesity, teenage pregnancy and alcohol abuse. A national PSHE association to support the professional development of practitioners, build effective networks of subject experts and spread best practice has been launched. The association's website provides a useful resource to PHSE staff.

Recommendation 12:

Developing the management and treatment service provided by the Clinical Paediatric Service and Food and Health Team.

Increasing the capacity of the team to respond to demand from overweight patients

The Paediatric Dietetic Service has had capacity problems over the past 2 years resulting in long waiting times, however, with the provision of 20 hours maternity leave cover over the past 8 months, the waiting list has reduced by half and with the return of a permanent member of the team from maternity leave in the last month, it is hoped the waiting time of less than 12 weeks will be achievable in the near future.

Developing care pathways specifically for the treatment of childhood obesity.

As part of the development of care pathways for overweight and obese children and adults, the Paediatric Nutrition & Dietetic Service has received funding from NRF to recruit to a new Specialist Paediatric Obesity Service. The team will consist of a Specialist Paediatric Dietitian, Food & Health Advisor and Community Nutrition Worker. The team is presently in the process of being recruited. They will offer a service to overweight and obese children throughout Bolton. This will be based on the MEND programme developed by Great Ormond St. Children's Hospital which is being rolled out across the country. The programme is tailored to meet different cultural needs. The PCT has given a commitment to continuing the funding of the service once NRF ends if it proves successful.

Recommendation 13:

Prepare to collect baseline data on Children's weight in the local area in advance of the national dissemination of guidance reinstating surveillance.

An interim surveillance programme to collect baseline data on the heights and weights of primary school children in reception year and year 6 was implemented in the summer term 2005-6.

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
PSA10a1 Total number of primary school age children in Year R and Year 6 recorded as obese for their age in the past school year	555	656	662
PSA10a2 Total number of primary school age children in Year R and Year 6 height and weight recorded in the past school year	4439	5246	5299
PSA10a3 Total number of primary school age children in Year R and Year 6	6492	6557	6623
PSA10a4 Percentage of children with height and weight recorded who are obese	12.5	12.5	12.49
PSA10a5 Percentage of children with height and weight recorded	68.38	80.01	80.01

Altogether, 4439 children in Bolton Primary Schools' reception year and year 6 had their height and weight recorded in the school year 2005-6. This was 68.38% of the children in these year groups.

Reception year, Bolton primary schools, 2005-2006 (provisional figures)

	Total number of children	Total number of children measured	Over weight number	Over weight percentage	Obese number	Obese percentage	Overweight and obese combined number
Female		1131	171	15.12%	98	8.66%	269
Male		1207	198	16.40%	134	11.10%	332
Both sexes combined	3176						

Year 6, Bolton primary schools, 2005-6 (provisional figures)

	Total number of children	Total number of children measured	Over weight number	Over weight percentage	Obese number	Obese percentage	Overweight and obese combined number
Female		975	140	14.36%	129	12.23%	269
Male		1050	134	12.76%	188	17.90%	322
Both sexes combined	3316						

Note: Calculations are based on the body mass index for the children's age:
 Not overweight or obese – below 85th centile
 85th – 95th centile overweight
 over 95th centile - obese

From the measurements provided, it was calculated that on average 12.5% reception year and year 6 Primary school children in Bolton were obese.

PCTs have been instructed not to release school level data because of the limited response rate (under 80%), the small numbers of children calculated as being obese and the possibility of stigmatisation.

The North West Public Health Observatory has issued a monthly bulletin in February 2007 (available at www.nwpho.org.uk/documents) comparing the North West's results with those for England from the national results which were published in the National Childhood Obesity Database report in December 2006. Obesity figures in reception year and year 6 in the North West were 10.0% and 17.4% respectively, with the levels in England 10% and 17.3% respectively.

The PCT has allocated funding for a permanent surveillance team and has appointed a Childhood Surveillance Team Coordinator. Our 2006 – 7 surveillance has commenced in February 2007. By the end of March 2007 we expect to have in post 3 surveillance assistants. The team will undertake the annual weighing and measuring of reception year and year 6 pupils. The aim is to weigh and measure at least 80% of eligible children in 2006-7.

Recommendation 14:

Food and Health promotion activity, such as that delivered in Sure Start centres to be rolled out across Bolton.

The Food and Health Team continues to work with individuals and groups around Bolton providing practical skills and advice on food and health issues to those most in need. A high percentage of the work is concentrated in Children's Centre's working with the parents and children on issues such as practical cooking, weaning, weight management for parents and fun food activities. Although the team do not currently directly focus on preventing childhood obesity, this work will have an indirect impact by using preventative methods.

The roll-out of Children's Centres and the development of Extended Services will support food and health promotion activity.

The Food and Health team also works across other disadvantaged areas in a variety of settings and with a variety of age groups.

Recommendation 15:

Developing joint working to address childhood obesity.

The Children's Health and Well-being Executive (a sub committee of the Local Safeguarding Children Board) is overseeing joint working to address childhood obesity. The group has representation from key agencies across the Borough.

Recommendation 16:

Development of culturally specific childhood obesity prevention programmes.

See the response to recommendation 12.

Recommendation 17:

Promoting walking and cycling to school using school travel plans.

Having a school travel plan is a compulsory standard for achieving national healthy School Status within the physical activity core theme. However as there has been limited capacity nationally for school travel plan co-ordinators, schools need only to demonstrate that they have undertaken a consultation of all stakeholders about routes to school to meet this standard for Healthy Schools accreditation (although several of the accredited schools do have a completed Travel Plan).

Completion of a full travel plan is expected in time for re-accreditation as a Healthy School. The number of schools currently accredited is 40, with another 15 awaiting accreditation before Easter 07.

13 schools currently have travel plans with a further 10 at an advanced stage of development.

Recommendation 18:

Implementation of physical activity exercise programmes specifically aimed at addressing overweight and obesity.

During 2006, The Active Health team have provided:

- An Indian dance programme for young people at Ladybridge (for primary and secondary students)
- Summer provision dance sessions delivered in leisure centres - mainly dual use sites and community venues across Bolton
- An after school dance programme at Ladybridge including street dance (primary and secondary students)

Future plans include:

- 'Health on wheels' led cycle rides planned for children and families. Children and adult bikes have been purchased and sessions will run at Leverhulme Park and Queens Park.
- Education sessions currently run for adults to increase the awareness of the benefits of physical activity are planned for roll-out to families with specific sessions targeted at children. There is currently a limited budget attached to this proposal but the programme is in place ready to run
- Supporting the proposal of the MEND programme and working with Serco (Leisure trust) to support roll out of programme within the leisure centres

The Sports Development team

- launched the 'In School' coaching programme in 8 Schools in September 2006 - with a focus on National Curriculum games, dance, gym and fundamentals of movement. The aim is to increase by 10 more schools in the second year of the programme.
- 4 Community sports coaches have been employed covering swimming, athletics, cycling and badminton. In 2006 over 1000 young people were coached.
- enabled the development of priority sports forums in 2005 with a focus on talent development and increasing participation – in cycling, athletics, cricket, dance, gymnastics, football, rugby union, and aquatics.
- Contributed to the School Sports Partnership's achievement of 75% of 5-16 year olds participating in 2 hours of PE and sport in and beyond

- the school curriculum.
- Supported the annual Primary School cross-country programme.
- Supported 500 young people through Borough-wide trials and training, enabling them to represent Bolton in the annual Greater Manchester Mini and Youth Games 2006.

Recommendation 19:

Consider the benefits of introducing an exercise referral scheme for children, young people and their families.

At present, there is limited evidence of effectiveness of such schemes. The Active Health team would be interested in developing such a scheme, which would require increased capacity in the team. The PCT would consider supporting such a scheme in future if sufficient evidence of effectiveness is revealed.

Recommendation 20:

Raise the level of breast feeding in the borough.

Initiatives to inform and support women in breastfeeding

The additional pressure on health visitors and school nurses dealing with high numbers of children in need puts pressure on their ability to get involved in pro-active preventive work, such as supporting breastfeeding. There will be developments in both services subject to agreement in the Local Delivery plan to implement promises made in the PCT manifesto. One positive example is the expansion of health visitor involvement in children's centres.

2006 has been a very positive year for breastfeeding in Bolton. In May, representatives from the PCT and Children's Centres met with an officer from UNICEF's Baby Friendly Initiative and together drew up an action plan to achieve Baby Friendly accreditation (recommended in NICE Post-natal guidelines, July '06, as best practice in support of breastfeeding). In December we received a Certificate of Commitment from Baby Friendly UK, and over the next few years we will be working towards full accreditation. The Princess Anne Maternity Unit is also working towards Baby Friendly Status. They have an action plan and will be applying for a Certificate of Commitment shortly.

Audits are in progress to ascertain our current strengths and weaknesses in supporting women to breastfeed, and this, together with the statistics collected, is providing a clear picture for the future.

The breastfeeding rates in all areas are below the national average, (69% initiation rate in middle class Bromley Cross compared to 75% nationally) but also vary throughout Bolton, with the lowest rates found in areas of predominantly white, lower socio-economic groups. In the Tonge area, 38% of women initiated breastfeeding, falling to 15% continuing at 6 weeks, whilst in Farnworth initiation was 51% and 25% were still feeding at 6 weeks. Both these areas appear similar in socio-economic factors, but the Farnworth area has had several years, through Sure Start, of targeted, extra midwifery input, and is the area in which the peer support scheme was first launched. Future plans include running peer support training schemes throughout Bolton, including one from the Tonge Children's Centre.

Children's Centre Staff have worked with the community midwives to review the content of the ante-natal education classes, and these are now being run in each centre.

We plan to run a breastfeeding support group in each Children's Centre – we currently run one in Harvey, Great Lever, Rumworth and Farnworth.

We are awaiting a decision from the Department of Health, which is awaiting advice from the Royal College of Paediatricians, about the adoption of the new, World Health Organisation centile charts. These have been developed using measurements from many 1000s of breastfed babies from several areas of the world, so are an excellent representation of optimal growth. (We would prefer to use the new centile charts as they correlate better with the slower weight gain seen in healthy breast fed babies. The centile charts which are used currently are more appropriate for bottle fed babies who tend to gain weight more rapidly.)

Latest figures show 56% of women living in Bolton initiate breastfeeding, and 24% of women are continuing to feed their babies at 6 weeks – the longevity of breastfeeding has increased slowly over the past couple of years. The PCT, Children's Centres and Hospital staff will continue working in partnership to improve breastfeeding initiation and continuation rates.