

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Children's Services Committee
<b>DATE</b>	24 June 2025
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Whole System Approach to Healthy Weight
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	F&C/25/152
<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	Eleanor Sheppard
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Shona Milne
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Niki Paterson and Phil Mackie
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1.1 and 1.1.2

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report on progress to increase the number of children and young people who are of a healthy weight by taking a Whole System Approach, as requested by the Education and Children's Services Committee on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended the Committee -

- 2.1 Note the work undertaken to date:
- 2.2 Continue to endorse the Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight known as Healthy Weight Aberdeen; and
- 2.3 Instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to report progress on the service's delivery of the Whole Systems approach, Healthy Weight Aberdeen, through a Service Update within 12 calendar months.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Healthy Weight Aberdeen is a Whole Systems evidence-based approach developed primarily by Leeds Beckett University. The approach advocates using the whole system to work with local communities to identify changes that can be made to the obesogenic environment to help people make healthier choices and be more effective in maintaining a healthy weight. Apart from the clear health and wellbeing benefits to individuals, taking this approach has the potential to positively impact upon the employability and productivity of the local population and reduce future demand for health and social care services.

#### 3.2 Governance

A Strategic Networking Group (SNG) has been established with members from Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP), Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian, and Community Planning Partners. This will be extended over time to include wider educational establishments and representatives from the business world. The Education Service is represented by a central officer, a secondary headteacher, a primary headteacher and an Early Learning and Childcare Locality Lead. Family Learning and the School Catering team are also represented.

- 3.3 The role of the SNG is to provide strategic leadership to operationalise the Healthy Weight Aberdeen approach and be responsible for oversight of the development, delivery and monitoring of the Healthy Weight Aberdeen Programme. The Healthy Weight Aberdeen SNG is chaired by the Prevention Lead of the ACHSCP and reports to the Community Planning Aberdeen Management Board (CPAMG).
- 3.4 Overall, the governance for Healthy Weight Aberdeen will be incorporated under the Community Planning Aberdeen Board and delivered within the context of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) for 2023-2026 and wider planning mechanisms (e.g. the Local Development Plan).
- 3.3 Progress against the six phases of the Whole System Approach public health model is outlined below.



### 3.4 Phase 1 : Setup

Actions conducted in phase 1 included:

- Collaboration between Children and Families Services and Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership (AHSCP)
- Establishing collaboration with Public Health intelligence on data and unhealthy weight prevalence
- Delivering the Stakeholder engagement launch event

- 3.5 On 30th August 2024 the Healthy Weight Aberdeen process was launched at an event in the Aberdeen Town House. The launch event, introduced by the Executive Director of Families and Communities, was attended by 111 stakeholders, including

Council members and helped to raise awareness on the Whole Systems Approach (WSA) to Healthy Weight. It emphasised the importance of a range of stakeholders and systems coming together, discussing the issue collectively and avoiding the tendency towards silo working.

- 3.6 The event was a means to plant seeds for potential early intervention and prevention for Aberdeen City and recommendations for future stakeholder engagement. Discussions identified causes around 18 themes within the city. Research data highlighted the prevalence of those of an unhealthy weight in Aberdeen, with 1 in 5 children in the first year of primary school being at risk, with higher rates in more deprived areas. The event report can be found [here](#) and the senior leaders' videos regarding support and commitment are available [here](#).

**3.7 Phase 2: Building the Local Picture**

Actions conducted in phase 2 included:

- Ensuring engagement with Multi-agency Senior Leaders;
- Establishing the Multi-agency Strategic Network Group (SNG);
- Establishing Healthy Weight Aberdeen as part of Community Planning Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP)

- 3.8 A multi-agency Strategic Network Group was established on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024 with 24 partners in attendance. The group established Terms of Reference and agreed roles and responsibilities. Good practice and evidence-based examples (nationally and internationally) have been reviewed.

**3.9 Phase 3: Mapping the Local System**

Key deliverables included:

- Delivering System Mapping workshop
- One to one meeting with partners and workshop working on Action Mapping; and
- Establishing Research links / collaboration with Rowett Institute and Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC).

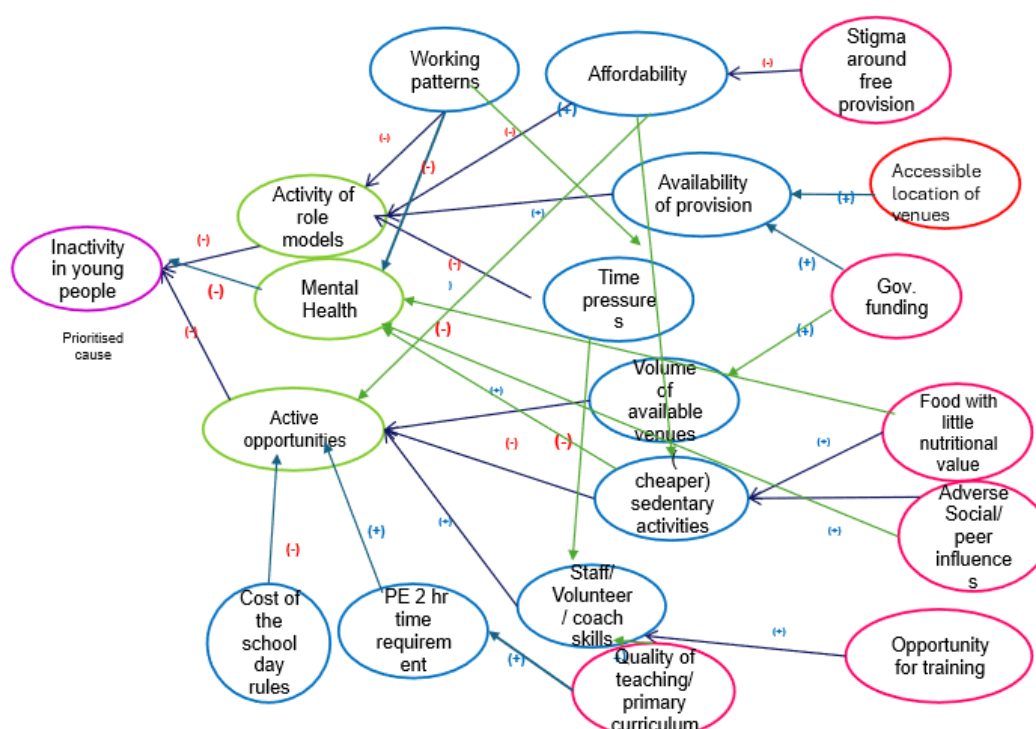
- 3.10 The System Mapping workshop was delivered on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025 with 19 partners in attendance. The workshop presented previous Whole System Work examples of collaborative working and wider systemic changes. The aims were to increase partner understanding on the Wider determinants of health (WDOH) and their influence in shaping individuals' biology, health behaviours and health outcomes.

- 3.11 Discussions included linking identified causes, actions to address these and the role of Scotland's seven levers for diet and healthy weight. The workshop illustrated the way stakeholders and their

work would fit into the overarching whole systems approach, visualising their place in the system. System Mapping was undertaken by education to identify points of leverage where future actions could be focussed. To exemplify the approach, Diagram 1 demonstrates the positive and negative influences between causes when exploring inactivity in young people.

- 3.12 This phase is ongoing, but it is anticipated it will be completed in August- September 2025 by sense-checking the work on existing systems mapping with the Strategic Network Group and wider stakeholders

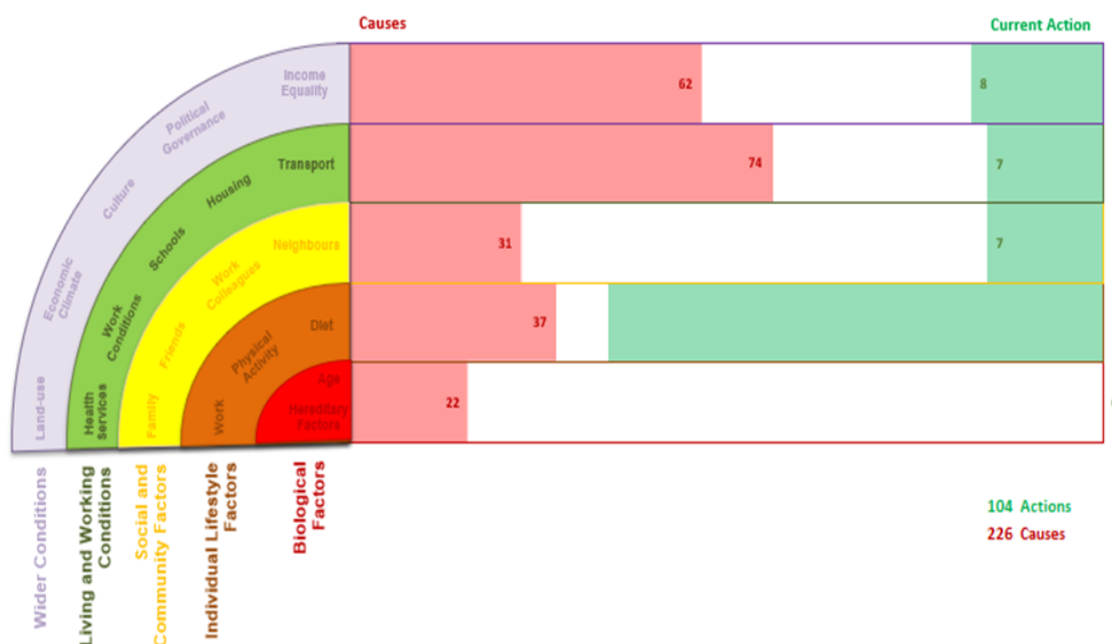
**Diagram 1: System Mapping-Workshop – Education Example: Inactivity in Young People**



- 3.13 Action Mapping was carried forward through a mixture of one-to-one working and a dedicated workshop delivered on 20th March 2025 with 28 partners in attendance. The purpose of the workshop was to initiate discussion on partners' existing actions, using the Public Health England Action Mapping Tool, and increasing understanding on the distribution of stakeholder resources in the context of the Wider Determinants Model of Health. The workshop also focused on consideration of the built environment; food environment; early years; and physical activity environment.
- 3.14 71% of partners completed action mapping for their sectors. Currently 82 partner actions are targeted around individual behaviours and 15 actions around wider living and working conditions. Our whole systems work will aim to shift the focus towards wider conditions and living and working conditions.

- 3.15 Education identified 15 actions being undertaken in schools, with the majority focused on increasing physical activity. These included Daily Mile engagement, development of physical education provision through the School Sports Award, increasing extra-curricular activity in partnership with Physical Education Physical Activity School Sport partners, P4 swimming provision, upskilling primary school staff to teach high quality PE, Active Travel Plans, the provision of Calm Space for Me ( Qi Gong) through virtual teaching, and cycling initiatives such as Bikeability and iBike. A notable exception is the award-winning Give Peas a Chance Project, through which the school catering team have incorporated sustainable peas into several dishes on the school lunch menu and the profile of sustainable food has been raised through classroom workshops. The impact of these actions is being reviewed to determine which could be a key focus for collaborating partners as part of the Whole Systems Approach (WSA) programme. For example, if we are to increase uptake of school meals, there could be development of a creative approach through collaboration between the school catering team, family learning, early years and school staff.
- 3.16 To support the review, education officers undertook an analysis of the National Physical Activity for Health Framework, mapping the expectations of the framework and how this relates or could relate to Education.
- 3.17 Wider partners have collectively identified key actions such as developing an integrated healthy weight pathway across life course (from pre-conception to older adults), supporting people in maintaining healthy weight and offering greater support to people who are at risk. However, as both Diagram 2 and Table 2 (below) demonstrate, there is a mismatch between organisational insight into the perceived causes and the current actions that they are taking.

**Diagram 2: Current Actions Mapped against Perceived Causes of unhealthy weight**



**Table 1: Healthy Weight Aberdeen partner actions against the Wider Determinants Model of Health**

	Current Actions	Perceived causes
Biological Factors	0	22
Individual Lifestyle factors	82	37
Social and Community factors	7	31
Living and working conditions	7	74
Wider conditions	8	62
Total actions	104	226

- 3.18 As part of Phase 3, a research collaboration workshop was organised between the Rowett Institute, NHS Grampian, Aberdeen City Council, and the Health Determinants Research Collaborative. This workshop explored how best to collaborate with the Rowett in specifying new research and in how best to translate research into local action. Topics explored included:
- Healthy weight and food insecurity;
  - Mapping social prescribing initiatives and food initiatives across Scotland;
  - Benefitting communities in rural areas involved in fishing (as part of a just transition);
  - promoting increased fibre intake;
  - school meals uptake.

### 3.19 Phase 4: Action

Work on all these areas is now underway:

- Facilitating two Public Engagement sessions in May 2025
- Initiating work on seven lever planning;
- Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP) Public Health establishing structured and sustainable Tier 1 Weight Management prevention
- Establishing Healthy Weight Aberdeen as part of partners planning (Community Learning and Development, Health and Transport Action Plan etc);
- Collaboration with Public Health Directorate (NHS Grampian team) and Health Determinants Research Collaborative

3.20 As part of ACHSCP's Grampian Wellbeing Festival two public engagement sessions were organised on 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> May 2025. The outcome of these sessions will help ensure that the Healthy Weight Aberdeen work takes account of the views, knowledge and priorities of the communities who are, ultimately, going to benefit from the whole system efforts to address obesity.

3.21 The intention is to involve communities in the planning, implementing and monitoring phases. This will be carried forward as part of the community engagement and locality planning mechanisms within the Aberdeen City LOIP.

3.22 Work is now starting to enhance the action mapping work by exploring the Local Levers for Diet and Healthy Weight to support local healthy weight working. The focus on developing actions will use existing (or new) strategic approaches to ensure the delivery of healthy weight actions which focus on the wider determinants of healthy weight. This will need to link to the existing strategy/policy review for public health delivery currently underway but will ensure that co-benefits across the whole system are meaningfully delivered. As a first "cut" Table 2 again shows the area identified as a healthy weight lever and the strategies/policies to which it relates. At present this is only an initial specification as further work is needed to explore appropriate local authority powers and duties and the local policies and strategies where action to deliver them is articulated.

**Table 2: Healthy Weight Levers and Associated Strategies/Policies /Legislation**

Lever Area	Associated Strategy / Policy / Legislation
Restrict food advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Food Nation Action Plan</li> <li>• The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (Scotland) Regulations 1984</li> <li>• Business Advertising Codes of Practice</li> </ul>
Utilise planning to improve food environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Food Nation Action Plan</li> <li>• National Planning Framework 4</li> </ul>

Strengthen public food procurement and provision standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Food Nation Action Plan</li> <li>• Local business codes for nutrition</li> </ul>
Work with the out of home sector to reduce calories on the menu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Food Nation Action Plan</li> <li>• Local business codes for nutrition</li> </ul>
Improve uptake of school meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy eating in schools: guidance 2020</li> <li>• Free School Meals (Local government finance circular 1/2025: settlement for 2025 to 2026)</li> </ul>
Promote and support physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical activity for health: framework</li> <li>• The National Transport Strategy</li> </ul>
Protect, promote, and support breastfeeding and healthy diets for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHS Scotland Breastfeeding Policy</li> <li>• Breastfeeding Friendly Scotland Scheme</li> </ul>

### 3.23 **Next steps**

The most urgent next steps are associated with completing Phase 3 and delivering Phase 4. This will allow actions identified in Phase 5 to be fed into the LOIP and wider agency planning for implementation during 2025/26 and beyond.

### 3.24 Work to complete Phase 3 is underway and will be completed by August 2025. This will involve:

- On-boarding wider (further) educational institutions, small to medium local businesses, and wider elements of Aberdeen City Council
- Establishing community engagement processes for Healthy Weight Aberdeen;
- Completion of current action mapping (one to one working)
- Sense checking system mapping models

### 3.25 Activities to engage the views of children and young people are being planned for Term 1 in Session 25/26.

### 3.26 Phase 4 work has now been initiated but needs to accelerate beyond current action mapping and will be completed by October 2025 (subject to staffing capacity). This will include:

- Delivery of lever specific strategy /policy reviews and proposed actions to move away from individual behaviour change and towards wider causes of poor healthy weight;
- Delivery of the proposed research collaboration;



- Delivery of new strategic action areas, in particular the National Physical Activity Framework actions and delivering the Good Food Nation Action Plan.

3.27 Completion of Phase 5 Managing the SNG, Action Plan & Phase 6 Reflect and Refresh require the delivery of specific actions which can be fed into the LOIP and wider planning /delivery mechanisms. In this role, the SNG will work under the CPA Management Group to oversee this task. It is anticipated this would take place during Q3 to Q4 of 2025-26. During the same period specific monitoring and impact assessment approach can expect to be put in place.

3.28 With Committee approval, Committee will be apprised of progress toward this long-term programme of work through a Service Update within one calendar year.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Our Local Public Health Team have identified 3 members of staff to work alongside a Local Authority Officer to help drive the work forwards. Two members of staff from NHS Grampian are also supporting the programme.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in this Report.

#### **6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 No negative environmental impacts have been identified, although the work may lead to recommendations on changes to policy governing the obesogenic environment.

#### **7. RISK**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level</b>	<b>*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control action</b>	<b>*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?</b>
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Not addressing obesity will lead to serious long term health needs for	Early Plan in place to address the rise in levels of obesity as a CPP	L	Yes

	our citizens which will add considerable demand on Community Planning Partners (CPP)			
<b>Compliance</b>	Risk of not aligning with national policy	The Plan reflects national policy.	L	Yes
<b>Operational</b>	Risk that we take a simplistic view, implement the easy options but make no impact on those we serve	We plan to take account of the complexity of the issue by working closely with communities	L	Yes
<b>Financial</b>	Risk that we don't have sufficient resource to meet the needs of those with health needs arising from obesity	The CPP is taking preventative steps to address obesity now that the issue is known	L	Yes
<b>Reputational</b>	Risk that we don't take action now that we know there is an issue	Mitigated by reporting back via service update within a year.	L	Yes
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	Risk if we don't take action to now support active travel	Officers from Planning and Transport are engaged with the plan	L	Yes

## 8. OUTCOMES

<b><u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u></b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<p><b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b></p> <p>The cross-cutting nature of work on obesity could impact on a range of Partnership Priorities including those within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Active City</li> <li>• Supporting people with the cost-of-living crisis</li> <li>• Building a greener and more sustainable city</li> <li>• Keeping our city moving</li> <li>• Empowering communities</li> </ul>	<p>Taking the approach advocated in the report will enable the joining up of all priorities to support a reduction in levels of obesity.</p>
<b><u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u></b>	
<p><b>LOIP stretch outcome 3:</b> <i>95% of all children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27–30-month review by 2026</i></p> <p><b>LOIP stretch outcome 10:</b> <i>Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026</i></p>	<p>Taking the whole systems approach will help us scale up the interventions into CPP policies and strategies.</p>
<p><b>Regional and City Strategies</b></p> <p>Prevention Strategy</p> <p>Children's Services Plan</p> <p>Local Outcome Improvement Plan</p>	<p>The approach being advocated prioritises prevention and is aligned with our key CPP plans.</p>

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	New Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	No
<b>Other</b>	None

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Education and Children's Services Committee, 02/07/2024 10:00](#) Item 10.5 :Healthy Weight initial report

## 11. APPENDICES

None

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

<b>Name</b>	Niki Paterson
<b>Title</b>	Education Support Officer
<b>Email Address</b>	Nikpaterson@aberdeencity.gov.uk