

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Healthy Eating Rapporteur Report

County Councillors:

Sue Hind

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Context

Highlighted in the Children's Health report presented to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee meeting on 18 January 2022, data indicated a variation between the Lancashire total number of obese children aged 4-5 years old in comparison with the England average and a concerning upward trend in the number of obese children in the 10-11 year old age range.

And in the Public Health Annual Report 2021-22 presented to Cabinet on 3 February 2022, the following statistics were presented:

- 25% of reception aged children are overweight or obese, which is worse than England (2019/20).
- 35% of year six children, are overweight or obese (2019/20). This rate is similar to England but increasing and getting worse.
- 57% of children are inactive.
- 72% of 15 year olds report mean daily sedentary time of more 7 hours daily.

School Meals Provision

Current Position for The Application of School Food Standards:

Nutritional standards are in place for school meals in England, aimed at ensuring that the food provided to pupils in school is nutritious and of high quality, and at promoting good health and eating behaviour amongst pupils. The standards apply to:

- all local authority-maintained schools
- pupil referral units
- academies that opened prior to 2010
- academies and free schools with agreed funding from June 2014
- non-maintained special schools

Designing School Meals

- School meal menus should be designed to follow a three week cycle to allow sufficient opportunity for all of the required School Food Standards food groups to feature. Menus should offer a combination of food groups which broadly follow Public Health England (now UKHSA) Eatwell Plate.
- Menu design should consider cultural and ethical choice, be child friendly and should engage children in widening their food palate whilst nudging preferences towards healthier choices.
- Menu design must also consider the identification and communication of the 14 defined allergens, a defined legal requirement of the Food Information Regulations (FIR) 2014.

Examples of current UK and Lancashire initiatives and information available

- PASTA – Play and Skills at Teatime Activity
- HAF – Holiday Activities and Food Programme
- Cookery Clubs
- Healthy Heroes
- Healthy Weight Environment - Public Health working with colleagues in Transport and Planning and Environment for Liveable Neighbours, making streets more appealing to walk and cycle.
- Healthy Hearts Transformation Programme
- Local Authority Healthy Weight Declaration
- GULP – Give Up Loving Pop
- HENRY – Health, Exercise, Nutrition for the Really Young

Advertising

Research led by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine has shown that restricting unhealthy food adverts could lead to significantly reduced unhealthy food purchases.

Findings have shown that the Healthier Food Advertising Policy implemented on the Transport for London network has reported to have led to households buying 1000 fewer calories per week from high fat, salt and/or sugar foods and drinks. The policy had a particularly strong impact on sugary purchases with a reported decrease of 20% (318 calories) per week.

Key Findings

- There are concerning trends shown in data relating to unhealthy weights of children, young people and families across Lancashire which is further exacerbated by a continued sedentary life style.
- There is considerable work being undertaken across the county on healthy weight environments with many of these initiatives focussed on 0 – 11 age range.
- Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Board have recently signed the refreshed Lancashire Healthy Weight Declaration.
- School Meals Provision has been awarded the ‘Soil Association Food for Life’ Silver Award and ‘Sugarwise’ Gold Award
- Healthier Food Advertising Policy across the Transport for London network has provided interesting evidence to support the restriction of unhealthy food advertising.

Conclusion