
SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL - TACKLING CHILDHOOD OBESITY IN SOUTHAMPTON
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2020

Present: Councillors McEwing (Chair), Houghton (Vice-Chair), Coombs, Harwood, Professor Margetts and T Thomas

Apologies: Councillor Vaughan

10. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN PANEL MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

The apologies of Councillor Vaughan were noted.

11. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.

12. **UNDERSTANDING THE RANGE OF LOCAL PROGRAMMES CURRENTLY UNDERWAY TO ADDRESS CHILDHOOD OBESITY**

The Panel considered the report of the Director, Legal and Governance requesting that the Panel consider the comments made by the invited guests and use the information provided as evidence in the review.

Following discussion with invited representatives the following information was received:

Children and Young People's Healthy Weight Plan 2017-2022 – Ravita Taheem, Senior Public Health Practitioner, SCC

Ravita Taheem introduced the session and informed the Panel that the meeting would focus on how SCC were supporting settings to provide healthy food and opportunities to be physically active, making it easier to make healthy choices, and how SCC were supporting children who already had excess weight.

Southampton Early Healthy Years Award – Darrin Hunter, Assistant Team Manager Early Years and Childcare and Angela Elliott, Early Years Development Worker

- A presentation was provided by Darrin Hunter and Angela Elliott giving an overview on the Southampton Healthy Early Years Award (HEYA).
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - A revamped Healthy Early Years Awards was rolled out in 2018, funded by Public Health and delivered free of charge to settings.
 - The award was made up of 6 stand-alone awards at 3 levels (Bronze, Silver, Gold). It included meeting standards on good quality nutrition, oral health and physical activity.
 - 62 settings had either engaged or achieved the award impacting on approximately 1,430 children and their families. Approximately 25% of nursery group settings had engaged and 8% of childminders. Half of engaged providers were in areas of deprivation.

- Ofsted commented favourably about HEYA during an inspection of a setting rated as outstanding.
- Parental feedback had demonstrated that the award was able to change family food choices (including content of lunch boxes) and lifestyles.
- Challenges now included keeping settings engaged when there were numerous pressures on Early Years providers (including safeguarding); better embedding the scheme within Ofsted's criteria; and, to increase take up to reach a critical mass in the city.

Healthy Weight Pre Birth > 19 Years – Vicki Pennal, Project Lead Healthy Settings & Clinical Team Coordinator 0-19 and Sophie Ruffles, Health Visitor - Project Lead Healthy Weight 0-5 years, Solent NHS Trust

- A presentation was provided by Vicki Pennal and Sophie Ruffles outlining the journey of intervention and prevention with regards to childhood obesity in Southampton from pre-birth – 19.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - A number of touch points existed in Southampton where services could identify, engage and support parents and children with regards to healthy weight.
 - This included the National Childhood Measurement Programme (NCMP) in school years R and 6. As obesity levels rose between Years R and 6 the opportunity to measure height and weight in Year 3 was raised.
 - In recognition of the link between breastfeeding and healthy weight a suite of breastfeeding support services were available. Breastfeeding rates were steadily rising in Southampton.
 - A Healthy Weight Pathway had been developed that outlined the referral pathway to services for children identified as being outside the healthy weight range.
 - In addition Solent NHS Trust were providing health education to employees working across the children's workforce in the city.
 - Engaging and supporting some of the most challenging children and families in Southampton could be difficult and resource intensive, often due to their chaotic lifestyles. To improve engagement with priority children a designated Healthy Weight Team was suggested. This would require significant additional resource when finances remain constrained.
 - In 2018 The Healthy High 5 Award was launched in Southampton to make it easier for schools to help students get fit, eat well and live balanced lives. The Infant, Primary and Junior award includes the following elements: Daily Mile/Golden Mile, Nurturing Nature, Access to Water, Mindfulness Minute and Healthy Lunch, Breakfast and After School Clubs.
 - As of January 2020, 31 (about 40%) Southampton schools had engaged in the award scheme – 26 Primary, 3 Secondary and 2 Special schools.
 - As well as promoting physical activity schools have committed to improving the quality of their menus and offering things like small taste pots to encourage children to try different things. Some schools have implemented salad bars, lessons on the importance of cooking skills and portion size.
 - The scheme was designed to be predominantly a digital platform but schools wanted face to face contact. This increased resource

requirement. Time and resources were required to increase take-up of the Healthy High 5 scheme and to embed it within school curriculums.

- Solent NHS Trust were involved in 2 schemes that support nutritious eating in school holidays - The Good Grub Club (West Southampton in association with Radian Housing) and Valentines School (East Southampton in association with Make Lunch).

City Catering Southampton – Sarah Doling, Food Development Manager, City Catering Southampton

- A presentation was provided by Sarah Doling giving an overview of the work City Catering Southampton (CCS) were doing, and associated challenges, to enable schools to comply with school food standards.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - CCS covered 46 out of 75 schools across the city (61%). Last year CCS produced approx. 1.7 million school lunches. 75% of menu cooked from scratch reflecting how school meals have evolved over the years.
 - Menus followed set guidelines within the School Food Standards. Encouraged children to take the healthier option – water always available during lunch.
 - Engaging national campaigns to encourage children to eat more vegetables –Vegpower (24th Feb until 3rd April).
 - Supporting holiday hunger schemes in some schools. Opportunity to teach cooking skills to families reflecting decrease in food science teaching within schools. Demand outstripped supply so agencies promoted clubs to target communities.
 - Challenges to the service include children who were not experiencing a variety of foods at home so they were put off school meals by unfamiliar foods.
 - Compressed school lunch breaks do not encourage children to sit down and eat lunch as well as having time for physical activity.
 - There were no restrictions on the content of packed lunches. Nothing equivalent to school meals food standards is in place or guidelines to follow.
 - The take up of free school meals was declining. This was concerning as it provided a nutritious meal for the most disadvantaged children in the city.

Change the Beginning and You Change the Whole Story – Dr Kathryn Woods-Townsend, LifeLab Programme Manager, University of Southampton

- A presentation was provided by Kathryn Woods-Townsend.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - LifeLab was a unique, state-of-the-art teaching laboratory dedicated to improving adolescent health by giving school students opportunities to learn first-hand the science behind the health messages.
 - Adolescence was a key time point to intervene. Habits formed as teenagers tended to last, and physical and psychological changes during adolescence made it an important time to help them form healthier habits.
 - Secondary school programme started in 2008. Delivered through school science curriculum (health education gets squeezed).

- 42 schools from across the region have engaged in LifeLab research. Pilot studies have demonstrated important statistical changes in the attitudes of children 12 months after experiencing LifeLab. Importantly they were more critically reflective about their own lifestyles.
- Engaging Adolescents in Changing Behaviour (EACH-B) – LifeLab were developing an intervention that motivates and supports teenagers to eat better and exercise more. It was to be tested with teenagers from secondary schools.
- Young Health Champions scheme launched in 2017. The qualification taught young people (14-18 years old) the skills to understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and to make healthier choices. It was proving difficult to get schools to engage as at this age the focus of schools was understandably on curriculum content.
- Trying through the Early LifeLab initiative to engage with primary school children and parents. However, LifeLab does not have sufficient resources to meet the increasing demand from primary schools.
- LifeLab provided a practical route in to schools for public health interventions, and can upskill Science teachers.
- Future priorities included encouraging repeated exposure to the LifeLab programmes for children and young people.
- There was a need to get more Southampton schools involved with LifeLab. It was hoped that the PHSE curriculum could be a route for public health into schools but it was not a priority for schools.