

Healthy **Weight:** **Healthy** Wales



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Our long term strategy
to prevent and reduce
obesity in Wales

Foreword

Being a healthy weight has become one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of long term health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and cancers. However, in our current environment it is difficult for many of us to achieve this.

Our food environment has developed in a way which prioritises convenience over health, with a focus on easy, quick foods that will often be energy dense and high in fat and/or sugar and are perceived as more affordable. Alongside this we are increasingly less active as a nation due to our daily work and travel patterns.

Preventing obesity is a complex challenge, with many contributing factors acting at individual, community, societal and global levels. We need to see a reversal in the current trends which are having a significant impact on our health, life quality and life expectancy as a nation. There are also continuing pressures on our NHS services and the wider Welsh economy related to obesity in the immediate and long-term.

Our starting point for driving these changes is clear. We know that around one in four (about 9,000) of our four to five year olds start school each year overweight or obese. Levels of childhood obesity are worse in our most deprived areas and severe obesity in children continues to rise. This trend increases throughout adolescence and continues into adulthood, with nearly 60% (about 1.5 million adults) who are overweight or obese. If we do not act now, the numbers of adults who will become obese or overweight is projected to increase to 64% of our population, which taken with projected population change, is another 160,000 adults by 2030.

The good news is that we can and will change this trajectory. We need to work together as a country and commit to making a difference – both to our lives now and for future generations. This is why we have legislated through our Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 to create this strategy, which will develop new ways of working and build on current best practice. We will ensure that there is a sustained and long-term focus on prevention, early intervention and support to those who require help.

This strategy is a key deliverable through “A Healthier Wales: our Plan for Health and Social Care”, which sets out the vision for health and social care services and our ten national design principles. This will ensure that we are delivering a whole system approach with a range of partners all playing a part. We will place a clear focus through this strategy on developing a ‘wellness’ system, to support and anticipate health needs, to prevent illness, and reduce the impact of poor health and inequality.

To achieve the goals set out in this strategy by 2030 we will drive strong cross-Government and partnership action. This will be based on our approach to the Future Generations Act, which places long-term thinking, integration, involvement, collaboration and prevention, at the heart of what we do.

Everybody needs to play a role. Delivery cannot be achieved by Government, the NHS or any other individual sector alone. We will ensure that there is strong leadership that brings together the knowledge and skills at a local level from the public, private and voluntary workforce, working with communities and utilising local assets to drive change and inspiring those around them to do the same.

Change is possible. It will be achieved by doing many of the right things at the same time, and at pace. My ambition is for Wales to be one of the first countries in the world to witness declining rates of obesity. This will have a significant and long-lasting legacy for both our current and future generations.

Vaughan Gething

Minister for Health & Social Services



Introduction

Our life expectancy as a population has remained static in recent years and obesity related illnesses and death, linked to poor diets and sedentary lifestyles, continues to increase at an alarming rate. We are at a tipping point in time where we need to take direct action to improve life opportunities for both our current and future generations.

The Impacts

If current trends continue more people in Wales will die prematurely due to cancer, heart disease, liver disease and diabetes. More lives will be adversely affected by disability and ill health. Obesity also impacts negatively on our mental health which in many cases tracks with us from a young age and has life-long consequences and impacts.

Achieving Change

The factors that contribute to excessive weight gain are complex. People's lives and food or physical activity patterns are not uniform. They are also not static and they change over time. Our lifestyle behaviours are influenced and driven by the environment around us, the culture we live in, and our ability to make changes.

Being overweight has become normalised, therefore it can be more difficult to recognise an unhealthy weight even before it develops into obesity. This can make behavioural change more difficult to achieve. We cannot change the habits built up through generations simply by telling people about the problem or by doing what we have always done.

Change will be created by taking time to involve, understand and share insight to inform the development of agile and responsive approaches. We will collect evidence to continually improve what we do and to demonstrate the impact that we are making. In recognising this, we will work in a very different way.

This strategy is not a short term fix; change is not going to happen immediately. It will be delivered through a range of solutions which employ a combination of legislation and regulation, fiscal measures and funding, as well as building on existing programmes and developing new ones to drive the change we need.

We will set a course of action and bring people, communities and organisations along with us. Wales will be able to demonstrate that its powers as a small country can be harnessed to support changes that will benefit our future generations.



Ways of working

We will embrace and use the five ways of working set out in the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 as our guiding principles to deliver the strategy. This will allow us to develop a systems based approach which enables leadership at every level and will maximise the impact upon people's lived experiences in Wales for current and future generations.



Long-term

We will be bold and test new ways of doing things and learn as we go to continuously improve. We will use the best available evidence to embed a range of effective interventions to support the conditions required to impact on our nation's health in the long-term. We will evaluate and assess behavioural change across the population to monitor outcomes.

Prevention

We are working to ensure that the emphasis of the strategy is on prevention and will build a comprehensive system which provides leadership at every level.

Integration

A whole government approach across a range of departments will be evident through delivery of the four themes of the strategy. We will link delivery to the seven well-being goals and work with public bodies to bring together a range of policy goals, such as driving climate change, seeking to influence and change behaviours around travel, recycling, clean air and food promotion.

Collaboration

We will create the right conditions for transformative ideas and collaboration to flourish. We will:

- Support and enable our key national partners and organisations such as Public Health Wales, Sports Wales and Natural Resources Wales to deliver and work together to progress key actions.
- Work in partnership with Regional Partnership Boards and Public Service Boards (including Local Government and Local Health Boards) to develop transformative ways of working and to drive collective leadership with a particular focus upon prevention.
- Enable grassroots action to take place within communities so that our third sector, community partners and leaders across settings such as schools, leisure settings and workplaces can develop new ideas or scale existing approaches which are already having a positive impact.

Involvement

We will listen, communicate progress and involve people in shared decision making in order to develop solutions and ideas. We will work with individuals, families, communities and organisations reflecting diversity in order to draw upon local assets, strengths, specialist knowledge and skills to scale up a range of coordinated approaches and interventions.

Monitoring Delivery

To ensure that collective action is contributing to our national goals we will continuously monitor and evaluate progress. We will foster an inclusive and open environment where practice can be shared, lessons learnt and where there is constructive feedback and challenge built into our delivery. This will be underpinned through open and transparent communications.

We will publish five two yearly delivery plans from 2020-2030 which will aim to build a picture and a clear story about what our priorities are, what has been done and how are we doing. This will aim to build a clear narrative over time to map our journey. This approach will also allow us to be responsive to any emerging or changing operating environments.

Instead of setting specific targets we have built in milestones, for each of the four themes of the strategy, to test what progress is being made. We will create a baseline of data, which we have not collated previously, to build and demonstrate the progress Wales is making. We will use the information collected through this time to allow us to be dynamic and agile; to change course in certain areas if the pace of change is not being made.



Food Environment

- Advertising
- Reformulation and Production
- Healthier Retail and Better Consumer Information
- Healthier foods purchased and eaten out of the home
- Community Food Environment

Active Environment

- Active Travel
- Safer Communities
- Green Spaces / Landscapes
- Infrastructure and Facilities

Healthy Environments



Healthy Learning

- Healthy Childcare Settings
- Healthy Schools
- Healthy Higher, Further and Other Educational Settings

Healthy Work and Community Settings

- Healthy Workplaces
- Healthy NHS
- Healthy Communities

Healthy Settings



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Leadership and Enabling Change



Healthy People



National Delivery

- National Leadership
- Enhanced Intelligence
- Open and honest communications and engagement

Prevention and early Intervention

- The Best Start
- Healthy Growth and Development
- Healthy for Life

Systems Based Approach

- Local Leadership
- Collaboration and Involvement
- Enabling local action

Targeted and Specialist services

- Reduction in chronic diseases linked to obesity
- Specialist services for adults and children

Our Vision for 2030 and Beyond

As part of our long-term ambitions we want:

- The people of Wales, and our future generations, to have the best start in life and live longer, better and happier lives.
- Support making the healthier choice the easy choice and for people to feel enabled to make positive lifestyle choices to sustain or maintain a healthy weight.



We will drive forward four themes by 2030:

Healthy Environments

- Food environments where healthier food and drink is widely available, appealing and affordable, making the healthier choice the easy choice.
- Active environments that support and motivate people to be more active; by making green spaces, sport and recreation opportunities more accessible and by making active travel the obvious choice in terms of safety, convenience and cost.

Leadership and Enabling Change

- Develop a 'wellness' system for healthy weight, to support and anticipate health needs, to prevent illness, and reduce the impact of poor health and inequality.



Healthy Settings

- Our settings where we learn, work and live will be positive environments; which create a supportive cultural norm where being healthy and active is what everyone does; providing healthier food choices and encouraging regular physical activity.

Healthy People

- People feeling more motivated, enabled and supported to make healthier choices throughout their lives.
- A closing of the health inequality gap amongst our most disadvantaged communities through the targeting of services, funding and support.
- Health and care services which are compassionate. Supported by skilled, confident professionals and volunteers who use each contact with the public to encourage and support them to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- Fair and equitable access to a clinical pathway for weight management services with guaranteed access for all.



1 – Healthy Environments



By 2030 we will create:

- Food environments where healthier food and drink is widely available, appealing and affordable, making the healthier choice the easy choice.
- Active environments that support and motivate people to be more active; by making green spaces, sport and recreation opportunities more accessible, improving the quality of these spaces and by making active travel the obvious choice in terms of safety, convenience and cost.

Food Environment

Our food environment and our eating patterns have changed. We 'eat out' and 'order in' more frequently and snack more often. Food is available 24 hours a day and we rely less on cooking from scratch or having three set meals a day.

Around one in five meals are eaten outside of the home; portions are bigger and generally contain more fat, sugar and salt. Our shops, supermarkets, takeaways and restaurants often promote and discount foods, snacks and meal deals that are energy dense and convenient rather than promote the healthier alternatives.

We are constantly bombarded with advertisements and offers which encourage us to eat unhealthily. These are often targeted at children and drive our behaviours and eating patterns.

All of this means that it is increasingly difficult for us to make healthier choices in our daily lives. The dietary habits we have developed come at a cost; diet related factors are now the leading cause of premature death and disability in Wales.



In order to impact positively on the way we eat and shop in Wales we need to shift the balance of the food environment and support people to gradually change their habits towards choosing healthier options. This will have a significant impact on our health.

However, we will not inadvertently impact people on lower incomes or communities with higher levels of deprivation, we will carefully balance any changes, and work with communities to address potential barriers. We want to work with partners and the food industry to ensure that healthier choices are more readily available, affordable and that as a population we have the skills and knowledge to be able to eat a balanced diet.

The food industry has recently made good progress in reformulation and providing healthier options, such as lowering the salt content in foods and reducing sugar content in drinks through the Soft Drinks Industry Levy. We want to build on this and work in a collaborative way to support further change.

To achieve a level playing field and deliver at scale we will use legislation combined with community action. This will support changes in the food environment and build upon interventions already demonstrating success within local populations. Over the next decade we will ensure that:

- consumers can access healthier food and drink more readily;
- healthier food and drink will be marketed and promoted to give it a competitive advantage over less healthy options; and
- consumers will be better informed and have clear information to enable them to make a healthier choice.



By 2030 you can expect to see:

Advertising

- A ban on advertising, sponsorship and promotion of foods high in saturated fat, sugar and salt in public spaces. This will include bus/train stations, sporting events, family attractions, schools (including close to), hospitals, leisure centres and other public spaces.
- An increase in the promotion of healthier alternatives and incentivising products which support positive choices.
- The Welsh Government working closely with the UK Government to further restrict advertising in broadcast and on-line settings, which are non-devolved.

Reformulation and Production

- Welsh businesses increasing the scale of reformulation and developing healthier alternatives.
- The Welsh Government continuing to work with the UK Government to support wider work on reformulation.
- Welsh taxation powers on discretionary foods high in fat, salt and sugar to be considered if the pace of reformulation does not meet expectations.

Healthier Retail and Better Consumer Information

- A change in the use of price promotion and discounting practices, with retailers shifting the balance towards the promotion of healthier products and alternatives.
- A ban on the sale of energy drinks to children and young people.
- Work with UK Government to further improve and enhance front of pack nutrition labelling on pre-packed products.

Healthier foods purchased and eaten out of the home

- Calorie labelling at the point of purchase for food eaten out of the home

- Limits placed on the establishment of Hot Food Takeaways around schools and communities.
- Limits placed on upselling food and drinks high in saturated fat, salt and sugar, including free refills.
- Work with producers to increase the amount of fruit and vegetables in ready meals.

Community Food Environment

- Support to increase the availability of healthier food options on our high streets.
- Procurement and contracting in the public sector supporting the purchasing and selling of healthier food and drink.
- A Refill Nation, where access to free drinking water will be common place in our cities, towns and communities.
- Supporting local food businesses to develop healthy food choices and to increase more local food growing opportunities, which will impact on the environment and support climate change.

What difference will this make?

- A significant reduction in saturated fat, salt and sugar across all food and drinks.
- An increase in healthier options and where applicable a reduction in portion sizes in the out of home food sector.
- An increase in consumption of fruit and vegetables in the population diet.
- A reduction in the diet inequality gap between the most and least deprived communities in Wales.



Active Environment

Being more physically active can have a significant positive impact on mental and physical health yet many of us find it difficult to build regular activity into our daily routines.

We know that our current environment still supports the use of cars over walking or cycling. This means we can be influenced to make decisions based upon convenience and perceived safety concerns over other positive health and wellbeing benefits.

Achieving a step change in how we are able to access and utilise our outdoor space will require continued investment and support. To influence how we make choices in our daily lives we will draw on the strengths and opportunities within local areas to gain access to green spaces, safe walking and cycling routes and high quality public transport.

Wales is famous for the beauty of many of its landscapes. We will continue to work with our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (our designated landscapes) to get more people passionate about the natural environment and the positive health benefits it brings to our citizens who live in or visit them. We will also continue to promote and enhance opportunities on people's doorsteps to walk and enjoy the countryside in other ways.

Sustained and continued investment in active travel will help us to rethink the way in which we commute. This will not only impact our physical and mental health, but will improve our air quality and influence climate change. We will work with partners to enable the use of train or bus stations and sustainable transport systems, ensuring that public transport is more accessible than ever.

We know there is a strong link between lack of access to quality green spaces and childhood obesity. Over the next decade we will ensure high quality, well connected natural resources and ecosystems

are more accessible to all. This includes parks, forests, beaches, national trails, rights of way and rivers.

We will create more opportunities for active recreation and play for families and children, particularly in the early years, by increasing access to high quality play provision, developing family friendly routes and by utilising our natural infrastructure, including national parks.

Shaping and developing safe and active communities' starts with where we live. We will prioritise capital investment against delivering health and care services fit for the future, promote good health and well-being for everyone and build healthier communities and better environments. This will include providing greater opportunities for local communities to be healthy and active, which encourages good physical and mental health.

New housing developments will be designed and built to enable active travel, play and recreation. We will support planners to prioritise quick, safe, convenient and well connected pedestrian and cycle routes to health and care appointments, school and work, to places of interest and our town centres. We will utilise 20mph speed limits to further encourage active travel.

Maximising opportunities in the active environment will also require consideration of how high quality sport infrastructure can help to increase participation. This can include exploring how to utilise community based facilities and expand 3G pitches for multi-use activities.

Keeping communities at the heart of developments is key. We need to work across partners to develop an integrated approach, and will use planning policy, national guidance and Health Impact Assessments to ensure that the health and wellbeing of residents is built into decision making.



By 2030 you can expect to see:

Active Travel

- Continued and sustained investment into active travel which will increase cycling and walking opportunities across Wales.
- Enhancement of Integrated Network Maps to support decision making and joining up opportunities.
- Health Impact Assessments and tools for planners to support local action and improve opportunities for communities to develop local ideas and solutions.
- Accessible transport hubs, which enable active travel and increase journey opportunities.
- Continued investment into public transport to improve journey times and encourage people to use sustainable transport links.

Safer Communities

- Increased use of 20 mph zones which will aim to increase physical activity opportunities across communities throughout Wales.
- Continued and scaled investment into safer routes to schools, which will increase the number of children routinely walking or cycling.

Green Spaces / Landscapes

- Better promotion of, and more opportunities to access, local green spaces and rights of way for recreation.
- Innovation of green spaces in areas of deprivation, creating greater opportunities for walking or cycling.
- An increased appreciation of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and their contribution to the health and quality of life of people who live in or visit them.

Infrastructure and Facilities

- Physical activity routinely built into infrastructure and funding decisions, such as 21st Century Schools, Health and Social Care sites, Housing and Regeneration.
- Increased investment into high quality play facilities which are targeted at areas of deprivation.
- Increased investment into high quality sport facilities and scaled support for communities to invest in community assets.



What difference will this make?

- An increase in people achieving the Chief Medical Officer physical activity guidelines and significantly reduced sedentary behaviours across all ages.
- An increase in active travel levels.
- Improvements in air quality and support to achieve climate change targets.
- An increase in sport participation and active recreation.



2 – Healthy Settings



Our settings where we learn, work and live will be positive environments; which create a supportive cultural norm where being healthy and active is what everyone does; providing healthier food choices and encouraging regular physical activity.

Healthy Learning

Children and young people spend a substantial amount of time in child care and educational settings. These settings can have a big impact on helping to influence behaviour alongside a range of other factors.

Good health and well-being is a key enabler of successful learning and can influence future life outcomes. Settings can promote and educate children, young people and their parents or carers about the positive aspects of a healthy lifestyle. They can also play a key role to deliver interventions which support regular physical activity, sport or recreation participation and healthy eating for life, and be environments that provide access to healthier food and drinks.

The opportunities that these settings offer are:

- Childcare settings can encourage early movement and motor skills and help families experience a choice and range of healthy foods. Healthy eating and physical activity patterns formed in the early years can influence habits for many years to come.
- Primary schools can play an important role in providing age-appropriate education. They can provide opportunities to develop knowledge and skills for making positive lifestyle choices and help to normalise good eating and physical activity patterns through the school day.

- Secondary schools can strengthen food and physical activity literacy in addition to skill-development around food preparation, physical activity and sports participation. Schools play a vital role in supporting children and young people as they continue to become more independent in the choices they make.
- Young people in higher, further or other educational settings are at a stage in their lives where they are already making independent lifestyle choices. Creating the conditions where healthy options in food, activity and transport are more attractive, affordable, prominent and accessible will help to shape behaviours and drive a new normal in this important stage in life, helping to embed a positive platform into adulthood.

It is important for there to be skilled staff who are trained and knowledgeable in food, diet and physical activity with access to professional advice and a choice of interventions which best support their pupils.

The Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience within our new curriculum for Wales, covering the ages of 3-16 years, will play an important role in enabling learners to develop:

- knowledge of a healthy balanced diet and its importance to health and well-being;
- skills and competencies in food preparation, food safety and cooking;
- knowledge, skills and competency in a range of physical activities and sports; and
- knowledge and awareness of the importance of active travel to school.

Learning has to be supported by an environment that models and reinforces these messages. Settings should be places which promote and model positive behaviours, enabling healthy choices to be considered normal. This can include:

- A positive dining experience and promoting a range of healthier



meals, snacks and drinks to ensure our children and young people have access to a more balanced diet through the healthy eating in schools regulations.

- An active environment which encourages active travel, daily physical activity choices and varied sport or recreation offer to encourage participation.

By 2030 you can expect to see:

Healthy Childcare Settings

- Childcare settings are supported by a national programme and are fully embedding the Welsh Government's food and nutrition guidance.
- Settings are able to demonstrate how they support young children to eat a healthy balanced diet and be physically active.
- Support and scaling of interventions which promotes early movement and the importance of play.
- Delivery of our childcare offer and investment into infrastructure which supports alignment of the education and childcare elements of the provision.

Healthy Schools

- Opportunities to learn about food, physical activity, nutrition and hydration within the new curriculum will enable learners to critically assess the impacts of healthy decisions and choices.
- Knowledgeable staff trained to support pupil learning about food, physical activity, nutrition and hydration.
- Schools able to select from a range of integrated programmes that promote healthy eating, physical activity, recreation and school sport choices across the whole school environment.
- Estyn Inspectors being more informed and having a greater focus on the whole school approach to health and well-being, included food and physical activity.

- Implementation of revised school food regulations and improved dining environments, involving pupils in decision making about food and drink choices.
- Active environments inside and outside the school gates which support active travel and physical activity including sustained investment into safer routes to schools.
- All primary schools building daily physical activity into the school day.
- Schools able to demonstrate that they meet a national quality standard which impacts on learner behaviour in these areas.

Healthy Higher, Further and Other Educational Settings

- Healthy campuses and sites that adhere to established criteria on food and drink provision.
- Targeted behavioural change campaigns being delivered to promote positive lifestyle choices, including healthy eating choices.
- Campuses that have active travel routes and a range of support for students to remain physically active and participate in sport for life.

What difference will this make?

- An increase in 4-5 year olds starting school a healthy weight, which is sustained through school and into adolescence.
- All pupils leaving school with the knowledge, skills and competencies to take up healthy lifestyle choices in relation to food, drink and physical activity.
- Increased uptake of healthier food choices in line with the Eatwell Guide.
- More children and young people meeting the Chief Medical Officer physical activity guidelines and a reduction in sedentary behaviours.
- An increase in participation in sport or recreation and active travel amongst children and young people.



Healthy Work and Community Settings

There are a number of settings within our daily lives that play an integral role in our healthy environments, and can influence the daily choices that we make. These settings include the places we work, health or care sites such as hospitals, GP surgeries or pharmacies and places in the community such as leisure centres, cinemas or community centres. They can all influence or nudge us to make healthy or unhealthy choices.

The places where we work can play an important role in promoting positive health and wellbeing. There are strong social and economic reasons for businesses in the private, public and third sectors to support workplace health, which can increase productivity, job satisfaction and reduce sickness absence. There are a range of approaches which can be considered by employers, such as:

- Increasing the proportion and appeal of healthier food and drink options in cafes, dining rooms and vending machines so they become the norm;
- Restricting promotion and incentives on unhealthy products and increasing promotion and incentives on healthier options;
- Incentivising schemes to promote good physical and mental health such as offering free health checks or cycle to work schemes;
- Providing facilities and policies to support active travel; and
- Promoting peer support workplace initiatives to encourage physical activity, such as lunchtime walks or weight loss programmes.

These actions will help support the adult population in Wales to remain active, to promote community engagement and promote and maintain a healthy weight.



In the immediate term a strong focus will be placed on the public sector bodies, including Local Health Boards, Trusts and Local Authorities to act as exemplars. This will help to transform their environments to both support staff and to ensure that visitors and patients have access to a positive health promoting environment.

We will leverage support to the private sector through our economic contract and encourage change through our health promotion programmes which aim to reduce sickness rates, accidents and injuries and increase employee satisfaction. This will develop greater leadership and build a strong economic case to support the value of having an active and healthy workforce.

We want future community settings to be places that support us to make healthy choices. Increased revenue and profit can be achieved by changing the type of options and promotions which are available, and not relying on the upselling or marketing of convenience foods high in fat, salt and sugar to generate income, particularly when offers are made to children and families.

By 2030 you can expect to see:

Healthy Workplaces

- Enhanced workplace policies and programmes that deliver effective preventative and early intervention approaches for employees, such as healthy lifestyle programmes and signpost to weight management programmes.
- Pilot and embed programmes with public sector employers to test and share work place initiatives around food and physical activity.
- Enhanced compliance with food and drink provision criteria to support the achievement of the health and wellbeing national award status through Healthy Working Wales.

Healthy NHS

- All food and drink provision for patients, staff and visitors to adhere to strict healthy criteria, including within canteens, vending and retail outlets on NHS sites.
- A clear active travel plan for all sites which will promote easy access and use of sustainable transport links.
- Local Health Boards and Trusts evidencing progress to support health and activity within their workforces, including availability of weight management services.

Healthy Communities

- An increase in the promotion of healthier food and drink across a range of community settings such as leisure, cinemas and community centres.
- Explore and use a variety of levers to change the way that food selling practices operate.

What difference will this make?

- An increase in those who are a healthy weight across the working population.
- An increase in physical activity levels against the Chief Medical Officer physical activity guidelines and a decrease in sedentary behaviours.
- A reduction in sickness absences and increases in job satisfaction across workforces implementing interventions.



3 - Healthy People



By 2030 we will deliver a range of approaches that focus on preventing issues for the future, whilst ensuring effective interventions help to drive change and by 2030 we want:

- People feeling more motivated, enabled and supported to make healthier choices throughout their lives.
- A closing of the health inequality gap amongst our most disadvantaged communities through the targeting and tailoring of services, funding and support.
- Health and care services that are compassionate and supported by skilled, confident professionals and volunteers who use each contact with the public to encourage and support them to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- Fair and equitable access to a clinical pathway for weight management with guaranteed access to services for all.

Prevention and Early Intervention

The first 1000 days, that is the time before conception, during pregnancy and up to a child's second birthday, represent a critical part of childhood. It is when we see the most rapid phase of brain development and where the foundations are laid down for our future health and wellbeing.

Establishing healthy habits early in life gives babies and young children the best possible start and reduces their risk of poor physical and emotional health throughout childhood and into adulthood. Good nutrition is a key part of this development. Starting a family is a crucial milestone in anyone's life and a time in which most are keen to make positive changes in their and their families' lives.



However, not all parents experience the same starting point. We know that for some families the day to day challenges of life can make translating good intentions into action very difficult. This is particularly the case in areas where health inequalities are greatest and can impact on and limit the choices which are able to be made.

The importance of sustaining and maintaining good food and physical activity choices when our children start to grow and develop into toddlers and into school age is critical. We know that one in four of our children already start school being overweight or obese, which continues to increase throughout childhood.

Maintaining healthy weight throughout our lives can also provide significant challenges. We experience different triggers and drivers for our lifestyle behaviours and the way we perceive barriers or enablers to looking after our own health also varies from person to person. This is why support to empower people to become healthier in their decision making, leading to small but significant changes, needs to be tailored to an individual's personal values and context. This mean support needs to be flexible and offer variety and choice for people to choose an approach which best suits their needs.

To achieve a step-change for Wales, we will focus on this critical period of development to ensure all children are well nourished and start school at a healthy weight. We will ensure new parents, carers and families receive the right support. We will utilise our existing infrastructure through Flying Start and our health and care system and we will ensure staff are skilled and confident in providing the help parents need. We will target more help to the areas with greatest need and use financial levers for parents to help reduce the cost of eating healthily.

Ensuring that health, care and other professionals engage in regular conversations with patients about being a healthy weight can help to support behaviour change. This is particularly the case if messages and approaches are consistent across professions and settings and are conducted at an early stage rather than left to be addressed when weight issues become more challenging and complex.

A focus on prevention and early intervention at the right time will help to support positive behaviour change with families. These approaches need to be designed with families at the centre to ensure we can support positive parenting and provide advice, information and support which is tailored to their needs.



By 2030 you can expect to see:

The Best Start

- All expectant parents across Wales with access to information and guidance in their local areas to plan positive lifestyle choices and, where appropriate, services to help manage weight.
- Early years health and care professionals, such as midwives and health visitors, will receive behavioural informed training through Making Every Contact Count to support parents, carers and families, with a specific focus on diet and nutrition.
- All new parents will have access to support for commencing and maintaining breastfeeding and developing responsive feeding practices.
- Schemes to support families to develop confident and positive parenting practices. These will include timely introduction of solid foods, overseen by registered dietitians to help sustain a change in behaviours for new families.
- Enhanced financial support for parents on lower incomes to promote good nutrition choices for their child.
- A greater use of digital marketing and web-based information for parents, tailored to people's needs to target messages and to share information and advice.

Healthy Growth and Development

- Areas in Wales where there are the greatest health inequalities will receive enhanced support which will engage families and help develop locally-led solutions.
- Provision of engaging and enjoyable programmes to encourage eating well, sitting less and moving more. This will include targeted programmes in areas where there are greater health inequalities, including food provision during school holidays.

Healthy for Life

- Health care professionals routinely holding conversations with people and raising the issue about weight sensitively.
- Tailored campaigns for adults and children informed by behavioural science, web-based authoritative information and support providing trust-worthy up to date and consistent advice.
- A range of behavioural science informed early intervention weight management support and physical activity based services delivered within local communities which draw upon local assets for children, families and adults linked through social prescribing.
- Realising and monitoring of a clinical obesity pathway and supporting plans across all Local Health Boards in Wales to evidence how prevention and early intervention is being delivered.

What difference will this make?

- An increase in 4-5 year olds starting school a healthy weight, which is sustained through school and into adolescence.
- An increase in breastfeeding rates up to 12 weeks, six months and beyond.
- A reduction in health inequalities linked to obesity rates.
- An increase in people achieving the Chief Medical Officer physical activity guidelines and significantly reduced sedentary behaviours across all ages.



Targeted and Specialist Services

Obesity is linked with a number of chronic conditions and specialist health needs such as Type 2 diabetes. Therefore, to be able to effectively manage lifestyle changes or to plan for future surgery, many people may require specialist support and help from highly skilled professionals to be able to manage their weight.

There are also many people, children or families who may require access to specialist weight management services across Wales to provide intensive help and support. Obesity is linked to a range of psychological triggers and in many cases there is a need for trauma informed support through a skilled multidisciplinary team of professionals to help support positive lifestyle change.

We know that there is evidence of increased weight gain in relation to some mental health conditions. Treatments will continue to highlight the importance of diet and physical exercise working with our health professionals and third sector organisations for those who require tailored support. We will ensure that services are designed to support people with a range of disabilities or other access needs.

We also know that, for some people, in the right circumstances, a medical intervention through bariatric surgery can be effective. This still requires intensive psychological and health professional support and further lifestyle change, both pre and post-surgery in order to have a positive impact for the individual.

By 2030 you can expect to see:

Specialised Support

- Monitoring of a clinically led obesity pathway and supporting plans across all Local Health Boards across Wales to evidence how targeted and specialist services are in place, which will be measured and accountable through NHS planning frameworks.
- Targeted delivery of a National Exercise Referral Scheme which supports people with chronic conditions linked to obesity.
- Evidence-driven dietetic led programmes reversing the trends in Type 2 diabetes through weight management.
- High quality multi professional specialist weight management services available for children and families, and adults across Wales delivered within local communities.
- Equity of access to bariatric surgery for people who require this intervention.

What difference will this make?

- Reduction in adults and children who are obese and morbidly obese across Wales.
- Reduction in chronic diseases, including Type 2 diabetes linked to obesity.



4 – Leadership and Enabling Change



By 2030 we will develop a 'wellness' system for healthy weight; to support and anticipate health needs, to prevent illness, and reduce the impact of poor health and inequality.

Achieving Change

The strategy will be delivered around principles of shared outcomes and responsibilities. We are addressing changes in the way we have lived our lives for decades, so we cannot do more of the same if we want to achieve change.

The solutions we need to find are part of a complex system and will require us to work in a different and more dynamic way to achieve our ultimate goals. The Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 sets the scene for the ambitions and goals which will provide a delivery framework.

This will include delivering on Public Service Board priorities and linking delivery with their local Wellbeing Plans. We will align with the five ways of working on long-term, prevention, integration, collaboration and involvement which will help to support and give the right tools and frameworks to organisations and partnerships in order to demonstrate how they are delivering and fulfilling obligations.

The success of this strategy can help to make a substantial cost saving to the future of NHS services and will improve outcomes for people's long-term health and wellbeing. The strategy will support the National Transformation Programme and the design principles. In particular we aim to balance a nationally consistent framework with local delivery and opportunities to innovate.



National Delivery

Setting an ambitious plan through the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 ensures that we are able to take a long-term approach. Developing the five two-yearly delivery plans ensures accountability and ownership across a number of departments and through a range of policies, programmes and funding levers to drive the required change. The outcomes and 2030 vision set within this strategy will be the guiding principles.

National delivery will be supported in the following ways:

1. Delivery against milestones and outcomes will be accountable to the National Implementation Board. This will have the right level of governance and challenge to assess and make decisions which influence the direction of travel. This will build in collaboration across a number of partners.
2. There will be an overarching evaluation framework which will build in dynamic data and information to assess delivery and drive improvement. This will be accountable to the National Implementation Board.
3. We will publish a set of annual indicators which will assess delivery. This will include providing regional and local data to influence local delivery improvements.
4. Open and honest communications and awareness will be a central component for future delivery. It will be essential for partners and members of the public to see progress across the 10 year period. We will build a communications plan across the two-yearly delivery plans, which will include engagement through online platforms, including social media.
5. We will build in a strong engagement approach that listens and conveys key messages to partners and communities. We will put in place Healthy Weight Ambassadors to facilitate open and honest engagement with communities. This will include ensuring the voices of children and young people help to shape delivery.

Delivering a Systems Based Approach

Leadership at all levels, accountability and governance are crucial if we are to organise and strengthen collective efforts. This strategy is a public service and community issue. We need to move to a system of solutions to empower the leadership and change we wish to see across partners.

As a call to action we will encourage our delivery partners to sign up to a charter which aims to empower healthier lifestyles, and promote physical activity. This charter, through the National Implementation Board, will hold to account each partner who can support and enable change to happen across Wales. Signing up to the charter will help create the positive change needed.

We intend to build accountability into delivery through the NHS planning framework for delivery of clinical services. However, through the National Implementation Board, which will be accountable to Welsh Ministers, we intend to develop a set of reporting mechanisms which will scope how progress is being made across the breadth of the strategy.

In keeping with the multi-agency, long term strategy now being developed to shift the focus of the NHS and other public services towards prevention and wider population health, there is an important need to consider how to align with existing infrastructure and work. In particular through our Flying Start infrastructure and through work to develop integrated approaches within early years system.



Delivery and Principles

The strategy will be delivered with partners across a core set of principles:

1. Adopting an improvement approach. Gaining large scale change across the system will require multiple small scale process changes by leaders and teams from within it. This will allow partners to identify local strengths and opportunities and where there are levers in the system to stimulate change.
2. A blend of nationally delivered programmes alongside a range of local, asset based approaches. These will be underpinned by a 'menu' of effective strategies based on evidence, and will be long-term, sustained approaches and interventions.
3. Delivery to be supported through dynamic analytical and evaluation support, to help partners to assess where progress is being made. Evaluation of programmes will be ongoing and based on continuous improvement principles. Health economics and wider public service savings will be built into an evidence base to identify a cost savings approach.
4. Funding will be leveraged into the system to drive programmes and new ways of working. However, partners will be expected to prioritise and focus local resources to ensure that investments are delivering in a sustainable way. This includes optimizing current programmes and policies to support delivery.
5. Engagement and collaboration will be central themes in order to listen to all voices and build ownership and trust. This will involve continuous engagement with key sectors and members of the public, ensuring inclusion of children, young people and families to explore and test how progress is being made, and to respond to views in an open and transparent way. Developing and identifying key leaders and advocates across all levels will help to drive local system leadership.

To drive the level of ambition we wish to see, we intend to support partners with a range of tools to help inform and shape local thinking. This will include working dynamically with Public Service Boards.

