

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Overview & Scrutiny Committee **DATE:** 3 December 2013

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WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Councillor James Walsh (Commissioner for Health and Wellbeing)
Councillor Pavitar Mann (Commissioner for Education and Children)

PART I **CONSIDERATION & COMMENT**

CHILDHOOD OBESITY REVIEW (MEETING 4): What is the role of GPs and Primary Care?

1 Purpose of Report

To provide the Committee with information relating to the role played by GPs, dietitians, health visitors, school nurses and children's centres play in tackling childhood obesity.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

That the Committee consider the information provided and garnered through questioning at the committee meeting in order to form conclusions on the work currently going on around primary healthcare and in children's centres to tackle childhood obesity.

3 Slough Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

Priorities:

- Health and Wellbeing – enhancing positive health and wellbeing throughout life, encouraging healthy eating and increased physical activity, improving the emotional and physical health of children of all ages from 0 to 19 years.

4 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

The JSNA for Slough in 2009, 2010 and 2011/12 all noted the issue of childhood obesity as a priority.

5 **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications of proposed action.

(b) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal	None	None
Property	None	None
Human Rights	None	None
Health and Safety	None	None
Employment Issues	None	None
Equalities Issues	None	None
Community Support	None	None
Communications	None	None
Community Safety	None	None
Financial	None	None
Timetable for delivery	None	None
Project Capacity	None	None
Other	None	None

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act Implications relating to this report.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no identified need for the completion of an EIA related to the content of this report.

6 **The role of Slough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in tackling childhood obesity in the borough**

- 6.1 A January 2013 report from the Royal College of Physicians called on the medical profession to lead from the front in delivering a solution to the issue of obesity (both childhood and adult), with GPs playing 'a pivotal role not just in obesity prevention, but also in management'. Whilst there has been discussion around the need for GPs with a special interest in weight management, the underlying principle of GPs leading on this issue is around making every contact count. But this is a challenging issue to raise with children and families and needs to be handled in a sensitive and appropriate way.
- 6.2 At present the Slough CCG is not involved in any specific programmes of work, with childhood obesity recognised as an important, but somewhat neglected area in primary care.
- 6.3 The current pathways followed by GPs refer patients presenting with high BMI levels to paediatric dietitians following an initial assessment including blood tests. If needed patients are referred to Community Paediatricians.

- 6.4 There are number of areas where the CCG would be looking to strengthen its working practices, for example:
- following a referral from the GP to a paediatric dietitian or community paediatrician, a robust system of monitoring and following up on progress needs to be introduced;
 - that all GPs surgeries introduce a system of regularly having health checks for children up to 16 years of age. A similar programme of work is done in schools, but GPs have limited knowledge of the results of this or how issues are followed up. A GP surgery-based programme would make it easier to address the problem in its initial stages, with nurses providing advice on health diets and lifestyles. Such a system would also enable closer monitoring of children at a high risk of obesity such as those with obese parents;
 - the need to have closer liaison with public health, health visitors and school nurses. The strengthening of this relationship would ensure children and families at risk of obesity were identified earlier and the issue addressed jointly, including the education of parents on the benefits for the whole family of healthy eating and exercise.
- 6.5 The Slough CCG has launched a website for parents in Slough: www.childhealthslough.com. This website can be used to introduce information on childhood obesity for parents. In addition, leaflets on the issue could be made available in GP surgery waiting rooms, and the CCG could organise events and children's centres to engage with parents on the issue. Effective publicity of the issue, educational events, and information points would be key to the success of these programmes of work.

7 The role of health visitors and school nurses in tackling childhood obesity

- 7.1 The primary role of school nurses and health visitors in dealing with issues of childhood obesity is around prevention and health promotion to children and their families and individual support and signposting on. Starting antenatally with advice about breastfeeding and then onto healthy weaning and the importance of a balanced diet as per start 4 life, promoting the healthy start programme to those eligible and Vit D to all who would benefit . The health visiting staff are trained to baby friendly standard to offer support to breastfeeding mums; and both Health Visitors and School Nurses are trained to effect behaviour change and positive parenting whilst delivering the healthy child programme to support obesity prevention.
- 7.2 Both school nurses and health visitors refer those identified with a need directly to community dieticians or to GPs, CAMHS, or to community paediatricians if the case involves complex development issues in addition to obesity.
- 7.3 The school nurse team undertakes the childhood measuring programme at Year 1 and Year 6, and informs parents of the outcome of the Year 1 screening, offering support if required. We do not have a specific programme to follow up in supporting children and families, but offer regular weighing, dietary advice and general health promotion linking with the change4life programme.
- 7.4 In terms of multi-agency working, School Nurses and Health Visitors support the Food Awareness week when possible and refer children and families to specific weight management programmes when available.

8 **The role of children's centres in tackling childhood obesity**

- 8.1 The 10 children's centres across Slough provide a 'one-stop shop' in a local neighbourhood for services for families with young children.
- 8.2 Within the borough there are 2 types of Centre:
- Full Service Centre – offering a full range of services plus full day care (8am to 6pm childcare for under 5s, crèches, pre-nursery groups and out of school clubs)
 - Graduated Centre – offering a full range of services plus sessional childcare (crèches and pre-nursery groups)
- 8.3 The Centres offer a comprehensive portfolio of services in partnership with a wide range of other agencies:
- health services, ante-natal and post natal support, speech and language therapy, Healthy Start vitamins, Food Bank vouchers
 - Stay and Play groups, music and story times, Play & Learn groups and targeted Family Learning
 - flexible childcare with education for children from 3 months upwards
 - support for children with learning difficulties and disabilities and their families
 - free Bookstart packs and lending services for library books and toys
 - help and advice on a wide range of family matters
 - healthy eating workshops and cookery tips for feeding the family
 - adult education and training, plus advice and guidance for adults seeking employment, and lots more.
- 8.4 The children's centres' provide the facilities within which health visitors and other programmes of work to tackle obesity are run. This support is essential to the early identification of risks, and the establishment of good habits which can help prevent obesity as a child develops.
- 8.5 The broad nature of the children's centres means that the bigger issues that have an impact on the risk of obesity can be identified, such as self esteem of the parents, adult skills, budget management, or cooking facilities available at home. This work begins during pregnancy and the importance of breastfeeding and weaning programmes are extremely important life practices for the future health of the child.
- 8.6 Alongside facilitating the work of others such as health visitors, the children's centres are also involved in directly providing services such as the provision of meals for children within their care throughout the day, as well as providing role model practice to assist parents in caring for their children such as cooking schools.
- 8.7 All the children's centres in the borough have signed up to the Smiling for Life initiative which promotes healthy snacks, as well as the Catering for Health Award that covers the provision of healthier food choices. The centres follow the national Early Years Foundation Stage framework, which supports children from birth to 5

across all areas of development. Through this, children are taught about healthy eating choices and about the importance of physical exercise. In 2014 the children's centres will be involved in the borough-wide Slough Walks and Talks initiative aimed at getting young children to be more active in everyday life.

- 8.8 The Children's Centres and other early years providers in Slough, including some schools, are also involved in providing 15 hours free nursery education provision for the most disadvantaged 2-year-olds in the borough. The eligibility criteria are the same as those that apply to Free School Meals, and so the Children's Centres are providing free meals to the 2-year-olds who attend for their free nursery education hours at meal times. The Centres also use the 2-year-old programme to provide bespoke family learning through engagement with low income families. The family learning programmes address a number of specific issues relating to parenting capacity and other family and environmental issues that may be affecting the children's wellbeing and development, including factors that may lead to unhealthy eating habits in adulthood.
- 8.9 A key aspect of ensuring children's centres can play an effective role in the development of the borough's children through supporting parents is establishing the process of registering with a children's centre as a matter of course, similar to GPs. This will ensure that the facilities and advice are available to those who need it most.

9 **Public Health Programmes**

- 9.1 Community dietitians are commissioned by Public Health to provide early years and school-based interventions around prevention and treatment for childhood obesity. The Committee discussed many of these programmes of work when they looked at the role of schools in tackling childhood obesity, for example:
- Let's Get Going – provided through Berkshire Youth a programme which is due to start in a number of primary schools in the borough. This programme is a 10 week, holistic programme looking at nutrition, physical activity, behavioural change and after-school healthy lifestyles club aimed at children in years four to six. These sessions are also available to parents of children with behavioural or weight issues, as well as children with normal weight who can use the programme to enhance their fitness and activity.
 - Mission Healthy Eating – a programme of work specifically aimed at improving the nutritional quality of packed lunches and promoting school meal uptake.

10 **Conclusion**

- 10.1 This report provides information on the work going on across the primary healthcare sector and in children's centres to tackle the issue of childhood obesity in Slough, in order to inform the Committee's discussions on the issue.

11 **Background Papers**

- 1 - Royal College of Physicians – Action on obesity: Comprehensive care for all (Report of a working party, January 2013)