

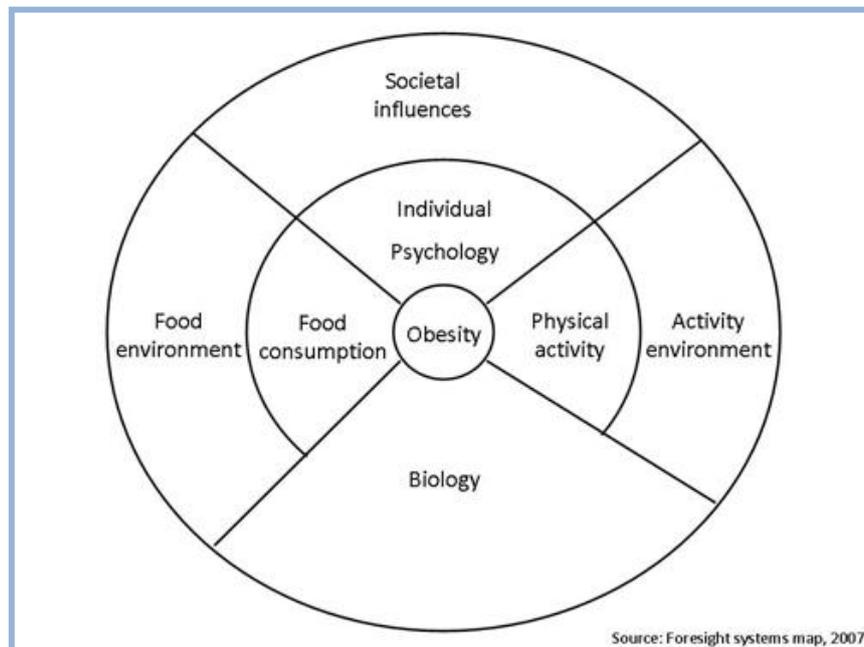
ADULT OBESITY, HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY Fact Sheet

Background

The prevalence of obesity among adults increased sharply in England during the 1990s and early 2000s. In 2015, 27% of adults were obese. Being overweight was more common than being obese and 41% of men and 31% of women were overweight, but not obese (Health Survey for England).¹

Obesity is associated with a range of health problems including Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. The resulting NHS costs attributable to overweight and obesity have been projected to reach £9.7 billion by 2050, with wider costs to society estimated to reach £49.9 billion per year (Foresight Report 2007).² These factors combine to make the prevention of obesity a major Public Health challenge.

Obesity occurs when over time the energy consumed from food and drink exceeds the energy expended through the body's metabolism and physical activity. These factors result in an accumulation of excess body fat. However there are many complex behavioural and societal factors that contribute to the causes of obesity. The Foresight Report presented an 'obesity system map' with energy balance at its centre to demonstrate this.³ A simplified version of this map is shown below:



¹ Health Survey for England (2015) <http://content.digital.nhs.uk/healthsurveyengland>

² Tackling Obesity Future Choices: Foresight 2007
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/287937/07-1184x-tackling-obesities-future-choices-report.pdf

³ Obesity System Map (Foresight Report 2007) <http://www.shiftn.com/obesity/Full-Map.html>



There is no one simple solution to tackling obesity; rather it requires an integrated and wide-ranging programme of solutions involving national and local actions. There has been a national focus on obesity and a series of strategies in recent years: the Public Health White Paper '*Choosing Health*' (2004),⁴ the National Strategy on Obesity '*Healthy Weight Healthy Lives*' (2008)⁵ and the '*Call to Action on Obesity in England*' (2011)⁶ which sets out the key components of a successful approach through:

- Empowering individuals
- Giving partners the opportunity to play their full part
- Giving local government the lead role in driving health improvement and harnessing partners at local level
- Building the evidence base

Physical Activity

In 2011 the UK Chief Medical Officers published revised guidelines for physical activity taking a life course approach, recommending that adults should undertake at least 150 minutes (2.5 hours) of moderate intensity physical activity a week in bouts of 10 minutes or more. The CMOs also published a report '*Start Active, Stay Active*' (2011) aimed at reducing sedentary behaviour for all age groups.⁷

However, participation is influenced by the environment in which we live and by individual characteristics. Barriers to active living may include fears about crime and road safety, pollution, access to recreation and sport facilities, attitudes and transport. Those people that are more disadvantaged may be less able to afford access to facilities and more likely to live in neighbourhoods with crime and traffic problems.⁸

Risk factors

Lifestyle and behaviour choices are important factors in influencing weight status. Unhealthy diets and physical inactivity are major risk factors for overweight and obesity as well as a number of chronic health conditions including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, some cancers and high blood pressure.⁹

⁴ Department of Health. *Choosing Health: Making healthy choices easier*. November 2004.

⁵ Department of Health. *Healthy weight, healthy lives: a cross-government strategy for England*. January 2008.

⁶ Department of Health. *Healthy Lives, Healthy People: A call to action on obesity in England*. October 2011.

⁷ Department of Health, Physical Activity, Health Improvement and Protection. *Start Active, Stay Active: A report on physical activity from the four home countries' Chief Medical Officers*. July 2011.

⁸ Edwards P and Tsouros A. *Promoting physical activity and active living in urban environments*. WHO Europe 2006.

⁹ NHS Choices. *Cut down on your calories*. <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/eat-less.aspx>

The Local Picture

Excess weight

Statistics recently published by the Public Health Outcomes Framework indicate that 60.5% of adults (aged 16 years and over) in Sutton are overweight or obese (i.e. almost two thirds). **Fig. 1** shows that compared to other London authorities Sutton ranks similar to London (58.8%), and ranks 14th out of 33 boroughs, though is lower (better) than the national average (64.8%). Sutton's rate of adults with excess weight improved in the last year, down from 63.2% to 60.5%.

Adults are defined as overweight (including obese) if their Body Mass Index (BMI) is greater than or equal to 25kg/m². This is a new indicator based on adjusted, self-reported height and weight collected via the Active People Survey by Sport England since 2012. Previously only modelled estimates were available so this indicator is of significant interest. However, it is currently only available for Sutton as a whole and not for areas within the borough.

Fig 1: Percentage of adults overweight or obese, Sutton compared to London authorities

Physical Activity

Although the percentage of Sutton adults with excess weight is higher than London, rates of physical activity are similar to London and England as shown in **Fig. 2**. The percentage of active Sutton adults is 58.8%, compared to London 57.8%, and England 57%. This 2015 data is based on the UK CMO's definition of adults achieving at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week.

Fig. 2: Percentage of physically active and inactive adults, Sutton compared with London authorities, 2015

Fig 3 shows that trends of physical activity for Sutton have remained similar for the last two years.

Fig. 3: Trend in percentage of physically active adults, Sutton compared with London and England

Assets

The environment, including street layout, land use, recreation facilities, parks, public buildings and the transport system can impact on an individual's motivation to take part in physical activity. People are more active when they can easily access parks, green spaces, workplaces and shops.⁵

Sutton has significant assets in terms of access to green spaces, parks, allotments and playing fields as shown in **Fig. 4**. Work should continue across the borough to promote our environment and raise awareness of the (free) opportunities for individuals and families to be physically active.

Fig 4: Sutton Assets for being active

What works

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has published guidance on evidence based approaches to enable communities and specific population groups to achieve a healthy weight. These are summarised as follows:

Guidance on **Obesity** (NICE 2006)¹⁰ on the prevention, identification, assessment and management of overweight and obesity in adults and children recommends that the prevention and management of obesity should be a priority for all, because of the considerable health benefits of maintaining a healthy weight and the risks associated with obesity.

Detailed actions are included for:

- NHS
- Local authorities and partners
- Early years settings
- Schools
- Workplaces
- Self-help, commercial and community settings

Guidance on **Obesity, working with local communities** (NICE 2012)¹¹ recommends:

- Developing a coherent sustainable, community wide, multi agency approach
- Align action to tackle obesity with other disease specific prevention and health improvement strategies, such as CHD and diabetes
- Ensuring strategic leadership and support at all levels
- Coordinated local action and communication in Public Health teams, local business and social enterprises, voluntary and community organisations
- Training and development for all partners, professionals and those in local services.
- Communication strategy through appropriate branding, language and advocacy.
- Monitoring and evaluation of cost effectiveness
- Embed scrutiny and accountability

Guidance on **weight management before, during and after pregnancy** (NICE 2010)¹² recommends:

- Weight management for women with a BMI 30 or more preparing for pregnancy
- Help for pregnant women to adopt healthy lifestyles during pregnancy
- Supporting women after childbirth at postnatal checkups
- Community-based services
- Adequate skills for involved professionals

¹⁰ NICE. Obesity: Guidance on the prevention of overweight and obesity in adults and children, 2006. <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg43>

¹¹ NICE. Obesity: working with local communities. <http://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/obesity-working-with-local-communities>

¹² NICE. Weight management before, during and after pregnancy, 2010. <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph27>

Guidance on **walking and cycling** (NICE 2010)¹³ recommends:

- Developing a local strategy and policy support for walking and cycling networks and infrastructure
- Developing road safety partnerships and strategies
- Addressing motor traffic speeds and introducing engineering measures
- Ensuring all relevant planning consider walking and cycling
- Developing cross sector walking and cycling programmes
- Commissioning personalised travel planning
- Community wide walking programmes, including older people and individual support
- Developing cycling programmes

Guidance on **Physical activity: brief advice for adults in primary care** (NICE 2013)¹⁴ recommends:

- Identifying adults who are inactive
- Delivering and following up on brief advice
- Incorporating brief advice in commissioning
- Systems to support brief advice
- Providing information and training

Guidance on **Assessing body mass index and waist circumference thresholds for intervening to prevent ill health and premature death among adults from black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups in the UK** (NICE 2013)¹⁵ recommends:

- Preventing type 2 diabetes
- BMI assessment, multi-component interventions and best practice standards
- General awareness raising

Key indicators and targets

Relevant indicators from the Public Health Outcomes Framework

<http://www.phoutcomes.info>

Health Improvement Domain:

- 2.12 Percentage of adults classified as overweight or obese
- 2.13 Physically active and inactive adults
- 2.17 Recorded diabetes
- 2.22 Take up of NHS Health Check Programme by those eligible

¹³ NICE. Walking and cycling overview. <http://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/walking-and-cycling>

¹⁴ NICE. Physical activity: brief advice for adults in primary care, 2013. <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph44>

¹⁵ NICE. Assessing body mass index and waist circumference thresholds for intervening to prevent ill health and premature death among adults from black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups in the UK, 2013. <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph46/chapter/recommendations>

Links to further information

- See also Factsheets on **Child Obesity and Healthy Weight, Diabetes**
- National Obesity Strategy. Healthy Lives, Healthy People: A call to action on obesity in England. October 2011. Available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213720/dh_130487.pdf
- NHS Choices. Obesity. <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/obesity/pages/introduction.aspx>
- Health and Social Care Information Centre. Statistics on Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet - England, 2013. Available from: <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB10364>