



lightening the load: tackling overweight and obesity

A toolkit for developing local strategies to tackle
overweight and obesity in children and adults

NATIONAL 
Heart Forum



NHS

Produced by the **National Heart Forum** in association with the **Faculty of Public Health** and the **Department of Health**

Endorsed by the **National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)**,
the **Food Standards Agency**, the **Royal College of General Practitioners**,
the **Royal College of Nursing** and the **Royal College of Physicians**

lightening the load:

tackling overweight and obesity

A toolkit for developing local strategies to tackle
overweight and obesity in children and adults

Written by Dr Kerry Swanton and Monica Frost
Consultant editor: Dr Alan Maryon-Davis

Produced by the **National Heart Forum** in association with
the **Faculty of Public Health** and the **Department of Health**
Endorsed by the **National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)**,
the **Food Standards Agency**, the **Royal College of General Practitioners**,
the **Royal College of Nursing** and the **Royal College of Physicians**

Lightening the load: Tackling overweight and obesity contains information which has been adapted and reproduced from the NICE guideline on obesity with the intention of reflecting the content of the guideline and facilitating its implementation. NICE fully supports this. NICE has not however carried out a full check of the information contained in the toolkit to confirm that it does accurately reflect the NICE guideline. Nothing should be regarded as constituting NICE guidance except for the wording actually published by NICE.

Lightening the load: Tackling overweight and obesity

Written by Dr Kerry Swanton and Monica Frost.

Consultant editor: Dr Alan Maryon-Davis.

Edited and produced by Wordworks, London W4 4DB.

Design by Heidi Baker.

© National Heart Forum, 2007

If you require further copies of this toolkit quote
50374/*Lightening the Load: tackling overweight and obesity*
and contact:

DH Publications Orderline

PO Box 777

London SE1 6XH

E dh@prolog.uk.com

T 08701 555 455

F 01623 724 524

Textphone: 08700 102 870 (8am to 6pm Monday to Friday)

www.dh.gov.uk/publications

This toolkit can also be downloaded from www.heartforum.org.uk or www.fph.org.uk. These websites provide up-to-date information about developments in the area of obesity.

National Heart Forum

Tavistock House South

Tavistock Square

London WC1H 9LG

T 020 7383 7638

E nhf-post@heartforum.org.uk

W www.heartforum.org.uk

Registered charity number 803286

Faculty of Public Health

4 St Andrews Place

London NW1 4LB

T 020 7935 0243

E enquiries@fph.org.uk

W www.fph.org.uk

Registered charity number 263894

Acknowledgements

Financial assistance

The National Heart Forum and the Faculty of Public Health would like to thank the Department of Health for providing financial assistance for the production of this toolkit.

Steering Group

Mr Paul Lincoln, National Heart Forum

Mr Tim Marsh, National Heart Forum

Dr Alan Maryon-Davis, National Heart Forum and Faculty of Public Health, and Chair of the Faculty of Public Health's Cardiovascular Health Working Group

Dr Chloe Parkin, Faculty of Public Health

Ms Lindsey Stewart, Faculty of Public Health

Individuals and organisations who contributed to the development of the toolkit

Dr Maureen Baker, Royal College of General Practitioners

Dr Maggie Barker, Regional Public Health Group – London

Ms Beelin Baxter, Department of Health East of England Public Health Group

Ms Anne Bowen, on behalf of The Royal Society for the Promotion of Health

Mr Colin Brown, Thurrock Primary Care Trust

Dr Rodney Burnham, Royal College of Physicians

Ms Joanne Butcher, National Children's Bureau

Ms Stephanie Cash, Luton Teaching Primary Care Trust

Mr Nick Cavill, Cavill Associates

Ms Emma Cooney, British Heart Foundation

Dr Rebecca Cordery, Bexley Primary Care Trust

Dr Adrienne Cullum, National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)

Ms Jenny Daniel, Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Ms Anna D'Arcy, Wandsworth Public Health Trust

Ms Jennifer Davies, Southampton City Primary Care Trust

Ms Maggie Dent, North Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust Partnership

Ms Louise Diss, The Obesity Awareness and Solutions Trust

Dr Laurel Edmunds, Independent Consultant and Researcher

Dr Daragh Fahey, Department of Health

Dr Nicholas Finer, Wellcome Clinical Research Facility

Mr Tam Fry, Child Growth Foundation

Ms Julie George, Westminster NHS Primary Care Trust

Dr Penny Gibson, Blackwater Valley and Hart Primary Care Trust

Dr Alison Giles, Department of Health

Dr Lesley Hammond, Chilton and South Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust

Ms Michelle Hawkes, Somerset Specialist Health Promotion Service

Ms Rosemary Hignett, Food Standards Agency

Ms Julie Holt, Bolton Public Health Trust

Ms Paula Hunt, Weight Watchers (UK) Ltd

Mr Paul Iggulden, Portsmouth City Primary Care Trust

Mr Philip Insall, Sustrans

Dr Susan Jebb, MRC Collaborative Centre for Human Nutrition Research

Ms Sally Johnson, Kingston Primary Care Trust

Dr Matt Kearney, General Practitioner, Castlefields Health Centre

Ms Lynne Kilner, Torbay Primary Care Trust

Ms Ruth Kipping, South Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust
Dr Beckie Lang, on behalf of the Association for the Study of Obesity and the Food and Nutrition
Group at the University of Teesside
Dr Jacquie Lavin, on behalf of Slimming World
Dr Catherine Law, Institute of Child Health
Dr Tim Lobstein, The Food Commission/International Obesity Taskforce
Dr Ann Mackie, South West London Strategic Health Authority
Dr Soraya Meah, South Liverpool Primary Care Trust
Mr Colin Noble, Department of Health
Ms Teresa Ann Owen, National Public Health Service for Wales
Ms Siu-Ann Pang, North Stoke Primary Care Trust
Ms Felicity Porritt, National Obesity Forum
Ms Vivien Prendiville, Morecambe Bay Public Health Development
Dr Sheela Reddy, Department of Health
Mr Neville Rigby, International Obesity Taskforce
Mr Graham Robertson, NHS Health Scotland
Dr Sheila Shribman, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
Ms Diane Spalding, Leicestershire and Rutland Strategic Food and Health Group
Professor Sarah Stewart-Brown, Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick
Ms Tracey Sweet, South West Peninsula Strategic Health Authority
Ms Tracey Thornley, Boots the Chemist
Ms Angela Towers, Northwest Food and Health Task Force, University of Central Lancashire
Mr Nigel Wallace, Peninsula Consulting
Dr Helen Walters, Portsmouth City Primary Care Trust
Ms Sue Weaver, on behalf of Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Primary Care Trust, Cotswold and Vale
Primary Care Trust, and West Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust
Mr David Wilkins, on behalf of the Men's Health Forum
Ms Nicky Wilkins, Faculty of Occupational Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians
Ms Carole Wood, on behalf of Morecambe Bay Primary Care Trust
Ms Lesley Wyman, Newbury and Community Primary Care Trust

Foreword

In 2000 the Faculty of Public Health published *Tackling obesity: A toolbox for local partnership action*, aimed at local teams involved in planning and coordinating strategies for the prevention and management of overweight and obesity. This new toolkit builds on the success of the original and, although primarily designed for use in England, should also be of use to those working in other parts of the UK.

As the levels of overweight and obesity in England have risen, so too have the thinking and best practice of those working in the area developed. It is a fast-moving arena and the publication of the health improvement white paper *Choosing health* has created many opportunities for those working at a local level to develop interventions further. This toolkit provides information and guidance to help your primary care trust or local authority select the most appropriate strategic interventions for your area. It complements the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guideline on obesity.

Overweight and obesity are complex conditions closely linked to today's society and the wider determinants of health. As yet, no country has successfully reduced the overweight and obesity burden. The toolkit will help you to consider the best approaches to tackling overweight and obesity in your local area, taking into account the specific needs of your local population and the socioeconomic and psychological experiences they may face. We hope that the toolkit will help you to develop the most appropriate and successful strategy for the needs of your community.

Caroline Flint

Minister for Public Health
Department of Health

Professor Rod Griffiths CBE

President
Faculty of Public Health

Sir Alexander Macara

Chairman
National Heart Forum

Contents

Introduction	11
Section A Overweight and obesity: the public health burden	13
What are 'overweight' and 'obesity'?	13
Prevalence and trends of overweight and obesity	16
The health burden of overweight and obesity	21
The health benefits of losing excess weight	25
The economic burden of overweight and obesity	27
What causes overweight and obesity?	28
Section B Overweight and obesity: reducing the burden	35
Tackling overweight and obesity	35
Preventing overweight and obesity	37
• Preventing overweight and obesity in whole populations	37
• Preventing overweight and obesity in individuals at risk	43
Managing overweight and obesity through primary care	44
Section C Developing a local overweight and obesity strategy	53
Making the case for a local overweight and obesity strategy	55
Partnership working	57
Resource mapping: reviewing current activity and identifying gaps	59
Identifying priorities and target groups	60
Deciding aims, objectives, standards, targets and milestones	62
Choosing interventions	63
• Preventing overweight and obesity	64
• Managing overweight and obesity	71
Understanding barriers and facilitating change	80
Infrastructure support	82
Monitoring and evaluation	83
Mainstreaming and sustainability	84

Section D Resources 87

Tools

Tool 1	Suggested structure for a local overweight and obesity strategy	89
Tool 2	Obesity prevalence ready-reckoner	91
Tool 3	Measurement and assessment of overweight and obesity – ADULTS	95
Tool 4	Height and weight chart – ADULTS	101
Tool 5	Measurement and assessment of overweight and obesity – CHILDREN	103
Tool 6	Centile BMI charts – CHILDREN	107
Tool 7	Local planning proforma	109
Tool 8	National Heart Forum e-News Briefing Service	111
Tool 9	Partnership working – A settings approach	113
Tool 10	Checklist to review current activity	117
Tool 11	Prioritisation and planning	119
Tool 12	Standards, targets and milestones	123
Tool 13	Evidence of effectiveness	125
Tool 14	Evidence of cost-effectiveness	143
Tool 15	Preventing overweight and obesity – NICE recommendations	145
Tool 16	Preventing overweight and obesity – Interventions guide	149
Tool 17	Dealing with overweight and obesity – Guidance for health professionals	161
Tool 18	Losing weight – Information for patients	173
Tool 19	Setting up a 'weight management on referral' scheme	175
Tool 20	Proforma for developing a local action plan for the prevention and management of overweight and obesity	177
Tool 21	Ways of involving patients and the public in tackling overweight and obesity	179
Tool 22	Monitoring and evaluation – Research and evaluation toolbox	181
For more information		
	National policy drivers	183
	Useful organisations and websites	189

Acronyms 191

Index 192

List of Tables

Table 1	NICE classification of overweight and obesity in adults	14
Table 2	Waist circumference thresholds used to assess health risks in the general adult population	14
Table 3	Prevalence of obesity and central obesity among adults aged 16 and over living in England, by ethnic group, 2003/2004	17
Table 4	Prevalence of obesity among children aged 2-15 living in England, by ethnic group, 2004	19
Table 5	Relative risks of health problems associated with obesity	21
Table 6	The benefits of a 10kg weight loss	25
Table 7	Government recommendations on diet and physical activity	39
Table 8	Main settings for preventing overweight and obesity	65
Table 9	Clinical guidance for managing overweight and obesity in adults, children and young people	72

List of Figures

Figure 1	Prevalence of overweight and obesity among adults, by age and sex, England, 2005	17
Figure 2	Prevalence of overweight and obesity among children, by age and sex, England, 2005	19
Figure 3	Obesity trends among children aged 2-15, England, by sex, 1995-2005	20
Figure 4	Cost of selected diseases in the UK, 1999	27
Figure 5	Wider determinants of health	30
Figure 6	Department of Health approach for delivering the PSA target on obesity	36
Figure 7	The 'Three E's model for lifestyle change'	36
Figure 8	The Balance of Good Health	38
Figure 9	Triple-tier service model for weight management	46
Figure 10	Suggested structure for developing a local overweight and obesity strategy	54

This toolkit is intended as a resource to help those working at local level to plan and coordinate comprehensive strategies to prevent and manage overweight and obesity. It focuses on multisector partnership approaches. Although specifically tailored for England, much of the information and guidance in the toolkit apply equally to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

This toolkit can be downloaded from

www.heartforum.org.uk or **www.fph.org.uk**.

These websites provide up-to-date information about developments in the area of obesity.

Introduction

Nearly a quarter of people in England are obese and current trends may mean that today's children have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.¹ It has been estimated that, unless we take effective action, about one-third of adults and one-fifth of children aged 2-10 years will be obese by 2010.²

The rapid increase in levels of overweight and obesity has occurred in a time period too small for genetic changes to be the cause. This means that the growing health problems are likely to be caused by behavioural and environmental changes in our society. Added to this, overweight and obesity are health inequalities issues, with people from the lowest socioeconomic groups most at risk.

This toolkit has been designed to provide a starting point for developing a local strategy to tackle overweight and obesity. It is intended to help local multiagency teams – including public health, health promotion and primary care professionals, and strategic planners in both the NHS and local government in England – to develop and implement strategies and action plans to halt the year-on-year rise of overweight and obesity through prevention and management.

The toolkit provides a comprehensive collection of information and tools to assist with delivering current national and local policies. It purposefully does not provide detailed information about care and treatment of overweight and obesity, but rather offers signposts to well established and comprehensive material covered elsewhere. The toolkit complements the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) clinical guideline *Obesity: the prevention, identification, assessment and management of overweight and obesity in adults and children*.³

The toolkit is designed to equip local action teams with the necessary information and tools to meet and address the challenge of tackling overweight and obesity. It has four sections:

Section A: Overweight and obesity: the public health burden

This section focuses on the public health case for developing a local overweight and obesity strategy.

Section B: Overweight and obesity: reducing the burden

This section looks at ways of reducing the burden of overweight and obesity through prevention and management. It considers the broad principles involved and some of the evidence supporting particular approaches.

Section C: Developing a local overweight and obesity strategy

This section provides a practical guide to developing a local strategy to prevent and manage overweight and obesity.

Section D: Resources

This section contains the tools highlighted in section C, as well as further information on national policy drivers, and details of useful organisations and websites.

KEY FACTS

Overweight and obesity in England

- Overweight and obesity increase the risk of a wide range of diseases and illnesses, including coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and some cancers.⁴
- Obesity reduces life expectancy on average by nine years and is responsible for 9,000 premature deaths a year.⁴
- The prevalence of obesity has trebled since the 1980s.^{4,5} In 2005, 22.1% of men and 24.3% of women were obese and almost two-thirds of all adults – approximately 31 million adults – were either overweight or obese.⁵ (For definitions of 'overweight' and 'obese', see page 13.)
- Overweight and obesity are also increasing in children. In 2005, 31% of children aged 2-10 years were overweight (including obese), and 16.8% were obese.⁵ Among 11-15 year olds, 35.1% were overweight (including obese) and 20.6% were obese. This represents a 33% increase in overweight (including obese) and a 59% increase in obesity since 1995 for 2-15 year old children.⁵ If the proportion of obese children continues to rise, a whole generation may have a shorter average life expectancy than their parents.¹
- It has been estimated that, if current trends continue, about one-third of adults and one-fifth of children aged 2-10 years will be obese by 2010.²
- There are social group differences in obesity, particularly for women and children – 18.7% of women in professional households are obese compared with 29.1% in routine and semi-routine households.⁶ A similar pattern is seen among children, with 12.4% in professional households classified as obese compared with 17.1% in semi-routine households.¹
- Most evidence suggests that the main reason for the rising prevalence of overweight and obesity is a combination of less active lifestyles and changes in eating patterns.⁴
- Obesity has a substantial human cost by contributing to the onset of disease and premature death. It also has serious financial consequences for the NHS and for the economy. The economic costs of obesity are estimated at between £3.3 billion and £3.7 billion per year and the costs of obesity plus overweight at between £6.6 billion and £7.4 billion per year.⁷

Note: The Health Survey for England (HSE) figures are weighted to compensate for non-response. (Before the HSE 2003, data were not weighted for non-response.)

References

- 1 Jotangia D, Moody A, Stamatakis E, Wardle H (2005) *Obesity among children under 11*. London: National Centre for Social Research, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at the Royal Free and University College Medical School
- 2 Zaninotto P, Wardle H, Stamatakis E, Mindell J, Head J (2006) *Forecasting obesity to 2010*. London: Joint Health Surveys Unit (National Centre for Social Research, and the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at the Royal Free and University College Medical School). www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/13/86/29/04138629.pdf
- 3 National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) (2006) *Obesity: the prevention, identification, assessment and management of overweight and obesity in adults and children*. London: NICE. www.nice.org.uk/guidance/CG43
- 4 Department of Health (2004) *Choosing health: Making healthy choices easier*. London: Department of Health
- 5 The Information Centre for Health and Social Care (2006) *Health Survey for England 2005: Updating of trend tables to include 2005 data*. London: The Information Centre for Health and Social Care. www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/hseupdate05
- 6 Sproston K, Primatesta P (eds.) (2004) *Health Survey for England 2003. Volume 2: Risk factors for cardiovascular disease*. London: TSO. www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/09/89/11/04098911.pdf
- 7 Based on figures quoted in: House of Commons Health Select Committee (2004) *Obesity: Third report of session 2003-2004, volume 1*. London: TSO