



HARINGEY OBESITY CONFERENCE

## Report

Healthy  
Haringey

*Small changes, big difference*

## Introduction by Councillor Morton – Cabinet lead for Health and Wellbeing

---

Obesity is a difficult problem. It is complex in its origins and often difficult to recognise or acknowledge. These challenges however were no match for the ‘can do’ attitude on show at Haringey’s Obesity Conference held in June.

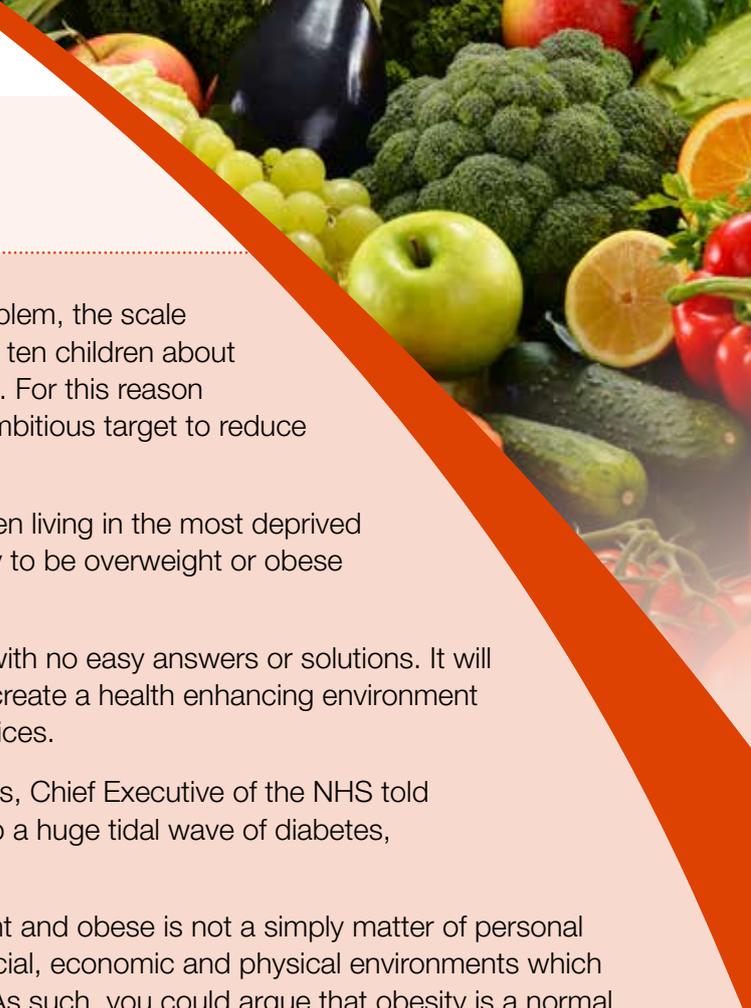
Thanks to the energy, enthusiasm and great ideas in the room, I left the event - as I’m sure many others did - feeling inspired and determined to take decisive action to reverse our obesity epidemic. More than 200 participants, from a wide range of local organisations, shared ideas and examples of best practice.

The event galvanised support for a collective approach to tackling obesity through a Haringey Obesity Alliance, which was launched at the conference. The positive impact the conference has had is already beginning to show. Since June many organisations have signed up to the Haringey Obesity Alliance.

It is through this Alliance that the council and Homes for Haringey has pledged to review all the “no ball game signs” in the borough, to encourage more young people to engage in physical activity and exercise where it is safe and appropriate to do so. We recognise that this is only one small piece in what needs to be a wide patchwork of changes. But as part of a wider programme of action coordinated by the Alliance, interventions like this will help to create our vision of a Haringey where the healthier choice is also the easier choice.

We know we have a lot of work to do to deliver this vision. But given the spirit on show at the conference, I’m confident that the collective will exists in this borough to create the healthier Haringey we all want to see.





## Key learning points from the conference

- While Haringey is not unique in facing an obesity problem, the scale of challenge in Haringey is daunting - with four out of ten children about to start secondary school either overweight or obese. For this reason Haringey's Health and Wellbeing Board has set an ambitious target to reduce obesity to the English average by 2018.
- The link between poverty and obesity is stark. Children living in the most deprived parts of Haringey are two and a half times more likely to be overweight or obese compared to the most affluent parts.
- Reducing and preventing obesity is a complex task with no easy answers or solutions. It will require concerted effort by the whole community to create a health enhancing environment that makes it easier for people to make healthier choices.
- In his video address to the conference Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of the NHS told warned that by not tackling obesity we are storing up a huge tidal wave of diabetes, heart disease and cancers.
- Professor Harry Rutter stressed that being overweight and obese is not a simply matter of personal choice, but a result of complex relations between social, economic and physical environments which makes it far more likely that people will gain weight. As such, you could argue that obesity is a normal reaction to our abnormal environment.
- There is no single 'silver bullet' which will reverse the rising trend of obesity. Rather these problems should be thought of as a large jigsaw puzzle in which many interventions, policies and actions are required from individuals and society across multiple sectors in order to complete the picture.
- Professor Martin Caraher stressed that there is a role for regulation through planning policy to change the local food culture and support the development of a health enhancing environment in Haringey where healthier choices are easier.

## Next steps – join Haringey's Obesity Alliance

The Haringey Obesity Alliance is a group of local organisations committed to working together to reduce obesity in Haringey.

Comprised of local schools, the NHS, businesses and the voluntary sector, the Haringey Obesity Alliance is helping to make Haringey a healthier place where fewer people are overweight or obese.

Chaired by Cllr Peter Morton, Haringey Council's Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and reporting to Haringey's Health and Wellbeing Board, the Alliance coordinates efforts to fight obesity to ensure they have the greatest possible impact locally.

The Alliance is seeking like-minded organisations to join efforts in tackling obesity in Haringey.

New partners will pledge to support more people to eat better, be more physically active and create an environment where it is easier for people to make healthier choices.

For more information about the Haringey Obesity Alliance, including details of how you can join please email [obesity.alliance@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:obesity.alliance@haringey.gov.uk)