

Welcome to this Hartlepool Director of Public Health Annual Report.

It's focus is how people of all ages in Hartlepool can achieve and maintain a healthy weight and improve their physical activity.

Both of these are of the utmost importance for your health and wellbeing as they have a particular impact in terms of your quality and length of life.

Being overweight or obese is linked to a number of very

serious conditions including diabetes, cardiovascular disease and a number of cancers.

Conversely, increasing your physical activity has a significant positive impact on not only your physical health but also your mental health, and this report tells the story of how, here in Hartlepool, we are doing this.

It's an inspiring story about real people who are making a real difference to their health and to their lives.

Obesity



Obesity refers to an unhealthy weight that corresponds with an increase in body fat.

The main way to measure obesity is by using the body mass index (BMI). This measures your weight and height and gives you a score.

For most adults a BMI of:

18.5 to 24.9 means you're a healthy weight
25 to 29.9 means you're overweight
30 to 39.9 means you're obese
40 or above means you're severely obese

Another useful way to measure excess fat is to look at your waist size. Men with a waist size of 94cm and women with a waist size of 80cm are more likely to experience obesity-related problems.

Children should be measured differently – the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) has been set up to measure children in reception and Year 6. Children of different ages and sexes develop differently which makes measuring complex. Because of this the NCMP uses a different method which compares a child's BMI with a reference weight.

Here's Gemma Ptak, the Council's Assistant Director (Preventative and Community-Based Services), to tell you more about Hartlepool's obesity problem and how it's being tackled.

Also, [click here](#) for a more detailed breakdown of health in Hartlepool.

Working in Partnership

Local authorities across the country have been engaged in piloting the whole systems approach to obesity prevention. We are learning from them what has worked and also what doesn't work in order to ensure we are using the best possible evidence to develop our work programmes.

We can take our lead by looking at what has been successful elsewhere. A programme of work developed in Amsterdam (the Amsterdam Healthy Weight Programme) has been highlighted as being a good example of an urban level system-wide approach to tackling obesity.

Early indications from the city suggested success in reducing obesity using a range of approaches. These included focusing on the first 1,000 days, working in schools, community-based approaches, working with businesses and helping children to lose weight. This is an example of working together in partnership to achieve our goals.

Here's Craig Blundred, Hartlepool's Deputy Director of Public Health, to tell you more.



Badminton



Hartlepool Borough Council has a range of activities at its local centres that are accessible for all sections of the community. Sports like badminton are key components of the range of activities we provide across the town.

Physical activity is a key element of our obesity prevention strategy. Whether you play organised sport or simply build cycling or walking in to your everyday life, physical activity can help improve your physical and mental health.

Keen badminton regulars Eileen Mennear and Sue Jukes explain why the sessions are important to them.

Junior Funability

We are developing a range of initiatives focusing on building healthy eating and physical activity into everyday lives as well as ensuring services meet the needs of the population.

Examples of this include implementing an infant feeding strategy to support new mothers and children, working with planning colleagues to continue to tackle the problem of the density of takeaways, working with health colleagues to ensure there is a clear pathway for weight management services and ensuring that the system partners work together to ensure a joined-up approach to tackling obesity.

Ensuring children of all ages and abilities are able to access physical activity opportunities is key to increasing participation. Activities like Junior Funability engage children in fun activities that increase their physical activity.

Here's sports coach Katie Gofton to tell you more about the benefits of the Funability sessions at Brierton Sports Centre.



Social Dance



It's important to start early to get into the habit of eating healthily and participating in physical activity.

This doesn't mean, however, that you should stop as you get older. Maintaining physical activity in later life not only helps to prevent obesity but improves bone health, cardiovascular health and also contributes to improving your mental health as well.

We should all maintain physical activity as we age – activities such as social dance also increase our opportunities to meet people and socialise. It's also never too late to start – the most benefits are had if you move from a sedentary lifestyle to moderate physical activity.

June Ions and Tony Pearson, featured here, are two of the people who are enjoying major benefits from social dance.

Planning

The Hartlepool Local Plan states that the Council is committed to ensuring that residents have the best possible opportunities to live a healthy lifestyle.

One way for this to be achieved is through planning controls on fast food takeaways. Public Health England has identified that Hartlepool has a high density of hot food takeaways. These shops, serving energy-dense food, contribute to the ongoing obesity epidemic.

When a planning application for an A5 use is received, if applicable the current floor space is reviewed and if the new development exceeds the threshold, it will generally be refused. Comments on planning applications are also received from key stakeholders including the Council's Public Health team.

Here's Helen Smith, the Council's Senior Planning Officer, to tell you more.



Fiit Mums



Our Fiit Mums bootcamp at Brierton Sports Centre is really popular and is a great example of how physical activity can be lots of fun too.

Mums meet up at this weekly exercise class and use bars, bikes, ropes and other equipment to build their strength and increase their fitness levels.

Best of all – their babies and children are welcome.

Check it out!

Stagecoach

Working age people spend a lot of time in the workplace, so we are keen to see initiatives that help people to be as healthy as they can be at work.

This is particularly important for those occupations where there are limited opportunities to either eat healthily or to take part in physical activity.

The Better Health at Work Award in Hartlepool supports businesses and employers to engage with their workforce to improve its health and wellbeing.

Stagecoach is committed to supporting its staff to enjoy healthy lives, as Assistant Operations Manager Shaun Anderson explains.



Beating Holiday Hunger



School holidays should be a happy time for families, but for some it can be a time of very considerable financial strain.

Local organisations can play a key role in helping and supporting vulnerable families during this time.

An example is the Filling The Holiday Gap scheme – also known as the ‘Holiday Hunger’ scheme – which provides resources to public sector and voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations and other charitable groups to help them ensure that families with school-aged children they are working with don’t suffer acute food poverty during school holiday periods.

The scheme is provided throughout Christmas, Easter and summer school

holiday periods and has seen an increasing take-up.

There is the risk that without targeted provision of foods for children during school holiday time, health inequalities across the town may widen. It is still a fact that families normally entitled to free school meals in the most deprived areas of Hartlepool may become malnourished over the school holiday period, often resorting to very poor quality food high in fat, salt and sugar. This contributes to poor nutritional outcomes and rising obesity levels.

Teresa Driver, Development Officer at The Wharton Trust, talks here about how the scheme is delivered and the many benefits it brings.

Exercise Referral

The Exercise Referral Scheme in Hartlepool provides a wide range of physical activity programmes that support people with the following conditions:

- Heart problems
- Pulmonary respiratory illness
- Mobility problems and chronic back pain
- Stress, anxiety and depression
- Diabetes
- Stroke
- Parkinson’s
- Muscular sclerosis
- Pre and post-surgery
- Obesity

A variety of different activities are provided to support people to improve their health and reduce their health risks.

Dorothy Luff is a great advocate of our Exercise Referral sessions.



Conclusion



Where are we going from here?

Here’s Craig Blundred again to sum up.