

HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 20 MARCH 2023



**Report of:** Communities and Public Health, People Directorate.

**Title:** Update Report on Supporting Children’s Healthy Weight (a whole systems approach)

**Ward:** All

**Officers Presenting Report:** Jo Williams, Grace Davies

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#### **Recommendations:**

This report updates the Health Scrutiny Committee on Healthy Weight, following the previous report in April 2022.

It revisits our whole systems approach to healthy weight, supporting healthy weight environments becoming the norm across all Bristol’s communities and settings.

In order to equip and create healthy weight supporting communities, more work and resource is needed to build partnerships (across the LA, NHS, Integrated Care System, VCSE) and create infrastructure, training and opportunities.

Feedback will be particularly welcomed on two of the workstreams that support healthy weight (i) the commissioning of Bee Zee Bodies to deliver weight management support for high priority families and children and (ii) the development of the Food Equality Strategy action plan.

#### **The significant issues in the report are:**

Challenges with long-term financial resource to support delivery and embedding of weight management support in priority communities



## 1. Summary

1.1 This report aims to provide members with an update on the ongoing work facilitated by the Public Health team to tackle unhealthy weight in Bristol for all ages, but particularly focused on families, children and young people. It revisits how this is being addressed through a ‘whole systems approach’ and includes short update summaries on how this is being delivered. It then presents more information on two specific examples of projects that form part of this whole system approach: the commissioning of the tier-2 weight management service for high priority families and children in Bristol and the development of an action plan for food equality.

## 2. Background and Context

2.1 The proportion of adults in England who are overweight or living with obesity has seen large increases in the last four decades.<sup>1</sup> Whilst it is important not to create stigma for individuals with excess weight, at a population level this increase is strongly associated with negative health outcomes and reduced life expectancy. Obesity is a risk factor for a range of chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, at least 12 kinds of cancer, liver and respiratory disease. Obesity can have a negative impact on mental health. The health risks associated with obesity have been brought into focus by the COVID-19 pandemic; people who are overweight or living with obesity are more likely to be admitted to hospital, to an intensive care unit and, sadly to die from COVID-19.<sup>2</sup>

2.2 Local data from the Bristol Quality of Life (QoL) survey reveals significant variation and inequality across the city. The 2021/22 QoL survey showed wide variation by ward, with 28% of adults overweight or obese in Clifton compared to 69% in Henbury & Brentry (see fig. 1 below). There is an apparent variation between lower rates in more central wards and higher in more outlying ones, particularly in the south of Bristol. This relates in part to age and deprivation patterns in the city.<sup>3</sup>

2.3 The QoL survey highlights the following inequalities in healthy weight in the city:

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<sup>1</sup> Patterns and trends in excess weight among adults in England – UK Health Security Agency (blog.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives – GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

<sup>3</sup> [JSNA 2021/22 Healthy Weight \(bristol.gov.uk\)](http://JSNA 2021/22 Healthy Weight (bristol.gov.uk))

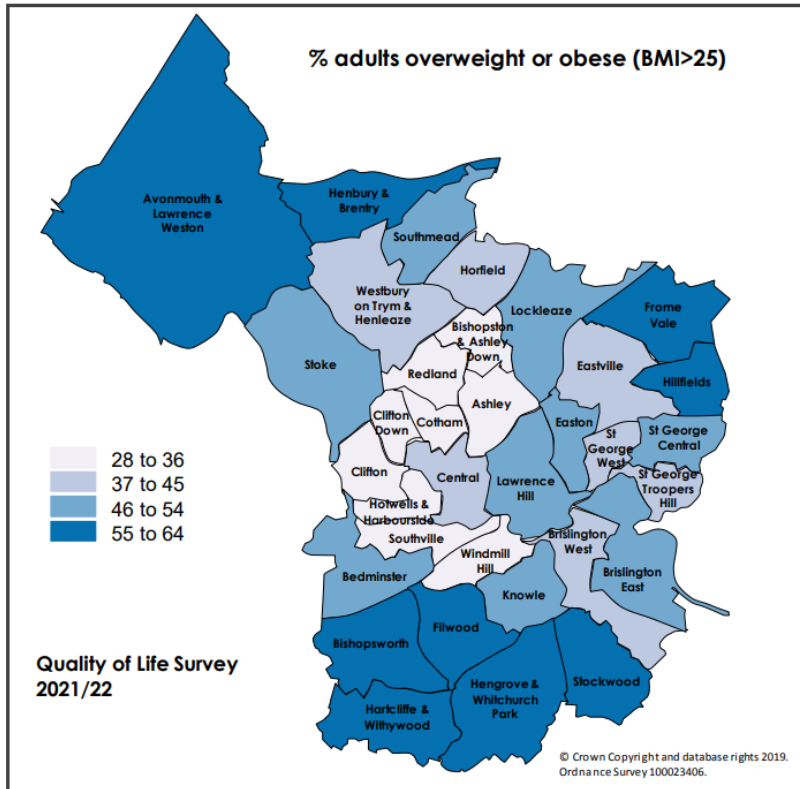


Figure 1: % of adults overweight or obese in Bristol by Ward (BMI >25)

≥ 30)

- **Diet quality** - Quality of Life data (2021/22) also shows that the lowest levels of fruit and vegetable consumption are associated with areas of the highest deprivation.
- **Pregnancy** – The percentage of women booking for maternity care with a BMI of 30 or more has increased in Bristol since 2013 (18.8% in 2013 to 20.2% in 2020). Mothers who are overweight or obese are at risk of a range of complications and poor birth outcomes and are more likely to have children with excess weight or obesity<sup>4</sup>.

2.4

There are also significant numbers of children with excess weight in Bristol. Data from the 2021/22 National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) in Bristol indicates that approximately 1 in 5 (20.5%) of children in reception (4-5-year-olds) and more than 1 in 3 (36.4%) of year 6 pupils (10-11-year-olds) have excess weight (are overweight or obese). These estimates indicate that the prevalence of excess weight for reception year pupils in Bristol was lower than the national average in 2021/22 (22.3%) to a statistically significant extent, but statistically similar to the national average (37.8%) in year 6 pupils<sup>5</sup>.

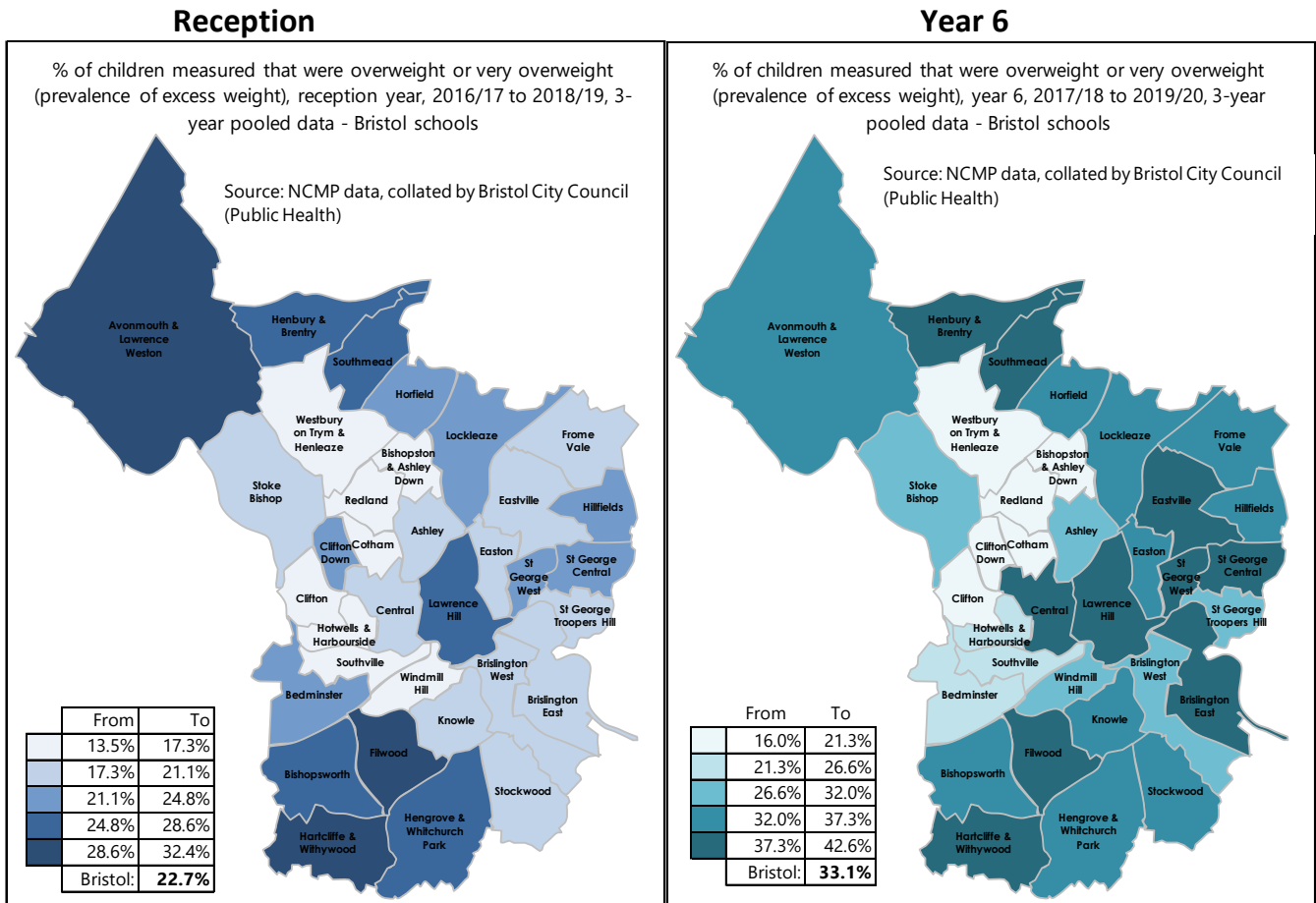
<sup>4</sup> Heslehurst N, Vieira R, Akhter Z, Bailey H, Slack E, Ngongalah L, Pemu A, Rankin J. (2019). The association between maternal body mass index and child obesity: A systematic review and meta-analysis. PLoS Med.11;16(6). Available at: [The association between maternal body mass index and child obesity: A systematic review and meta-analysis – PubMed \(nih.gov\)](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34888888/)

<sup>5</sup> JSNA 2022/23 – Healthy Weight Children (bristol.gov.uk)

- **Deprivation** - 65% of adults living in the 10% most deprived areas have excess weight, significantly above the city average (46%). This compares to 38% of adults living in the 10% least deprived areas.
- **Ethnicity** - 37% of White minority ethnic adults had excess weight compared to 70% of Black adults, both of which differ significantly to the city average (46%).
- **Disability** – Significantly more disabled adults (62%) have excess weight compared to the city average (46%)
- **Gender** – Men (51%) are more likely to have excess weight than women (41%), but women are more likely to be obese (BMI

NCMP is undertaken annually but was curtailed in 2019/20 and scaled back in 2020/21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. 2021/22 was the first year since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic during which a full year of NCMP measurements were carried out in Bristol.

2.5 As with adults, there is significant variation in the proportion of children with excess weight across the city, as seen in figure two.



**Figure Two** - percent of children in Reception and year 6 overweight or obese (BMI >25) in Bristol by ward (NCMP 3-year pooled data – hence the differences between the data in the graphs and the data reported above. In addition, due to the break in the continuous series of annual NCMP measurement during the Covid-19 pandemic, statistics which rely on 3-years of continuous data to allow for the reporting of statistics relating to smaller population groups and geographies (e.g., individual wards of residence within the city) have not been updated. Combining pre-pandemic measurement data with later results would potentially obscure any change to trends and comparisons brought about by the pandemic. (***We plan to update these grouped year statistics using 2021/22 and 2022/23 NCMP data following completion of the current 2022/23 data collection.***) The differences between this data and the adult data may also be explained by the adult data being self-reported.

- 2.6 The number of children with excess weight is closely associated with a range of inequalities:
- **Deprivation** – there is a consistent association in Bristol between deprivation of area of residence, and prevalence of excess weight in children at both reception and year 6 age.
  - **Ethnicity** – for year 6 pupils, Asian, Asian British, Black, Black British, and Mixed Ethnicity pupils have a higher proportion of excess weight than the Bristol average.

White pupils have a lower proportion of excess weight than the Bristol average (NCMP data, 2021/22).

- **Diet quality** – only 28% of primary and 19% of secondary school students reported eating at least five portions of fruit or vegetables on the day prior to being surveyed for the Bristol ‘Pupil Voice’ survey in 2022. 10% primary and 12% secondary students reported having no fruit or vegetables at all the previous day. This data is not available at ward data but is likely to show a similar association with deprivation as with adults.

### 3. Taking a Whole Systems Approach

3.1 The causes of excess weight are complex and there is no one solution that can counter all of these complex causes. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID, previously Public Health England) recommends a *whole systems approach* to tackle obesity and there is a growing body of evidence to support the impacts of taking this approach.<sup>6</sup> It means taking a broader approach by working across the entire system, understanding the numerous root causes of obesity and the impact of the wider determinants of health. OHID recommends action in the following areas:

- Healthier **food environments**
- Healthy weight supporting **Educational and childcare settings**
- Healthy weight supporting **workplaces**
- Supporting the increase of **healthy food consumption**
- Providing **weight management support**
- Promoting **local opportunities** and **developing asset based communities**
- Improving education/skills on **healthy eating** and **physical activity**
- Creating environments that **promote/facilitate physical activity**
- Increasing **active travel**

3.2 Bristol have committed to developing a whole system approach to healthy weight and signed up to the *Local Authority declaration on healthy weight* in 2020 to provide a framework for this. Bristol have committed to working collaboratively with each of our Locality Partnerships to support system level change - bringing together public health, healthcare providers, acute trusts, voluntary and community organisations, and the public to re-think how we provide health and social care services with a focus on prevention and place-based solutions.

We also join up approaches where we can with our neighbouring authorities (North Somerset and South Gloucestershire) and provide leadership to the Health Integration Team (HIT), which brings together researchers, public health professionals, clinicians, and the public, to improve how research, policy and practice interconnect, aiming to ultimately help re-shape the unhealthy environments that we live in.

The work on the whole systems approach to healthy weight is embedded in multiple policies

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<sup>6</sup> Whole systems approach to obesity: A guide to support local approaches. Public Health England, 2019.

and priorities within the council. These include:

- The One City Plan
- The Bristol City Council Corporate Strategy
- The One City Climate Strategy (due to the links with the work on sustainability on food)
- The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy
- The One City Belonging Strategy
- The One City Food Equality Strategy
- The Local Government Declaration on Healthy Weight
- The Healthy and Sustainable Procurement Policy
- The Advertising and Sponsorship Policy
- The Parks and Green Spaces Strategy
- Liveable Neighbourhoods

#### 4. Examples of Workstreams supporting Healthy Weight (Families, children and young people)

The following provides some examples of current work being undertaken to improve healthy weight in children and young people. These are grouped under the *Local Government healthy weight declaration* categories as an example of how this contributes to a whole systems approach.

Category of action	Example work
System Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bristol’s Belonging Strategy for children and young people includes key outcomes, priorities and actions on healthy weight, covering healthy weight in pregnancy, breastfeeding and early nutrition, physical activity, healthy eating and reducing all health inequalities.</li> <li>- The <a href="#">One City Food Equality Strategy</a> contains specific aims relating to food security in children and young people.</li> <li>- The <a href="#">Sports and Physical Activity Strategy</a> aims to halt the rise in levels of childhood and adult obesity by 2025.</li> </ul>
Healthy weight promoting environments and settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ‘Raising the Issue’ training has been delivered for midwives, health visitors and school nurses across BNSSG.</li> <li>- Maternal healthy weight advice and guidance is provided through the ‘my pregnancy’ app.</li> <li>- Healthy Start scheme and vitamins are promoted and distributed to families to increase uptake. Children’s Centres are distributing vitamins to eligible families.</li> <li>- Promoting breast feeding and breastfeeding support services, including targeted one to one support for women in the wards with the lowest breastfeeding rates.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promoting and protecting optimal infant feeding through ongoing work to support health visitors, Children’s Centres and maternity services, to achieve UNICEF Baby Friendly Gold Accreditation.</li> <li>- Free swimming classes for pregnant women at Bristol City Council leisure services.</li> <li>- <i>This Girl Can</i> physical activity campaign for women and girls.</li> <li>- FIT FANS is a free health programme for men and women aged 35-65 who are looking to lose weight, get fitter and lead a more active life. The 12 week programme is delivered by staff from Bristol Rovers Community Trust Slim2Win is a men's health and fitness initiative specifically developed by the Bristol City Robins Foundation which uses the competitive nature of football to facilitate weight-loss amongst programme participants</li> <li>- Over £8m of investment for Bristol’s major leisure and sporting facilities has been confirmed, creating more opportunities for Bristol residents to keep active and improve their health.</li> <li>- Work with Children’s Centres, for example in providing Children’s Kitchen and Food Clubs, and Healthy Start vitamin distribution.</li> <li>- As part of a BNSSG offer, the School Health Nursing Service has been commissioned to provide Extended Brief Interventions (EBIs) on healthy weight for children and families following NCMP measurement during 2022/23. This EBI intervention is being evaluated by researchers at The University of the West of England (UWE).</li> <li>- Brief Interventions on healthy weight and healthy weight conversation skills training delivered for school health nurses and other multi-agency practitioners working with children and families, as part of a ‘Making Every Contact Count’ approach.</li> <li>- The Bristol Healthy Schools programme supports and provides awards for schools that adopt a whole systems approach to healthy weight.</li> <li>- ‘Eat Them to Defeat Them’ campaign to promote vegetable consumption.</li> <li>- Funding provided to develop delivery of the healthy eating elements of the national RSHE curriculum with training delivered to South West teachers.</li> <li>- <a href="#">Making Every Contact Count</a> is an approach to behaviour change that supports staff to make the most of the everyday interactions that they have with people and to support them to take the first steps towards leading healthier lives.</li> </ul>
Policies and commercial interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work to embed Health in All Policies and workstreams, considering the wider determinants which influence health and taking a whole-systems approach. This includes: The <a href="#">Healthy and Sustainable Procurement Policy</a>, the developing Parks and Green Spaces</li> </ul>



	<p>Strategy, <a href="#">Advertising and Sponsorship policy</a> (2021) which outlines a total citywide ban on unhealthy food advertising and creating healthier environments through the planning system including developing a policy to restrict the opening of hot food takeaways within 400m of a school or youth provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ban on advertising of unhealthy foods within 400m of schools or educational settings.</li> <li>- Bristol Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme in a range of venues and settings to support mothers to breastfeed in public spaces.</li> <li>- Work to ensure the requirements of the International Code of Marketing Breastmilk Substitutes is implemented.</li> <li>- <a href="#">Bristol Eating Better business award</a>, improving healthy food and sustainability in the out of home food sector. Work to embed BEBA standards in <a href="#">health and sustainable procurement policy</a> across areas of council influence. Gold award standards for council catering contracts, bronze standard for market traders, major events &amp; site permissions. The Bristol Eating Better Award for schools and early years settings, including a policy of no unhealthy food advertising.</li> </ul>
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## 5. Tier 2 Weight Management Commissioning (includes supporting Healthy Weight in Families, children and young people)

5.1 In 2021 the Public Health team used Government funding to commission a 1-year pilot adult Tier-2 targeted weight management service for Bristol (awarded to Bee Zee Bodies), incorporating an asset based community development approach and a ‘test and learn’ ethos. Public Health were also able to fund an additional insight piece of work with specific communities and groups – helping to understand how services could be co-designed with communities in the future.

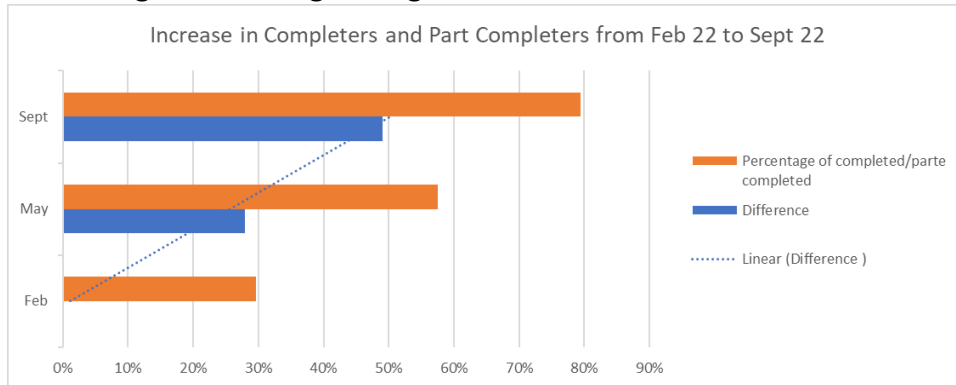
5.2 The Public Health Team developed a service specification for a follow on targeted 3-year weight management service, building on the innovative, community asset based, and insight/learning from the one-year pilot, but unfortunately the Government Office of Health Improvement & Disparity withdrew the 3 year funding at very short notice in April 2022. The Public Health Team were able to step in and find a further 1-year funding, which has been used to expand the pilot programme across Bristol, build on referral pathways and include a dedicated children and families’ programme within the service. The latter has involved 100 places for families who have a child aged between 5-12 years old who’s above their ideal weight based on their BMI. Families can join a 12-week online group programme providing lively, interactive webinars with fun exercises, games, and quizzes. Support throughout the week from a nutritionist via WhatsApp is also provided. The main referral route comes from



the School Health Nursing Service following their delivery of targeted telephone calls and Extended Brief Interventions on healthy weight (EBI’s) to families of children identified through the National Childhood Measurement Programme (NCMP) as having a BMI >98<sup>th</sup> centile (very overweight) in Year Reception and Year 6 within the Bristol top 5 wards with the highest levels of deprivation and childhood obesity.

5.3

It is early days, but data so far shows that the services are being successful in engaging those from targeted high priority wards and the percentage of those completing programmes is increasing, as trust is growing. See chart below:



5.4

Across the first two rotations of the family weight management programme, 57 families have so far been recruited with 75% of families completing the programme. The third and final rotation of the families’ programme is starting in April 2023, with recruitment currently underway. Interim findings from the service demonstrate that meaningful weight loss and behaviour change was achieved and there is positive feedback from the families who took part.

BeezeeBodies have also been able to hold additional formal and informal insight-gathering sessions which were conducted with local citizens of Bristol, with Black African, Black Caribbean and South Asian roots. A full insights report will be available soon, exploring the key themes that emerged:

- Creating a new environmental and contextual default in Bristol** (Icon: Tree)
- The need for systematic support on the journey towards health** (Icon: Hand holding a heart)
- Mental health in weight management: when weight is a by-product of something else** (Icon: Head with gears)
- The importance of culturally sensitive multigenerational family approach to tackle obesity** (Icon: Globe)
- Sociability is key for a healthier Bristol: it all starts with local communities** (Icon: Group of people)
- Changes to our approach to weight management** (Icon: Footprints)

5.5 We have recently been successful in securing money from The Innovation and Transformation Fund for funding a further 2 years of targeted weight management services for adults, families and children across Bristol, which we hope will further support ‘asset-based system development’ with a provider, working alongside community embedded services. This will include continuation of a dedicated children and families’ programme within the service.

5.6 In November 2022, to support our whole systems approach to healthy weight, The Public Health Team organised a workshop supported by more than 100 partners across Bristol, exploring ‘*How do we support Healthy Weight in our Localities?*’ and aiming to build understanding and create/consolidate partnerships and opportunities. This has helped significantly in establishing stronger links between partners across the LA, NHS, ICS and in communities.

## 6. The Food Equality Action Plan

6.1 In partnership with Feeding Bristol, the Community and Public Health team have created a [One City Food Equality Strategy for Bristol 2022-2032](#). This strategy has been developed to address food insecurity in the city. The Quality of Life Survey 2022/23 headline data shows that 8.1% experienced severe or moderate food insecurity (up from 5% last year), with 16% in the most deprived areas (up from 11.2% last year). The issues of food insecurity were exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ongoing Cost of Living Crisis means this issue is set to remain or worsen in the next few years. The strategy recognises the overlap of food insecurity with access to a nutritious diet, and the impacts a poorly functioning food system can have on healthy weight. Many people in the city face multiple barriers to accessing fresh, good quality, nutritious food, or having the skills or resources to benefit from it. In this way, addressing food inequality is a key strand of work in our whole system approach to healthy weight.

6.2 The Food Equality Strategy sets the ambitious aim to strive for food equality for all residents in the city of Bristol. The strategy defines food equality as existing when ***“all people, at all times, have access to nutritious, affordable, and appropriate food according to their social, cultural and dietary needs. They are equipped with the resources, skills, and knowledge to use and benefit from food, which is sourced from a resilient, fair, and environmentally sustainable food system.”*** The strategy identifies five priority themes to achieve this:

- Fair, equitable access
- Choice and security
- Skills and resources
- Sustainability local food system,
- Food at the heart of decision making.

6.3 The strategy was launched during the city’s ‘Food Justice week’ in June 2022. It is embedded in the One City Approach and is overseen by a steering group which meets on a quarterly basis (it has met twice - October ‘22 & January’23) and reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The strategy Action Plan framework is now in development. This will set out the specific actions and commitments needed from the council and partner organisations to achieve the vision set out in this strategy, but will be an evolving entity that will be responsive to current needs and priorities. The action plan consultation period took place Sept - Dec 2022 where 343 participants contributed with an online survey, community conversations, stakeholder workshops & conversations) resulting in over 1100 actions. This data went through thematic analysis and distilling to help shape the action plan.

### Wider strategic links

6.4 There is evidence that the strategy is being used as a lever to support work in the city on bringing about food equality, with its many wider strategic links:

- **Opportunities:** Working across the system - built on Asset based community and system working
- **Linking to national projects** – Shaping Places for Healthier Lives with BNSSG; Food insecurity monitoring improvements – Food Insecurity and Monitoring at a Local Level (FILL)
- **Securing resources** – ~£500K secured through Household Support Fund to support community food projects across Bristol focussing on the strategy priorities
- **Strategic links** – Linking to Local Strategic partnerships (LSP); Bristol Good Food 2030 includes Food equality/ justice is a key theme; linking to Healthy weight work/ Wider determinants inc., Cost of Living work (creating food support lists [Bristol Food Support Lists](#))

### Next steps for the Food Equality Action Plan:

- 6.5
- Steering group meeting (April)
  - Peer review of draft action plan (April)
  - Food Equality stakeholder meeting in (March)
  - Collate and incorporate feedback
  - Present for Members briefing; DMT; EDM; HWBB (for information) (March- June)
  - Finalise draft April/ May.
  - Launch during Food Justice week (June 2023)

## 7. Consultation

### a) Internal

7.1 This report was produced by the *Healthier People and Places* and the *Children and Young People* teams of the Public Health team in Bristol City Council

### b) External

*Not applicable*

## 8. Public Sector Equality Duties

8.1 An equalities impact assessment has been undertaken for the Tier 2 healthy weight services (Appendix A). Addressing inequalities is a core objective underpinning this entire body of work. Insights through data and population health management will be used throughout this process to identify, monitor and address inequalities. Please find Equality Impact Assessment for the Food Equality Strategy in Appendix B.

**Appendix A – EQIA for Tier 2 healthy weight services**

**Appendix B – EQIA for Food Equality Strategy**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**Background Papers:** Nil additional to the published references noted in the body of the report.