Early Years High Impact Area 4 – Healthy weight, healthy nutrition (to include physical activity) (What and why including context)

Children who are overweight are at increased risk of poor health outcomes such as type 2 diabetes and poor mental health. Childhood obesity is a significant health inequality with higher rates amongst children in disadvantaged areas and some ethnic groups.

Overweight and obesity in childhood is associated with overweight and obesity in adulthood, with subsequent increased risk of cardiovascular disease and other obesity related non-communicable diseases. In turn this leads to increased health and social care costs.

Obesity is a priority area for Government. The Government’s “Call to Action” on obesity (published October 2011) included national ambitions relating to excess weight in children. Healthy weight maintenance can be improved through encouraging breastfeeding, healthy weaning and healthy family nutrition in line with guidelines.

Early identification, supporting health promotion and change management around healthy lifestyles, using evidence-based techniques such as promotional and motivational interviewing, is offered by health visitors during routine, opportunistic contacts.

Within the Healthy Child Programme clear actions are identified for health visitors. The focus should be on the early identification and prevention of obesity in children, through an emphasis on breastfeeding, delaying weaning until babies are around six months old, baby-led weaning, introducing children to healthy foods, controlling portion size, limiting snacking on foods that are high in fat and sugar, and encouraging an active lifestyle.
Health visitors can promote healthy weight and healthy nutrition by:

- Supporting mothers to continue breastfeeding for as long as they choose
- Providing the family with information, advice and on weaning and the introduction of a variety of nutritious foods (in addition to milk) to ensure the child is offered a progressively varied diet from 6 months
- Promoting uptake of Healthy Start vitamins and vouchers by young mothers and families on benefits
- Discussing importance of vitamin supplements for all children under the age of 5
- Discussing and advising on behaviours, attitudes and family practices around food such as encouraging families to eat together and encouraging parents and carers to set a good example by the food choices they make for themselves
- Encouraging mothers to develop good eating habits
- Providing information and advice on safety such as choking
- Weight monitoring through clinics and also as part of the 2 year review and encouraging parents to monitor growth and development
- Being alert to and assessing for signs of under or overweight (including as a possible sign of neglect and malnourishment) and working with families to support them in addressing their child’s needs
- Signposting and referral to additional support, based on clinical assessment of need
- Encouraging healthy weight pre-conception and healthy pregnancy (obesity in the mother can cause complications in pregnancy).

In addition health visitors can build community capacity for healthy eating and physical activity, by establishing or linking to community groups eg cooking, sports/outdoor activities and support for families on low income in how to feed their child well on a fixed budget.

Health visitors have a lead role in promoting healthy nutrition for infants and young children through Children’s Centres. For example by leading the implementation and delivery of evidence-based programmes such as HENRY (Health Exercise Nutrition for the Really Young – a course on parenting, obesity and lifestyle strategies). As a member of the Children’s Centre Management Board, the health visitor can influence and develop health policies ensuring that Children’s Centres promote clear consistent messages about healthy eating and the benefits of physical activity, including provision of healthy snacks and drinks in the Children’s Centre setting.
Measures of Success/Outcome Measures
(Including Public Health Outcomes Framework or future Child Health Outcomes Framework measure/placebo, interim proxy measure, measure of access and family experience)

- **Access**: Evidence of use of up to date evidence-based multi-agency infant feeding policies setting out best practice in relation to breastfeeding support, healthy weaning and nutrition in early years settings. Evidence of a local multi-agency 0-5s healthy weight pathway setting out best practice on assessment, identification and interventions for healthy weight for 0-5 via quarterly NHS England Area Team dashboard.
- **Effective delivery**: Evidence of implementation of infant feeding policies and healthy weight pathways set out above via quarterly NHS England Area Team dashboard.

- **Outcomes**: Public Health Outcomes Framework 2.06i: Percentage of children aged 4-5 classified as overweight or obese: 4.0ii, Mean severity of tooth decay in children aged five years based on the mean number of teeth per child sampled which were either actively decayed or had been filled or extracted – decayed/missing/filled teeth; 2.2ii Breastfeeding prevalence at 6-8 weeks after birth – number of infants who are totally or partially breastfed at 6-8 week check via early years profiles.
- **User experience**: feedback from health visitor service user experience questionnaire on satisfaction with breastfeeding, weaning and nutrition support via local commissioner and provider data.

Connection with other policy areas and interfaces
(How does it fit/support wider early years work)

The High Impact Area documents have been developed to support delivery of the Healthy Child Programme and 0-5 agenda, and also to highlight the link with a number of other interconnecting policy areas eg early intervention, health inequalities, troubled families, vulnerable children and social justice. The importance of effective outcomes relies on strong partnership working between all health partners (primary and secondary), Local Authority partners including early years partners, and third sector (voluntary) partners.

- **Shared outcome measure**
- **Reducing health inequalities**
- **Early intervention**
- **Healthy Start vitamins scheme**
- **CMO report and vitamin D deficiency**
- **Start for Life**
- **Families in the Foundation Years**
## How will we get there?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System Levers</th>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>Professional/Partnership Mobilisation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Public Health Outcomes Framework indicator reported and benchmarked by</td>
<td>- Improved accessibility for vulnerable groups</td>
<td>- Multi-agency training on risk factors and root causes of obesity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Health England and NHS England</td>
<td>- Integrated IT systems and information sharing across agencies</td>
<td>- Multi-agency training for health weight including nutrition and activity</td>
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<td>- NHS England Service Specification supports the high impact areas and</td>
<td>- Development and use of integrated pathways to include prevention and</td>
<td>- Effective delivery of universal prevention and early intervention</td>
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<tr>
<td>delivery of the Healthy Child Programme</td>
<td>early intervention</td>
<td>programmes</td>
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<td>- Information sharing agreements in place across all agencies</td>
<td>- Systematic collection of user experience eg Friends and Family Test to</td>
<td>- Improved understanding of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Health</td>
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<td>- Integrated commissioning of services</td>
<td>inform action</td>
<td>and Wellbeing Board information</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Partnership working with Children’s Centres to support integrated planning,</td>
<td>- Increased use of evidence-based and multi-agency interventions to</td>
<td>- Integrated working of health visiting services within existing Local</td>
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<tr>
<td>delivery, monitoring and review</td>
<td>improve parenting and attachment</td>
<td>Authority arrangements to improve services for children, parents and</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Information sharing from Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (including Early</td>
<td>- Improved partnership working eg maternity, school nursing and early</td>
<td>families through a holistic approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Years Foundation Stage Profile data, health data and information about</td>
<td>years settings</td>
<td>Identification of skills and competence to inform integrated working</td>
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<td>families and communities) to identify and respond to joint priorities</td>
<td>- Consistent information for parents and carers on obesity, nutrition and</td>
<td>and skill mix</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Data feedback to inform JSNA on obesity in reception aged children,</td>
<td>activity</td>
<td>- To be familiar with the National Child Measurement Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>breastfeeding, nutrition and exercise to develop partnership healthy</td>
<td>- Identification of risk factors and indicators for obesity</td>
<td>- Closer links with early years settings, schools and school nursing</td>
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<td>weight strategies with clear pathways for support for parents and young</td>
<td>- Appropriate alignment to breastfeeding priority area</td>
<td>service</td>
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<td>children at risk from obesity</td>
<td>- Ensure local processes to enable smooth transfer of records during</td>
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<td></td>
<td>transition to school to ensure continuity of programmes</td>
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Associated Tools and Guidance
(including pathways etc)

- Healthy Child Programme: Pregnancy and the first five years, Department of Health 2009


- PH11 Maternal and child nutrition guidance NICE http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH11

- PH17 Promoting physical activity for children and young people NICE http://www.nice.org.uk/PH17

- PH27 Weight management before during and after pregnancy NICE public health guidance 2010 http://guidance.nice. org.uk/PH27

- PH6 Behaviour change: the principles for effective interventions NICE public health guidance 2007
  http://www.nice.org.uk/PH6

- PH49 Behaviour change: individual approaches NICE public health guidance 2014
  http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH49

- HENRY (Health Exercise Nutrition for the Really Young – a course on parenting, obesity and lifestyle strategies) http:// www.henry.org.uk/for-practitioners-managers-and-commissioners/


- Start for Life http://www.nhs.uk/start4life/Pages/healthy-pregnancy-baby-advice.aspx


- Healthy Start Vitamins http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/


