

## Bradford HDRC Policy Brief

Supporting physical activity and healthy nutrition with and through education settings

Target Audience: Local Authorities

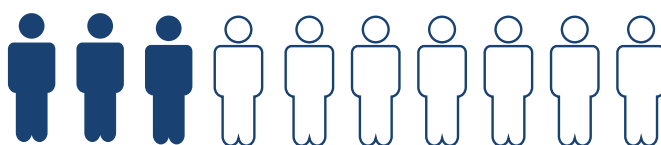
Based on N8 Child of the North Report - An evidence-based plan for supporting physical activity and healthy nutrition with and through education settings  
CoTN Physical-Activity-Nutrition Report 5 pdf

### Key Evidence Based Messages

- **Millions of children in the UK are not meeting the recommended levels of physical activity**, contributing to poor physical and mental health.
- **Increasing rates of childhood obesity, especially in deprived communities**, are straining the NHS.
- **Many children have poor diets**, low in fruits and vegetables and high in processed foods and sugars.
- **National level focus:**
  - The narrative of school curriculum and inspections needs to shift so that children's health and wellbeing outcomes, including healthy nutrition and physical activity, is given parity to academic outcomes.
- **Local level focus:**
  - Education settings need to be supported to involve all members of their school community to develop and deliver individualised whole-school approaches to support healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviours. These should be based on evidence of what works.
  - Develop strategies to provide more free school meals and develop resources to support families experiencing food insecurity.
  - Promote opportunities for physical activity and use advertising space to promote health lifestyle, eating and food options.
  - Build on approaches trialled in practice and highlighted in this briefing.

### The Problem: A combination of inactivity and unhealthy diet is fuelling an obesity epidemic

**3 in 10 five to sixteen year olds are inactive (do less than 30 minutes activity a day)**



**8 in 10 five to fifteen year olds do not eat the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables a day**



**2 in 10 households with children are experiencing food insecurity**



Physical inactivity is costing the UK an estimated £7.4 billion each year. Physical inactivity and obesity are risk factors for cardiovascular disease, asthma, cancer, diabetes, and poor mental health. There are increasing numbers of children growing up in poverty and attending school hungry. A failure to ensure every child is well-nourished will ultimately hinder the creation of a well-educated population for the future.

# What you can do at a local level

- **Develop strategies to provide more free school meals to children** through options such as setting up an auto enrolment process to remove barriers to eligible families having to apply for free school meals or reviewing how free school meals could be funded locally.
- **Ensure that the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) funding is targeted** to meet local needs and is engaging with children across all age groups.
- **Consider how local authority advertising space can be used** to promote healthy food options and restrict the advertising of foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar.
- **Develop local resources to support families experiencing food insecurity** through options such as increasing uptake of benefits or Healthy Start vitamins, for example.
- **Ensure there are opportunities for physical activity** by ensuring that leisure facilities are available and affordable to families. Funding of local sports clubs and grass roots organisations that deliver physical activities at a hyper local level can help to increase the uptake in disadvantaged communities.

## Approaches trialled in practice

Example	Approach	Impact
<b>Free school meal auto enrolment and funding of free school meals (e.g. the York Hungry Minds Programme.)</b>	<p>This involves combining different benefits datasets, identifying entitled free school meals households, then writing to parents to inform them that their children will be automatically registered unless they opt-out.</p> <p>Some local authorities have sought to locally fund free school meals for children, e.g. the York Hungry Mind Programme.</p>	Auto enrolment removes the reliance on families to directly apply for free school meals which may help overcome barriers to the current application process and reduce inequalities. Funding free school meals locally, particularly in schools identified in areas of need, has taken stigma and administrative burden away from the process.
<b>Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme for 13-16 year olds</b>	The Healthy Living Lab worked with the Mayor's Fund for London, Street Games, Birmingham City Council, Feeding Britain, Northumberland County Council, and young people to co-design a HAF Plus programme. The programme was specifically designed to meet the needs of older children.	The aim was to increase uptake of the HAF programme by young people aged 13-16, therefore ensuring that target children in this age received a nutritious meal in school holidays as well as having the opportunity to be physically active.
<b>Restrictions on advertising of foods that are high in fat salt and sugar on Council advertising space</b>	Since the successful launch of advertising restrictions on the Transport for London estate, a number of councils have introduced restrictions on the advertising of foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar on their advertising estate.	The impact of advertising on people's food choices was highlighted by Bite Back, a youth activist movement with the aim of reducing childhood obesity. Policies such as these aim to change the narrative put forward by the food and drink industry and to balance the advertising realm to also promoting healthy choices.
<b>Keighley Schools Together</b>	A network of local schools in Keighley, Bradford, working together to address the issue of food insecurity and poor nutrition.	Developing resources to support parents that need support with food insecurity to find the right help at the right time. Also promoting the national Healthy Start Programme, so that more families can access free food and vitamins.
<b>Abraham Moss Warriors, Cheetham and Crumpsall, Greater Manchester</b>	Actively engages with the community to offer opportunities to try different activities. Also offers activities during the school holidays for physical activity. They also developed a young leaders programme with StreetGames, which trains young people as mentors.	As well as providing opportunities for young people in disadvantaged areas to engage in physical activity, it has also provided opportunities for young people to make friends and have something to say they did over the school holidays when they return to school. The young leaders programme offers an opportunity for young people to gain valuable life skills.