Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
Understanding health and wellbeing needs

Obesity

Why is it a priority?

The WHO defines overweight and obesity as abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that presents a risk to health. Obesity prevalence is increasing nationally and globally, result of a complex “obesogenic” environment that encourages excess calorie consumption and inactivity, through work patterns, transport, food production, food sales and other factors.

In Greenwich around 29% of children aged 5 are obese or overweight. Prevalence of excess weight for 5 year olds has increased from 26% in 2008 to 29% in 2014, against a generally downward trend for London and England. By the age of 11, around 40% of Greenwich children are obese or overweight (5th worst rate in London). Furthermore, 64% of Greenwich adults are obese or overweight (3rd highest prevalence in London).

At least 6% of all deaths in England are attributable to obesity, which significantly increases the risk of type 2 diabetes (by 12 times for women, and 5 times for men) and the risk of heart attack (3 times for women, and 1.5 times for men). Obesity increases risk of high blood pressure, stroke, certain cancers, and osteoarthritis. Liver disease is the only major disease in the UK for which mortality is increasing, and obesity alongside alcohol excess is a main contributor. It is estimated that around 133,000 adults in Greenwich carry excess weight that may affect their health.

What could make a difference at a local level?

Taking a life-course approach and preventing and addressing excess weight in childhood and adolescence is crucial to prevent poor health in adulthood (Dehghan, 2005)

Pre-school and school based interventions to embed healthy behaviour
Cross-sectorial approach (including planning, transport and leisure services) to identify and modify environmental barriers to healthy eating and physical exercise

Workplace interventions and environmental improvements to actively promote healthy choices

Healthcare professionals support for healthy lifestyle behaviour change

What are the opportunities for improvement in Greenwich?

Taking a “whole system” approach to tackling child obesity is a shared, strategic priority for Greenwich, through our Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Embed obesity prevention across Children’s Centres and schools through the Healthy Early Years and Healthy Schools programmes

Implementation of TCPA Healthy Weights Environments actions to increase walkability and diversify the food and drink offer in the Borough

Influence culture change relating to diet and physical activity through the Good Food in Greenwich and Greenwich Get Active programmes

Implement the Healthy Workplace Charter in organisations and businesses to increase physical activity, reduce sedentary behaviour and improve access to healthier food for employees across the borough

Making Every Opportunity Count increasing referrals across the population into a wide range of healthy lifestyle behaviour change support programmes

Ensure clear and complete child, family and adult weight management pathways are in place, well known and utilised

![Greenwich: Excess weight in adults](image-url)

- Rank in London: 29
- Latest value: 64.0
- vs. IMD group: 12% higher
- vs. London: 8% higher
- vs. England: 1% lower