



Childhood Obesity -Trailblazer Programme.

To: England

For info: Contacts from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Key Issues

Following the publication of Childhood obesity: a plan for action – Chapter 2, the government have announced details of the Trailblazer programme. The programme formally launches in October and local authorities are invited to submit proposals for tackling childhood obesity in their local area. The successful submissions will receive government funding and support.

1. Introduction

On the 26 September 2018, the Public Health Minister introduced the governments Trailblazer programme. The programme has been introduced with the aim of developing local solutions to tackle childhood obesity that can be shared across the country. Councils are being invited to submit their proposal for tackling childhood obesity when the programme launches in October.

2. Background

The Childhood obesity: a plan for action – Chapter 2, was published in June 2018. In introducing the plan for action the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care set out the Government’s new national ambition to halve childhood obesity rates by 2030 and significantly reduce the health inequalities that persist.

In chapter four of the Childhood Obesity Plan the government outlined case studies from Blackpool Council and Derbyshire County Council as excellent examples of ambitious local approaches that are tackling childhood obesity. However, they also highlighted that many local authorities are struggling to tackle the complexity of the childhood obesity challenge.

3. The Trailblazer Programme.

The Trailblazer programme has been developed in partnership with the Local Government Association **to assist in supporting a small number of authorities to formulate plans with a view to rolling the programme out across the country.**

Up to 12 local authorities will be supported to develop practical plans, and in spring next year five authorities will be selected. Those selected will be included in the three-year programme where they will have access to expert support and advice to realise their plans, as well as a share of the £100,000 a year in funding that the government has allocated to the programme. The plans that prove to be successful will be considered when drafting future national policy.

APSE Comment

APSE welcomes the introduction of the Trailblazer programme. The programme is recognition of the role that councils can play in tackling childhood obesity at a local level. Providing funding and support for the chosen programmes demonstrates the governments' commitment to tackle the problem and emphasises the leadership and innovate approaches councils are taking to tackle the issue at a local level.

Childhood obesity currently costs the NHS more than £5 billion a year, and one in three children leave primary school either overweight or obese. With the issue being more prevalent in deprived areas where children are more than twice as likely to be an unhealthy weight. Although the programme is welcomed, in order to tackle the issues, there is a need for the Trailblazer programme to be scaled up and rolled out across the country at the earliest opportunity. APSE also has concerns about the impact of austerity on existing frontline services that promote active lifestyles and healthy eating.

As stated in the recent APSE briefing- [18-26 Childhood obesity - a plan for action - Chapter 2](#), an all system approach to tackling childhood obesity is required. Therefore, in addition to the funding announced for the small number of programmes that are successful in being taken forward as part of the Trailblazer Programme, APSE calls on government to provide adequate financial support to local authorities to allow them to provide and maintain infrastructure such as local parks and open spaces which also contribute to reducing the scale of childhood obesity.

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