



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 Two, the government announced details of the Trailblazer programme. The programme has now formally launched and local authorities are now invited to submit expressions of interest for inclusion in the programme.

1. Introduction

On 26 September 2018, the Public Health Minister introduced the government’s 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. The initial details of the programme were outlined in APSE briefing 18-35 – Childhood Obesity – Trailblazer Programme. This briefing sets out further details of the programme that were published by the government on 24 October 2018 and provides an outline of the criteria for submitting the proposals.

The full details of the programme including the associated prospectus can be accessed by the following link: -

[Trailblazer Programme](#)

2. Background

The Childhood Obesity: a plan for action – Chapter Two, 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 (LGA) **to assist in supporting a small number of authorities to formulate plans with a view to rolling the programme out across the country.**

There are three aims of the programme: -

1. To test the limits of existing powers through innovative and determined action to tackle childhood obesity.
2. Share learning and best practice to encourage wider local action, and
3. Develop solutions to local obstacles and consider further actions government can take to enable ambitious local action and achieve changes at scale.

The programme is modelled on a service design approach which will commence with a discovery phase including up to 12 councils being selected for inclusion during this initial phase. Five of these will be selected to tackle childhood obesity over a three-year period. £100,000 of funding and project support are available for each Trailblazer per year.

The selected councils will be asked to budget for £75,000 expenditure each year with £25,000 allocated for delivery support and subject matter expertise arranged in collaboration with the LGA.

The purpose of the funding is to support Trailblazer councils to participate in the programme without disrupting usual service delivery and it is not intended to cover core service delivery.

The programme will be managed by the LGA, who have been commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). The DHSC, Public Health England along with the Association of the Directors of Public Health will help steer the programme.

Call for action

Councils are invited to submit an interest to carry out a discovery phase. Within the expression of interest, the lead council will be expected to describe the drivers and aspects of childhood obesity that are going to be explored, the evidence of local need and inequalities and the approach for the discovery phase including community partner involvement.

Who can apply:

- All English councils individually or as a partnership (if in partnership with other councils and or other organisations a single council must lead).
- District councils are encouraged participate and should work in partnership with their county council who will lead the bid.
- Expressions of interest will need to be signed by the principal council's lead member for public health, chief executive and director of public using the form provided. It is also encouraged to include the signature of leaders from partners relevant to the areas the proposal is looking to address.

- Councils in receipt of government funding related to childhood obesity will be required to state this on their application. This does not automatically exclude councils from selection, but the impact of other initiatives and funding will be considered where there is overlap in the local project aims. Further information from councils may be requested in such cases.

Discovery phase

The first stage of the programme is a 12-week discovery phase which will support councils to understand the needs, behaviours and experiences of users (such as families parents, professionals and businesses.)

Up to 12 councils will receive funding of £10,000 to bring local partners through the whole systems approach, undertake discovery and develop a detailed proposal for the three-year programme.

Councils will be supported to apply learning from existing programmes and approaches, such as the Whole Systems Approach and behavioural insights techniques to refine and tailor local plans. Projects will also be supported to develop their discovery approach by a delivery support partner.

The discovery phase will conclude with the submission of an application for three-year funding by Friday 5 April.

Final applications will include an implementation plan for the three-year programme and will be expected to demonstrate innovation, how the community is at the centre of the approach, scalability, sustainability and methods of measuring success. It is intended that councils will be visited to learn more about your proposal before selecting the five councils to move forward.

Trailblazer three-year programme

In early May 2019, up to five councils will be selected to lead projects to implement their plans. At the end of the discovery phase milestones will be agreed for the three-year programme which will include triggers to release funding. The programme will feature three phases, though they will be flexible according to each of the Trailblazer project plans.

It is anticipated that the programme timeline will be as follows: -

1. Discovery phase kick-off event – January 2019
2. Discovery - Undertaking user research and planning – January – April 2019
3. Review of applications for three-year funding and on-site visits – April 2019
4. Develop and deliver – Project set-up, design, making and testing solutions – 2019-2020
5. Delivery – iterating and strengthening a solution – 2020-2021
6. Deliver, review and expand – Embedding and reviewing solutions, share knowledge and improve – 2021-2022.

There are three elements of support provided with the project, government expert support, delivery support partner and subject matter expert.

The LGA, DHSC, PHE and the delivery support partner state that they are keen to support the trailblazer projects develop ground-breaking and innovative initiatives. The prospectus sets out a range of commitments to funded council and also details of the commitments that the funded councils are being asked to make in return for the support being provided.

Areas to explore

The prospectus for the Programme provides guidance regarding the areas that the initiatives could explore which include the following: -

1. Children's exposure to food advertising can have immediate and long-term impact on their health by encouraging greater consumption after seeing adverts and altering their food preferences. With marketing for food and drink high in fat, salt and sugar dominating many public spaces, children's exposure is high.
 - The government want to see a reduction in children's exposure to advertising of products high in salt, sugar and fat across the local area including high streets, street furniture, transport systems and local events, particularly in areas of high child footfall.
2. Many high streets are densely populated with fast food outlets, cafés and restaurants that offer food and drink that can be high in salt, sugar and fat and have limited healthier options. The accessibility and convenience of such foods, which are inexpensive and quick to prepare, can be enticing for families.
 - The government want to see the local food and drink offer redressed, with diversity across high streets, town centres and shop parades so that healthier food and drink is accessible for the whole community and can become the default option.
3. Only one in five children meet the chief medical officer's recommendation of 60 minutes of physical activity a day. With reservations around active travel due to accessibility and safety concerns, limited access to green space and cost barriers to leisure facilities in some areas, opportunities for physical activity can be limited.
 - The government want to see increased opportunities for physical activity locally that are accessible and safe for families and young people to become more active.
4. Key public health, health and children's services can be disjointed and opportunities for prevention and intervention may not be fully utilised. With disparities in the provision of weight management services across England, many children living with obesity do not have access to appropriate services. We want to see existing services linked effectively and opportunities to provide both prevention and intervention support maximised, with accessible and effective care that meets the needs of each high-risk child.
 - The government want to encourage councils to look across their local system, consider the levers, and how they can be galvanised to deliver their vision of a healthier generation of children in your community. With families in more deprived areas and certain ethnic groups disproportionately carrying the burden of childhood obesity and the inequalities gap widening, it is paramount that councils carefully

consider the local demographic and specifically tackle these inequalities through their chosen approach.

In introducing these areas there is an acknowledgement that the drivers of childhood obesity are varied and that councils do not have full control of these. However, in setting out the expectations of areas to explore in the submissions the government recognise that there is a range of levers and the opportunities that councils have at their disposal to influence them.

The examples outlined above are intended too give a steer of approaches that programmes could include but the list is not exhaustive, or intended to limit authorities' ambitions.

How to apply

The Childhood Obesity Programme is now open for expression of interest and authorities are requested to email, cotp@local.gov.uk. The deadline for submissions of expressions of interest is Friday 30 November 2018.

Each expression of interest must address a series of questions directly, not exceeding the stated maximum word length of 500 words for the assessed questions. Full details of the questions and what is being looked for in the submissions can be found in the prospectus.

Expressions of interest will be evaluated and up to 12 discovery phase councils will be formally announced by the end of January 2019 with successful lead councils being expected to agree and sign the funding agreement by 9 January 2019.

To assist councils the Frequently Asked Questions section on the webpage will be regularly updated.

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 innovative 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.

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 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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