



Whole Systems Approach to a Healthy Weight in Kent

Dr Abimbola Ojo
Public Health Specialist, Kent County Council



Context and Background

- Obesity is a national and local public health challenge
- It is associated with many physical and mental health problems as well as causing premature deaths.
- Many multiple factors such as environmental, societal and individual are responsible for increasing number of people having excess weight.
- Tackling obesity and helping people achieve or maintain a healthy weight is complex that require whole system approach.





Why is obesity an issue?



It's widespread

Two thirds of adults, **a quarter** of 2–10 year olds and **one third** of 11–15 year olds are overweight or obese



Prevalence remains high

Overweight and obesity in adults is predicted to reach **70% by 2034**

More adults and children are now severely obese



Consequences are costly

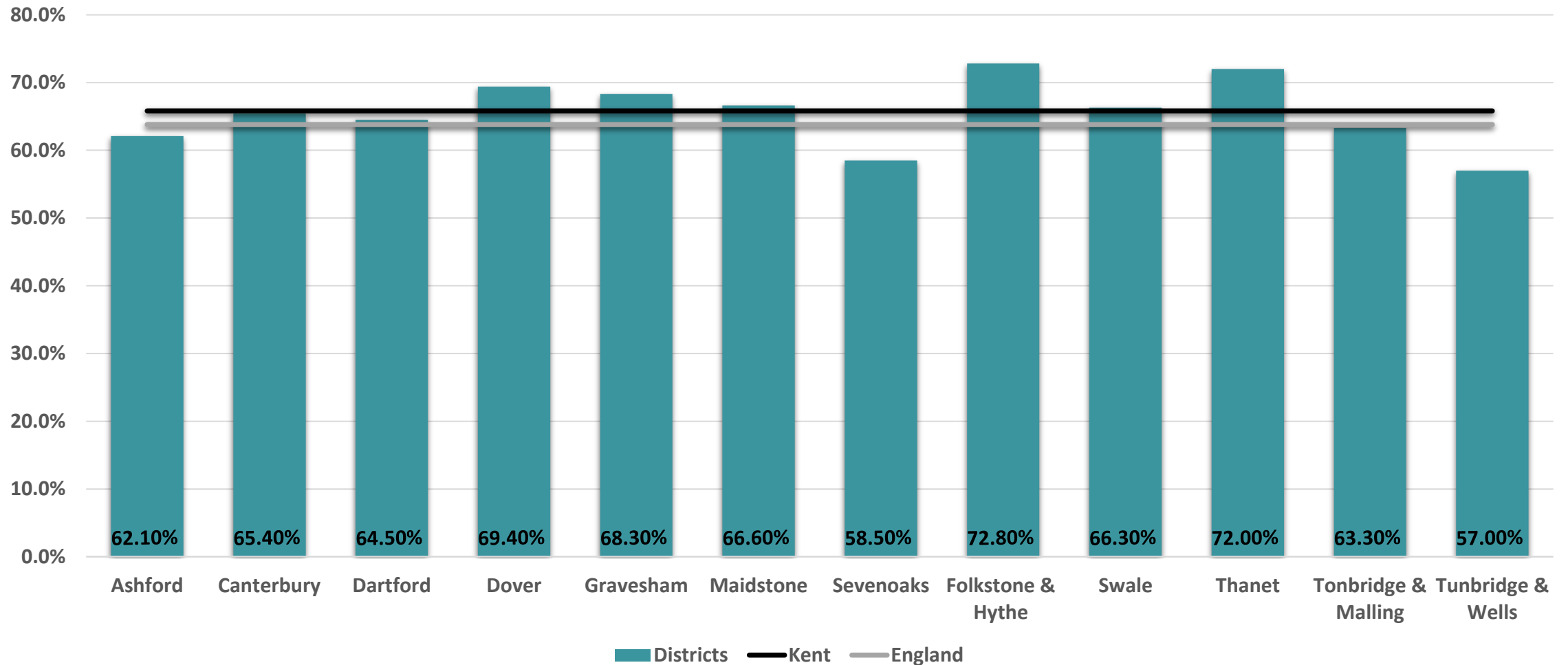
A high BMI...

- is costly to health and social care
- has wider economic and societal impacts

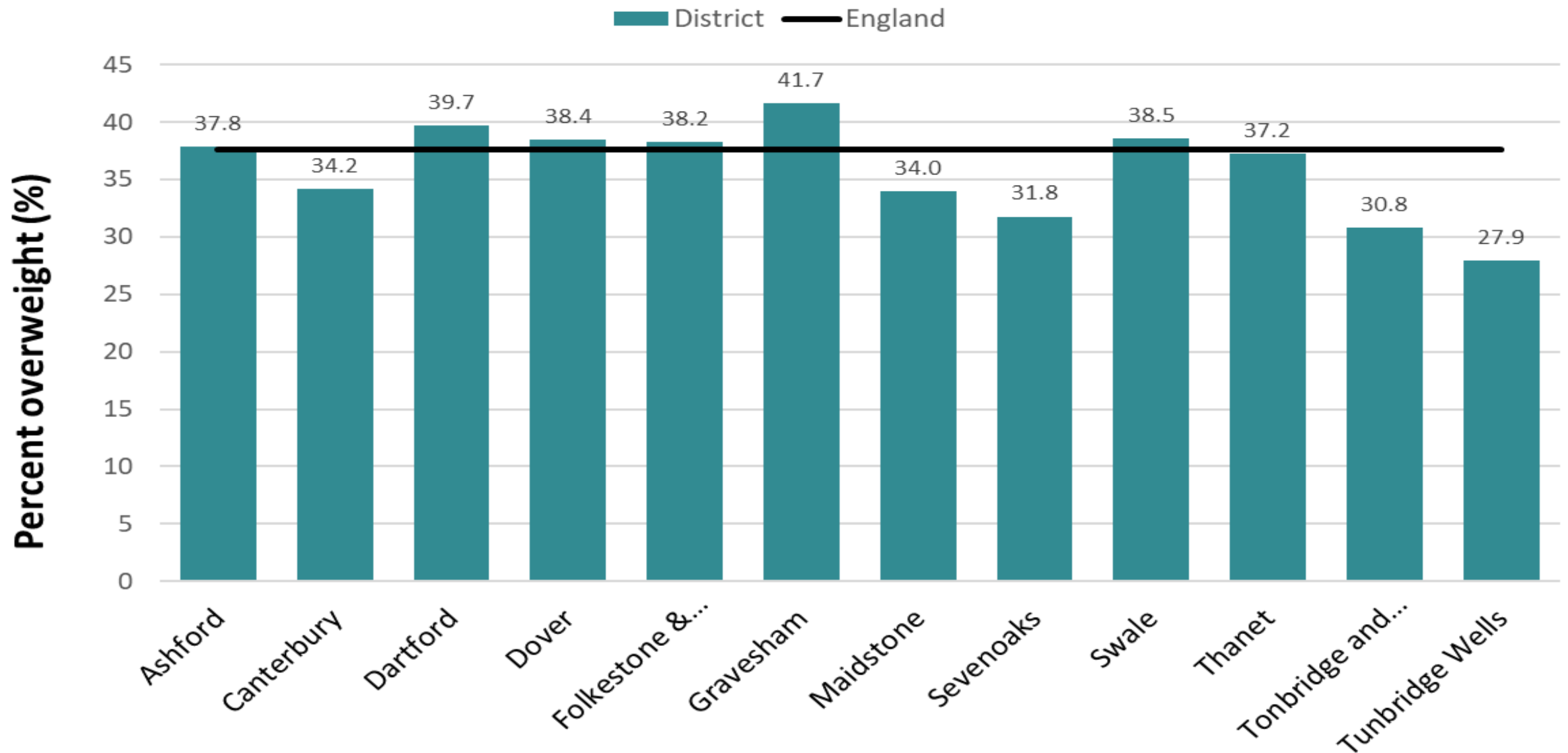


KENT– overweight and obesity prevalence in adults

In Kent, 65.8 % of those aged 18 and over were overweight and having obesity, higher in comparison to 63.8% in England within 2021/22.

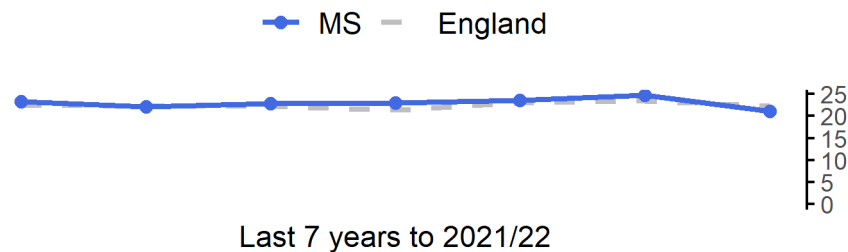
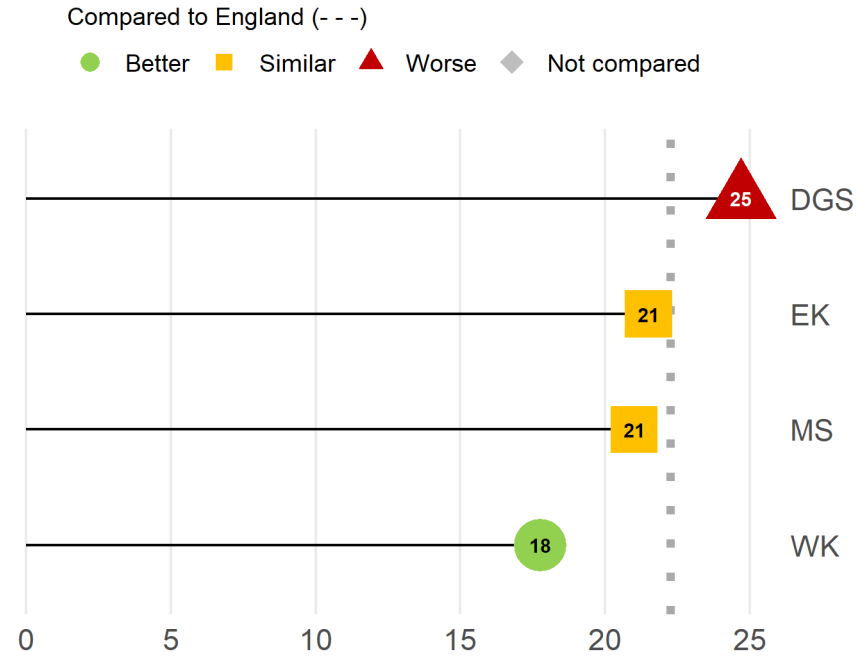
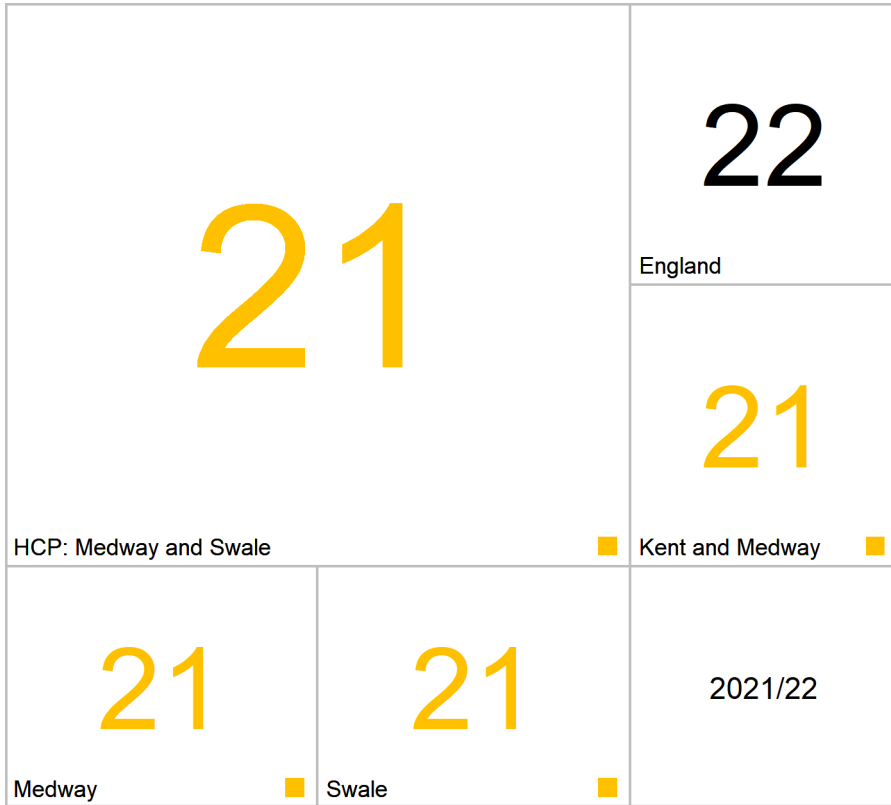


Percentage of year 6 children who are overweight (including obese), Kent districts 2021/22



Source: OHID, prepared by KPHO (HH), February 2023

Percentage of physically inactive adults



Source: [Medway and Swale HCP profile | Medway Council](#)

Obesity is complex

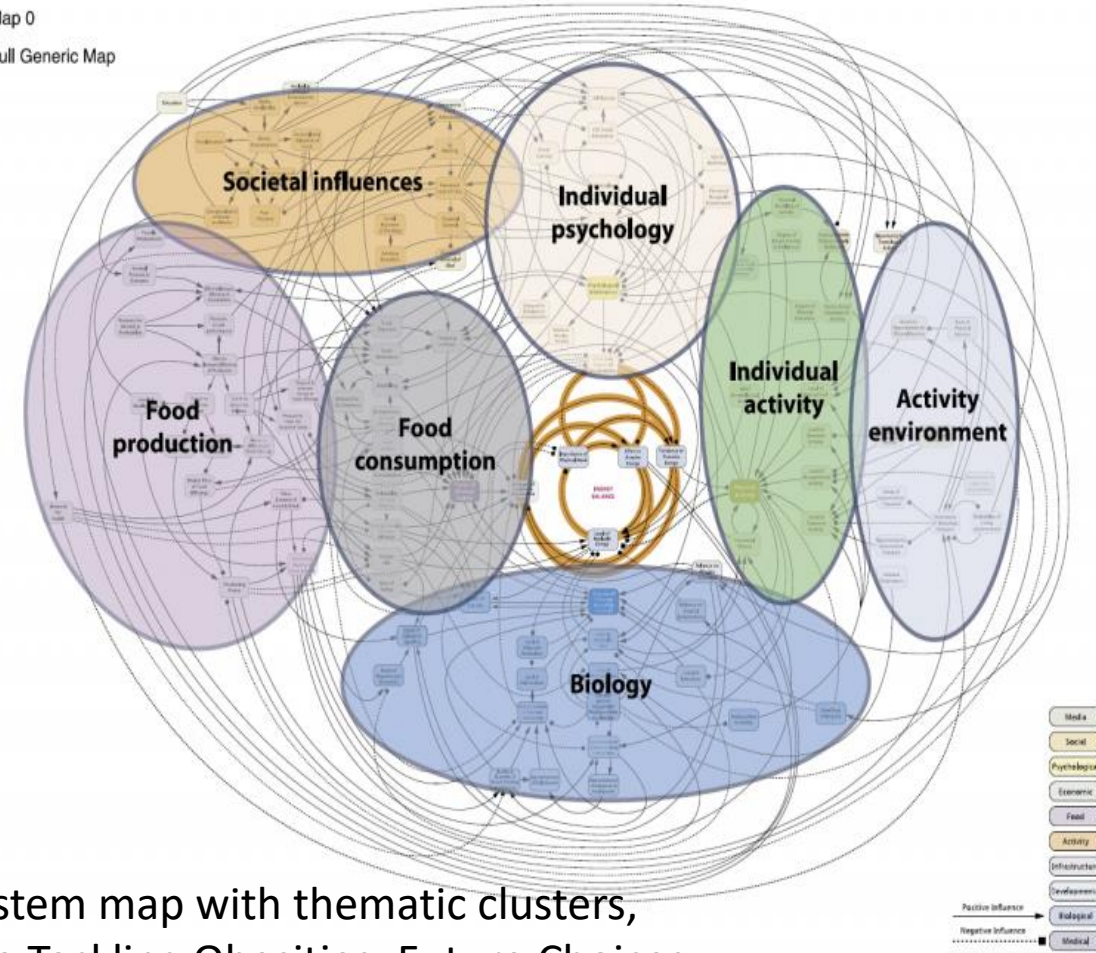
Obesity is complex; caused by multiple intersectional factors.

The complexity of the issue renders it difficult to tackle with a single intervention.

Social, cultural and economic trends have had a significant impact on our diet and weight, and have removed physical activity from much of daily life.

Our surrounding environments and choices have changed which has brought corresponding challenges, including the way we eat and exercise.

Map 0
Full Generic Map



The full obesity system map with thematic clusters, Figure 8.1 from the Tackling Obesities: Future Choices report.



Obesity and inequalities

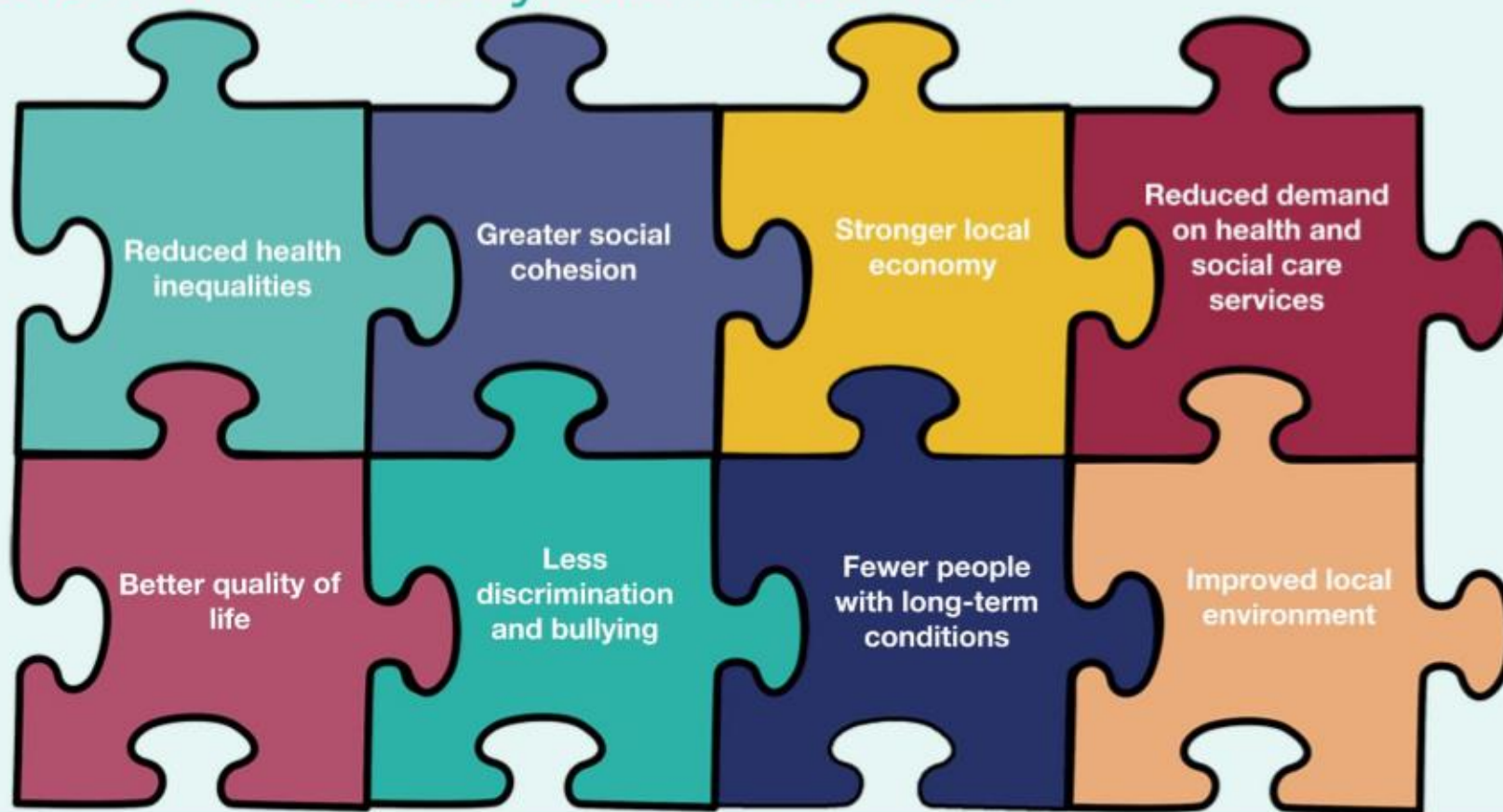
- Prevalence of obesity is highest in the most deprived groups of people in our population.
- Children in the most deprived parts of England are more than twice as likely to be obese compared to those in the least deprived.
- Other groups of people who are more likely to be obese:
 - Specific ethnic minority groups or communities e.g. Black and Asian, Gypsy and Traveller communities
 - People with disabilities, including learning disabilities
 - People with mental health conditions
 - People with other medical conditions
- Those who are obese are more likely to experience loneliness, mental health conditions and engage in other unhealthy habits including smoking, drinking excess alcohol, sedentary lifestyle and unhealthy eating.



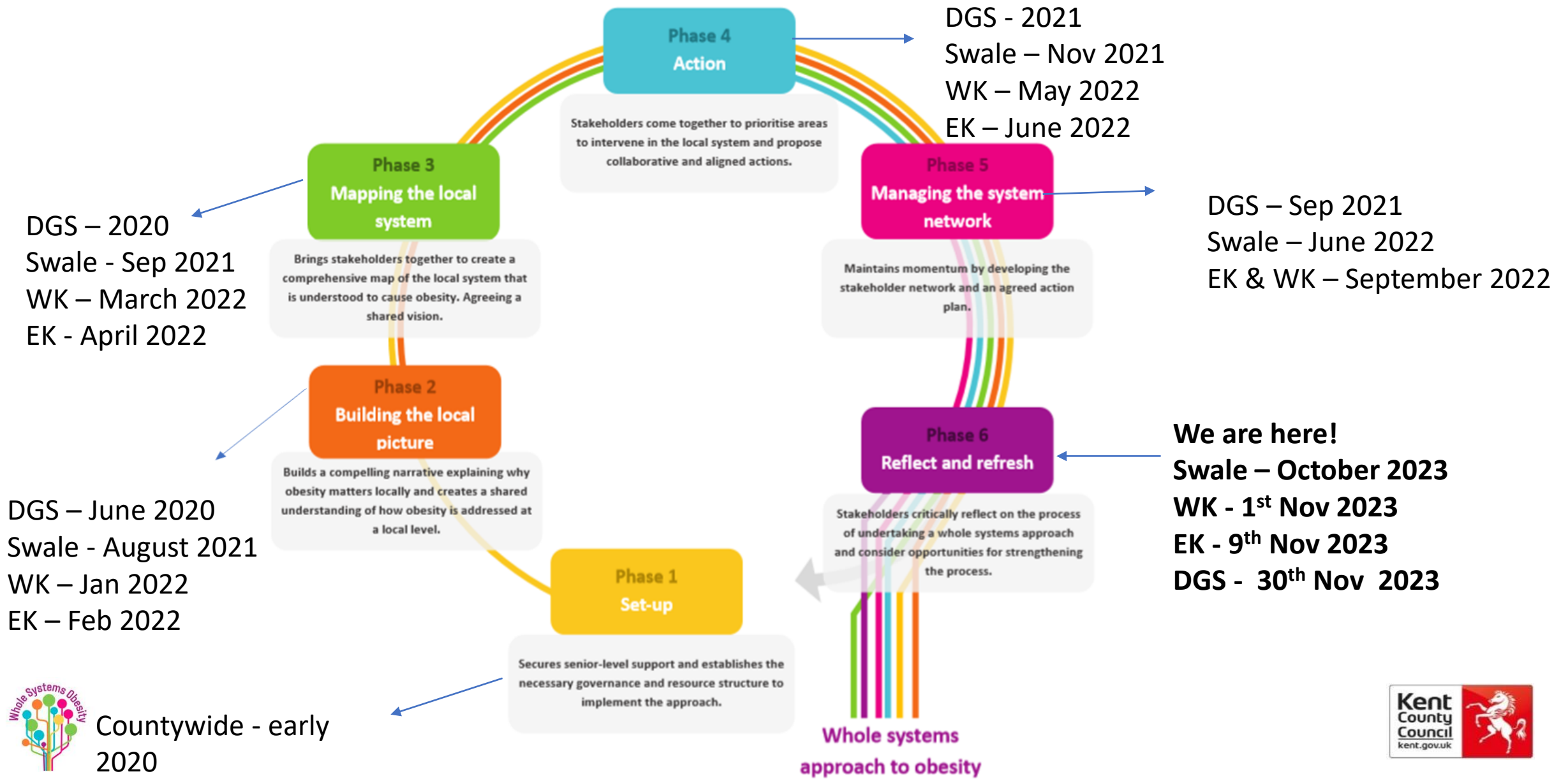


Public Health
England

Action on obesity can lead to:



Whole system approach to a health weight in Kent - the journey so far



Maternal, Early Years & Education

- Pre & Post natal education - Breastfeeding Promotion & promoting healthy messages
- Healthy Start Vouchers & Free School Meals
- Training Health Professionals
- Healthy Early Years & School Approach, inc. Active Travel in School
- HAF & Youth Hubs

Healthy Communities & Workplaces

- Grow your own
- Cost of living
- Physical Activity
- Community engagement
- Workplace Health

Physical Activity, Environment & Transport

- Increase use of leisure centres & open spaces - access to low-cost activities
- Active Travel & Physical activity in schools
- Transport policies & Active Travel – LCWIP
- Access to Green & Blue spaces

Primary & Secondary Healthcare

- Clear healthy weight pathway
- Consistent messaging across the system
- PCN Staff Training
- Health walks & signposting

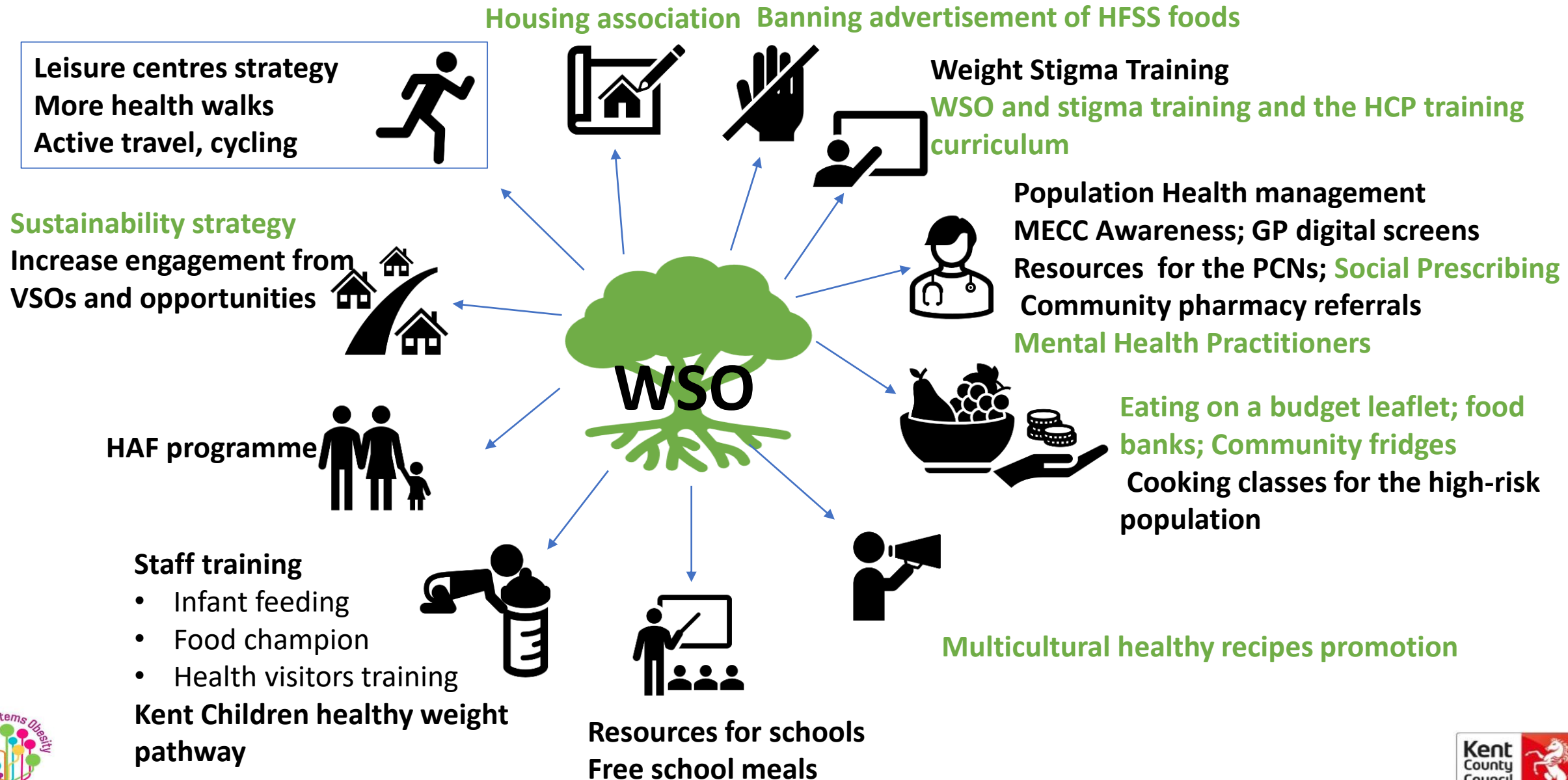
Policy & Planning

- Use planning policy and supplementary plans to promote physical activities and healthy eating
- Fast food restrictions; Strategy on healthy environment & advertising policy (HFSS)
- Planning of new developments, - new and quality open spaces

Marketing & Communication

- Campaigns and marketing to promote healthy eating and physical activities;
- increase awareness of available resources; services and offers;
- Targeted campaign; Social Media; workplace and wellbeing websites

Whole system Approach programme outputs – countywide



Housing and the Wider Determinates of Health

- Both built and natural environment are part of the wider determinants of health.
- Housing quality and environment can affect connectivity within a neighbourhood and people's social networks.
- Affects exposure to air and noise pollution, safe and accessible transport and opportunities for active travel.
- It also plays a crucial role in promoting access to open space, employment and healthy food options.



SOURCE: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute in US to rank countries by health status

What can Kent Housing Association do?

Healthy Places approach

- Follow the [Kent Design Guide](#) for healthy places
- Active travel considerations when planning new housing developments e.g. walking and cycling routes
- Ensure availability of green and open spaces
- Increase feelings of safety in housing developments and open spaces
- Ensure proper cooking facilities and equipment available for tenants.

Health Inequalities

Investment, resources, and commitment to appropriate interventions to reduce health inequalities.

- Mobile markets selling fruit and vegetables
- Grow your own initiatives e.g. through allotment groups or community group projects
- Set up a community fridge/larder to increase access to fresh local produce and reduce food waste.

Community connection

- Community facilities and collaboration with services such as the children's centres and make tenants aware of available services.
- Signposting to local initiatives such as cooking classes, health walks, healthy living centre, social prescribers.
- Develop partnerships with commercial or community trusted organisations to support health related initiatives e.g., Charlton Football Community Trust, The Stone Trust, supermarkets.
- Organise health events e.g., health checks bus, cost of living information events, One You lifestyle advisors visits, football tournament.
- Have a health champion in the housing team and/or among tenants to help co-design initiatives and promote health messages.
- Making Every Contact Count training for housing officers.

Partnership

Housing associations and housing teams within the district councils need to work collaboratively with other stakeholders internal and external to their organisation and align their actions.

- Collaborate with the Whole Systems Approach to obesity programme and be part of the Healthy communities' alliance subgroup.
- Adopt a Health in all policies approach with collaborative work between health teams, housing and planning departments.
- Link with ICS, NHS and community health providers, One You Kent and Primary Care Networks

What is in the Whole System Approach for the Housing Association?



Help improve social cohesion among residents

Ability to achieve 'healthy home' mark / status

Demonstrate social responsibility

Support most vulnerable residents (key deliverable outcomes)

Helps deliver against their objective to deliver community services and deliver value for money

Can increase opportunities to work towards residential awards

For further information please contact:

Tammy Foster for Dartford, Gravesham , Swanley & Swale : Tammy.foster@kent.gov.uk

Sarah Johnson for East Kent: sarah.johnson2@kent.gov.uk

Tammy and Sarah for West Kent

Dr Abimbola Ojo for general enquiries about the programme: Abimbola.ojo@kent.gov.uk

Thank You!

Questions?

Comments?

Suggestions?

