

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>06 June 2024</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>4.2</b>
<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight</b>		
<b>Report Author</b>	Beth Cossins, Principal Public Health Practitioner (System Working)		
<b>Report Sponsor</b>	Jennifer Davies, Interim Executive Director of Public Health		
<b>Presented by</b>	Jennifer Davies, Interim Executive Director of Public Health		
<b>Freedom of Information</b>	Open		
<b>Purpose of the Report</b>	<p>This report updates the Committee on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of the regional <b>Whole Systems Approach (WSA) to healthy weight</b> as a Ministerial priority under the theme of 'Leadership and Enabling Change' in the Welsh Government Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales strategy (2019).</li> </ul>		
<b>Key Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The WSA contributes to the delivery of the Health Board's <b>Population Health Strategy (PHS)</b> in line with the evidence base, to improve the health and wellbeing of our population. WSA contributes through each of the 4-pillars.</li> <li><b>Capability and capacity to deliver system change is limited</b> and the implementation of WSA being owned by the whole of organisation / whole of system is still not well prioritised, understood or appreciated. There has been some initial engagement from Public Services Boards but this was initiated and is still being led largely by the WSA team. There is no organisation/system strategic intent with a clear understanding of reputational and population health risks to non-implementation.</li> <li>Embedding and adopting a WSA <b>requires different behaviours across all parts of the system</b>. This aligns with the need identified in implementing the PHS to shift ways of thinking and working. Embedding population health principles and priorities as well as system leadership, system working and tools into our approach internally and in partnership is under-developed. Currently, there is a heavy focus on 'service based' activity aimed at 'lifestyle factors' e.g. weight management. Whilst these are important in supporting individuals with excess weight and related health conditions, equal (if not greater) emphasis and effort needs to be focussed in acting productively in partnerships and on the societal and environmental causes that lead to excess weight through a focus on the <b>wider determinants of health</b>.</li> <li>An inability to meet the scale of the challenge will result in a greater burden of disease in the population which has associated economic implications.</li> <li>The disproportionate impact of excess weight on our poorest communities is already driving unacceptable and widening health inequalities and inequity, which needs to be addressed through an approach focussed on addressing the causes.</li> <li>The recent assessment of the system against the maturity matrix (appendix 2) developed by Public Health Wales provides a useful baseline and a road map for action over the next few years towards greater system maturity. This requires organisation/system prioritisation of healthy weight together with responsibility and collective effort to affect a plan for improvement.</li> <li>WSA has been designed to align with the 7 well-being goals and 5 ways of working of the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.</li> <li>Governance for WSA requires different approaches and behaviours and the system of governance needs to be agreed and designed in order to effectively measure system change/shift over time.</li> </ul>		
<b>Specific Action Required</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Assurance</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Note</b> the work to date on implementing the WSA to healthy weight across the region</li> <li><b>Consider</b> the proposed actions / approach for 2024-25</li> <li><b>Note</b> the challenges to implementation highlighted/identified</li> </ul>		

## Regional Whole Systems Approach – Healthy Weight

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Population Health Strategy (PHS), approved by Board in March 2023 commits us to action, in line with the evidence base, to improve the health and wellbeing of our population whilst tackling the significant and stubborn health inequalities that exist. Yet, too many people across Swansea Bay face serious risks to their health and wellbeing associated with excess weight, with one in four adults and one in eight children (starting school, aged 4-5 years), living with excess weight<sup>1,2</sup>.

Through the recent establishment of a small team, Swansea Bay and Hywel Dda University Health Boards (UHBs) are taking a regional approach to the development of a **Whole Systems Approach (WSA)** aimed at creating the environmental conditions for a healthy weight and reducing inequalities between different population groups. This report provides an update on this developmental approach.

### 2. BACKGROUND

Healthy weight is no longer the norm. Across Swansea Bay University Health Board (UHB) 61% of adults and 25% of children (aged 4-5 years) are living with overweight or obesity<sup>1,2</sup>. Excess weight and diet-related ill-health increase the risk of long-term health conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease (including stroke), liver and kidney diseases and some cancers. It can impair mental and emotional well-being and leads to an increased number of years of life lived in poor health and contributes to a shortened lifespan - reducing life by an average of 3-10 years, depending on severity. Beyond individuals, obesity and overweight impacts wider society through reduced productivity and increased health and care costs. The annual cost to the Welsh NHS is now estimated at £86 million<sup>3</sup>, whilst the cost of adult overweight and obesity to UK society is estimated at £58 billion annually, equivalent to around 3% of the 2020 UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP)<sup>4</sup>.

Adults and children living in multiple disadvantage are more likely to be affected because nutritious food and opportunities to be active aren't accessible or affordable to them. Prevalence of adult obesity in Wales most deprived communities is 38.9%, compared to 29.9% in the least deprived<sup>5</sup>. For children, these inequalities in excess body weight manifest early in life. Across Swansea Bay UHB, children aged 4-5 years living in our most deprived areas are more likely to be living with overweight or obesity where the prevalence is 28% compared with 21.7% in the least deprived areas<sup>6</sup>.

Staying healthy when faced with a flood of high fat, sugar and salt and ultra-processed foods on our high streets and on supermarket shelves – often with price promotions is a challenge. For those with limited time and money the situation is even harder. Research shows that following the government's Eatwell Guide costs nearly three times the current average spend per person per week on food and non-alcoholic drinks. Only half of UK households have a food budget that can meet the costs of the guidelines<sup>7</sup>. A recent study on the density of fast-food outlets in Wales, pre and post pandemic shows a median increase of 13.6% and the highest increase is in Merthyr Tydfil which also has the highest prevalence of overweight and obesity<sup>8</sup>. People in more deprived areas also report lower levels of physical activity than average. Levels of income affect the relative affordability of accessing sports facilities, while a lack of access to green space or safe green space, can be a significant deterrent to being active outdoors. As is the case with diet, some of the psychosocial factors associated with living in poverty will make finding time to exercise or prioritising physical activity difficult<sup>9</sup>.

- **WHOLE SYSTEMS APPROACH (WSA)**

In response to this challenge, Welsh Government launched the **Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales (HW:HW) strategy**<sup>10</sup> in 2019. As a Ministerial priority it aims to **increase the proportion of the population who are a healthy weight and reduce inequalities in healthy weight between different population groups**. This 10-year strategy has a core focus on **leadership and enabling change** and promotes a **systems-based approach** to foster local leadership, collaboration, involvement and to enable local action.

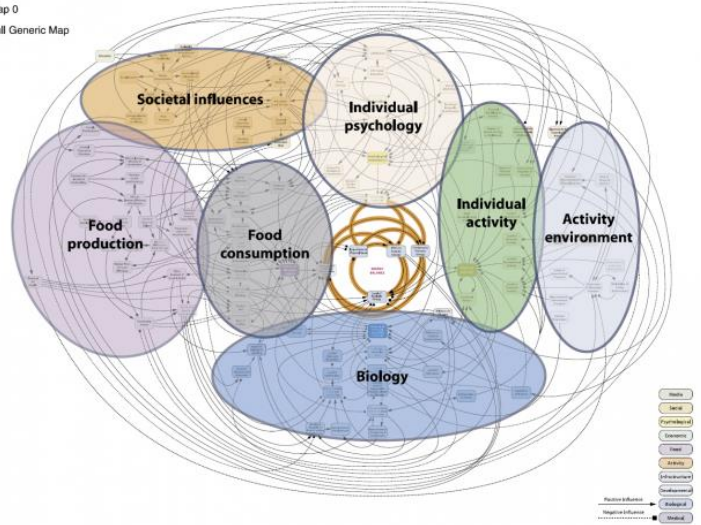
#### DEFINING A WHOLE SYSTEMS APPROACH (WSA):

*'those that consider the **multi-factorial drivers** [of overweight and obesity], involving **transformative co-ordinated action** across a broad range of disciplines and stakeholders, operating across **all levels of governance** and **throughout the life course**'*

**'a dynamic way of working, that brings together stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of the challenge, and integrate action to bring about sustainable, long-term systems change'**

The approach has been developed in response to evidence presented in the Foresight obesity system map<sup>11</sup> (Foresight Map – 'Tackling Obesity – Future Choices' Obesity Systems map, 2007.) see right, which drew global attention to how complex the obesity system is – made up of a series of interconnected 'sub-systems' including: societal and cultural influences; food production; food consumption; biological factors; individual psychology; individual activity and environmental factors.

Map 0  
Full Generic Map



It is important to note that whilst the factors in the map exist for all, the way in which they affect people's ability to maintain a healthy weight is different for different groups across society. This is because almost every aspect of life – the essential building

blocks of jobs, homes, access to education, transport and whether people experience poverty or discrimination – impact our opportunities to eat well, to be active and to maintain our overall health and wellbeing. Influencing change requires an understanding of this complex system and building this understanding locally has underpinned the early phases of the approach.



The evidence base suggests that a WSA to healthy weight is needed due to:

- The multiple stakeholders / sectors involved that influence the key drivers leading to obesity
- The complexity and multi-factorial nature of the issue which can lead to action taken in one part of the system having unintended consequences on other parts e.g. the impact of planning decisions on access to space to be physically active within communities/neighbourhoods
- The dynamic nature of a system that is constantly adapting and changing
- A need to disrupt the system to change how it functions

Implementation of a systems-based approach (Whole Systems Approach, WSA) is co-ordinated nationally by Public Health Wales and implemented locally through small implementation teams based at Health Board level. Swansea Bay and Hywel Dda University Health Boards are taking a regional approach. Grant funding allocated from Public Health Wales (circa (£222,000 annually) has enabled the recruitment of a small WSA team (completed in April 2024). It comprises 1.0 WTE Principal Public Health Practitioner; 1.0 WTE Project Support Officer and two Senior Public Health Practitioners (0.8 WTE in Hywel Dda and 0.6 WTE in Swansea Bay).

Guided by a Memorandum of Understanding between both UHBs, the team functions to support both Directors of Public Health and through them Local Authorities, Public Services Boards (PSBs), Regional Partnership Boards and communities in working collaboratively towards creating the environmental conditions for a healthy weight for all.

Delivering on WSA requires commitments at organisational, partnership and policy level within the healthy weight system to mobilise and bring about sustainable change. It requires different ways of working that are innovative and disruptive. It goes beyond single services or initiatives and internal to the UHB requires

consideration across all 4 pillars of Population Health Strategy implementation - using good food as an example, this might include:

- Pillar 1 – e.g. skilling staff to embed brief intervention approaches enabling them to raise the issue of healthy weight with patients; reviewing the food offer to patients (& staff) across our healthcare settings. Embedding a strong focus on prevention and tackling inequalities
- Pillar 2 – e.g. offering fair work to enable our employees to have the means to eat a healthy diet and be physically active, supported by good workplace policies on food provision and active travel
- Pillar 3 – e.g. ensuring we lever our public sector procurement role in getting good, locally sourced food on to the public plate
- Pillar 4 – e.g. taking collective action on the wider determinants of healthy weight through influencing the determinants leading to an unhealthy weight through the wellbeing plans of the PSBs.<sup>12,13</sup>



The WSA team have reviewed both plans and have identified the following opportunities:

Swansea Well-being Plan 2023-28 objectives	Neath Port Talbot Well-being Plan 2023-28 objectives	Opportunities for alignment with WSA
Early Years: <b>parents/carers are well prepared for birth</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access to the local natural environment for parents/cares and children – physical activity and emotional wellbeing</li> <li>• Play opportunities</li> <li>• Physical literacy</li> <li>• Infant feeding and the Baby Friendly Initiative</li> </ul>
Early Years: <b>All children develop to their potential</b>	<b>Children and Young People:</b> Ensure that when our youngest children start school, they are ready and able to learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking and cycling infrastructure</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• School based policies</li> <li>• Healthy School Scheme, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Active Travel</li> <li>○ Pre-school and school food environment</li> <li>○ Daily active</li> <li>○ Mental and emotional well-being</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Live Well, Age Well: <b>people have the best possible level of health and wellbeing</b>	<b>Jobs and Skills:</b> Develop Circular and Foundational economies and promote local people and businesses to spend more money in NPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progressive procurement policies eg. Local Food on the Public Plate</li> </ul>
	Encourage a regenerative local economy where the impacts of production and consumption are reduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural and built environments that encourage health and well-being are created and sustained</li> <li>• Transformative change in the Food, Energy and Transport systems and to move to a more regenerative economy which safeguards our natural resources. The PSB could play its part in this by:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Regulating the density of fast-food outlets which a recent study shows has seen a median increase of 13.6% across Wales post pandemic</li> <li>○ Promoting the creation of a sustainable food system, the development of local produce supply chains – growing/purchase/consumption</li> <li>○ Supporting the development of a sustainable transport system, with an emphasis on active travel options and striving for equitable access for all</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Highlighting links and enabling opportunities to connect production, consumption and healthy eating.</li> </ul>
	Ensure local businesses, local people and communities have maximum benefit from external major investment for the area both existing and planned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Progressive procurement policies/practices eg. Local Food on the Public Plate</li> </ul>
Climate Change and Nature Recovery: <b>Our carbon emissions are reduced to net zero and individuals, communities and organisations are well prepared for the impacts of climate change and adaptation</b>	<b>Environment:</b> Take collaborative action to tackle the climate emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● collaborative approaches to carbon reduction plans and actions</li> <li>● Developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy to highlight opportunities and issues within the county around public access to green space and opportunities for new, improved spaces</li> <li>● Promote active travel and develop a low carbon transport system that is accessible, affordable and meets the needs of everyone</li> </ul>
Climate Change and Nature Recovery: <b>The root causes of unsustainable production and consumption of natural resources are addressed, through knowledge and behaviour change</b>	Take collaborative action to tackle the nature crisis and improve the health of our ecosystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Promote environmentally sustainable and ethical procurement practices, especially in the public sector</li> </ul>
Strong Communities: <b>Communities and Individuals are connected</b>	<b>Communities:</b> Revisit the work undertaken with the support of the Bevan Foundation and reset the strategic objectives and actions to address the root causes of poverty now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Spatial Planning – Local Development Plans. Built and natural environment planning and design maximises connectivity opportunities within and adjacent to newly planned developments</li> <li>● Planning decisions – eg. supplementary planning guidance on fast food outlets</li> <li>● Poverty and food poverty</li> <li>● Community engagement in WSA and Community Asset Mapping</li> </ul>

UHB and WSA staff are contributing to some of these opportunities already e.g. consultation on the Local Development Plans for both Local Authorities, environment and sustainability work and the PSB sponsored 'Local Food on the Public Plate' learning set but this is uncoordinated and neither the totality nor the impact of the work are as yet clear. There are considerable opportunities and the WSA could help bring about change at the scale and pace necessary to impact population health in the longer-term.

● **PROGRESS TO DATE**



Implementation of the WSA follows the nationally agreed nine step process illustrated here (9 Step Whole System Approach, Public Health Wales, 2023).

During January and February 2023 five workshops were facilitated across the region with representation from a wide range of stakeholders. Supported by Leeds Beckett University, two workshops were held, one for Swansea and another for the Neath Port Talbot area with the aim of developing a series of qualitative healthy weight system maps. These

tools help participants visualise the system, its drivers and interconnections. This generated a shared understanding, allowing broad themes to be identified and pooled to create a collated systems map for Swansea Bay.

Additionally, a Social Network Analysis was conducted to help better understand relationships in the system, how information and resources are shared and who (individuals and organisations) might be influential in creating change. See Appendix 1 for workshop reports (Welsh and English).

• **ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEM MATURITY**

A system maturity matrix has been developed by Public Health Wales as a tool to measure progress with integrating a whole systems approach to healthy weight across Wales. It helps establish a baseline and is a subjective and reflective tool to help measure system changes and shift over time. The WSA team has undertaken an

initial assessment of the regional healthy weight system against the eight indicators illustrated below. (See Appendix 2 for full details)

Arweinyddiaeth gref Strong leadership	Iaith gyson Consistent language	Dealltwriaeth o'r cyd-destun lleol Understanding of local context	Ymgysylltiad Ystyrlon Meaningful Engagement
Strwythurau Llywodraethu cadarn Robust Governance structures	Cydnabod bod canlyniadau yn cael eu dylanwadu gan y system Recognition that outcomes are influenced by the system	Dysgu a Myfyrio ac adborth Learning and Reflection and feedback	Mentrau wedi'u gwreiddio Initiatives embedded

*Maturity Matrix based on key features for a Whole System Approach (Public Health Wales, 2023)*

It illustrates that the regional system position (which ranges from 1-5) is largely at 1 and 2 with some 3s. It has been helpful in forming a more systematic, objective view of where we are now, where we want to be and in identifying some practical steps – a roadmap that we can take internally in the UHB and as a productive partner to get there. This is helping inform a plan to build capability and capacity for systems working amongst stakeholders over the coming months/years. Indicators at level 4 and 5 in the matrix will be used to shape a collective view of 'what good looks like'. It is clear that system thinking & working approaches and tools are very new to many stakeholders and will need to be developed to facilitate an on-going approach

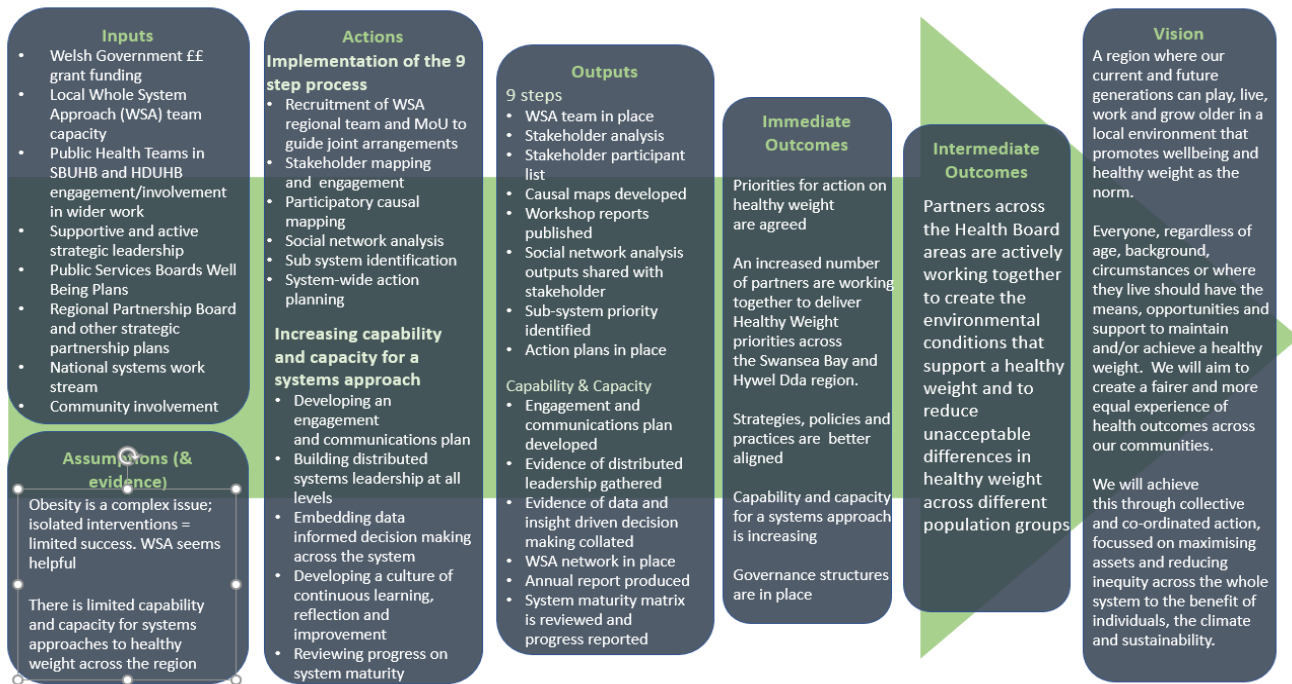
• **CHALLENGES**

- Lack of visibility and prioritisation of healthy weight in strategic plans, including the PSB Well-being plans. This impacts engagement in the systems approach and there are key stakeholders that are not yet engaged
- Limited capacity and capability in systems working – including tools, methodologies. The WSA team are building this as they go. This takes time
- Work being done but this remains un-coordinated and there is currently no mechanism for measuring the contribution to strategic goals or how they are reducing inequalities
- Inconsistency of language and messaging in relation to healthy weight with a dominant focus on individual behaviour. There is a need to build increased understanding and consideration of the role of the wider determinants of health
- Over focus on weight management as a solution as opposed to prevention
- In relation to the wider system, it is essentially a coalition of the willing.

• **NEXT STEPS**

The assessment against the maturity matrix, together with the 9 Step Approach to implementation has enabled a Theory of Change (see below) to be developed, which is guiding implementation across the region:

## Theory of Change WSA – Healthy Weight 2024



From this, a 2024-25 work plan has been drafted detailing the next stages of implementation of the 9-step process together with longer-term actions to increase capacity and capability for a systems-based approach across the region:

### Key components of the 2024-25 forward work plan

- **Sub-system identification**

- Structured conversations with key stakeholders to further develop the system maps – identifying missing areas and connections
- Maturity matrix assessment will be subject to a ‘check and challenge’ process by stakeholders
- Canvassing opinions and ideas on the sub-system priority to identify synergies, barriers, opportunities for alignment etc.
- Data and evidence will be gathered and used to help identify what will make the biggest difference
- Piloting of an approach to community engagement and asset mapping in HDUHB
- Bringing together range of stakeholders for a series of events to identify and agree a regional sub-system
- Following the identification of a sub-system(s) development of action plans to ensure better alignment of strategies and policies and the achievement of collective goals, working towards a common vision

- **Building capacity and capability for a systems approach**

In parallel, the team will take action on the dimensions of the matrix in order to shift system maturity forward. These will need to be progressed at the pace and speed of trust largely dictated by stakeholders but the ambition is to make progress on areas 1-5 identified in Appendix 1, over the next 12 months. In February/early March 2025 end-of-year progress will be assessed to demonstrate progress and inform the next work plan for 2025-26.

### 3. GOVERNANCE AND RISK ISSUES

Initiatives, approaches and actions in implementing the WSA sit across all service groups and in partnership spaces. A proposed governance structure has been established to take forward and provide assurance for the delivery against the Population Health Strategy aims and aspirations.

A proposal based on the current structures, is that WSA would report into the Population and Partnerships Committee during the early phases. As the work becomes systematised and operationalised through the 4 pillars, the intention would be to embed the reporting on progress and performance through the appropriate performance & governance structures, where these exist.

More broadly, governance of actions that arise out of WSA will need a federated governance approach with oversight at strategic level across the region – to be agreed.

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

WSA is currently grant funded for 2024-25 but no assurance has been given by Welsh Government of funding beyond that date. This is a long-term piece of work that demands considerable capacity in establishing solid foundations for future collaborative work. Assurances regarding future funding for the next of 2-3years needs to be a priority in conversations with funders.

#### 5. RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to:

- **Note** the work to date on implementing the WSA to healthy weight across the region
- **Consider** the proposed actions / approach for 2024-25
- **Note** the challenges to implementation highlighted/identified



<b>Governance and Assurance</b>		
<b>Link to Enabling Objectives</b> <i>(please choose)</i>	<b>Supporting better health and wellbeing by actively promoting and empowering people to live well in resilient communities</b>	
	Partnerships for Improving Health and Wellbeing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Co-Production and Health Literacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Digitally Enabled Health and Wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Deliver better care through excellent health and care services achieving the outcomes that matter most to people</b>	
	Best Value Outcomes and High Quality Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Partnerships for Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Excellent Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Digitally Enabled Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outstanding Research, Innovation, Education and Learning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Health and Care Standards</b>		
<i>(please choose)</i>	Staying Healthy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Safe Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Effective Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Dignified Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Timely Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Individual Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Staff and Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Quality, Safety and Patient Experience</b>		
<p>The paper outlines what is needed to progress the implementation of the WSA to healthy weight. Implementation of an effective WSA approach will lead to a more consistent approach to prevention of excess weight in the population over time but with a focus on shifting the system to consider the impacts of the wider determinants of health and inequities.</p>		
<b>Financial Implications</b>		
<p>The WSA is grant funded by Welsh Government. A total of circa £222 is allocated to the region. Grant funding has been confirmed for 2024-25 financial year, but not beyond.</p>		
<b>Legal Implications (including equality and diversity assessment)</b>		
<p>No legal implications identified. The implementation of the WSA will allow for the identification of equality and diversity issues and development of appropriate responses.</p>		
<b>Staffing Implications</b>		
<p>WSA offers an opportunity to significantly increase the organisation's capacity and capability to adopt different / new ways of working and thinking in order to contribute to a healthy weight environment for all.</p> <p>The WSA team is small consisting of a Principal Public Health Practitioner (System Working), two part time Senior Public Health Practitioners (1.4 WTE) and a Project Support Officer (1.0 WTE) will facilitate the work across stakeholder and partners.</p> <p>Action planning which will follow-on from the identification of a sub-system priority will identify the skills and any additional workforce requirements.</p>		
<b>Long Term Implications (including the impact of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015)</b>		
<p>WSA is contingent on collaboration among partners to deliver better outcomes for our population. A coproduction approach is integral to public health practice and seeks to involve communities and staff in designing services and programmes.</p>		
<b>Report History</b>	No previous reports	
<b>Appendices</b>	<p><b>Appendix 1</b> – System Mapping Workshop Reports 2023  <b>Appendix 2:</b> Assessment of system maturity by the regional WSA team</p>	
<b>References</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National survey for Wales: May 2020 to March 2021. Available at: <a href="https://www.gov.wales/national-survey-wales-results-viewer">https://www.gov.wales/national-survey-wales-results-viewer</a></li> <li>Public Health Wales (2022) Child Measurement Programme Report 2021-22. Available at: <a href="https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/child-measurement-programme/cmp-2021-2022/child-measurement-programme-annual-report2021-2022/">https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/child-measurement-programme/cmp-2021-2022/child-measurement-programme-annual-report2021-2022/</a></li> <li>Welsh Government (May 2021) Tackling the obesity epidemic</li> <li>Frontier economics (January 2022) Estimating the full costs of obesity. A report for Novo Nordisk. Available at: <a href="https://www.frontier-economics.com/uk/en/news-andarticles/articles/article-i9130-the-annual-social-cost-of-obesity-in-the-uk/">https://www.frontier-economics.com/uk/en/news-andarticles/articles/article-i9130-the-annual-social-cost-of-obesity-in-the-uk/</a></li> <li>Public Health Wales (2022) Public Health Outcomes Framework</li> <li>Public Health Wales (2023) Child Measurement Programme for Wales Annual Report 2022-23</li> </ol>	

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