

# Whole systems approach to obesity newsletter – July 2019

## Introduction

This is the final community of learning newsletter, as PHE has now published the [whole systems approach to obesity guide, supporting resources and learning report](#). The publication of these resources is the culmination of 4 years of co-development work between Leeds Beckett University and local authorities, commissioned by PHE in collaboration with the Association of Directors of Public Health and the Local Government Association.

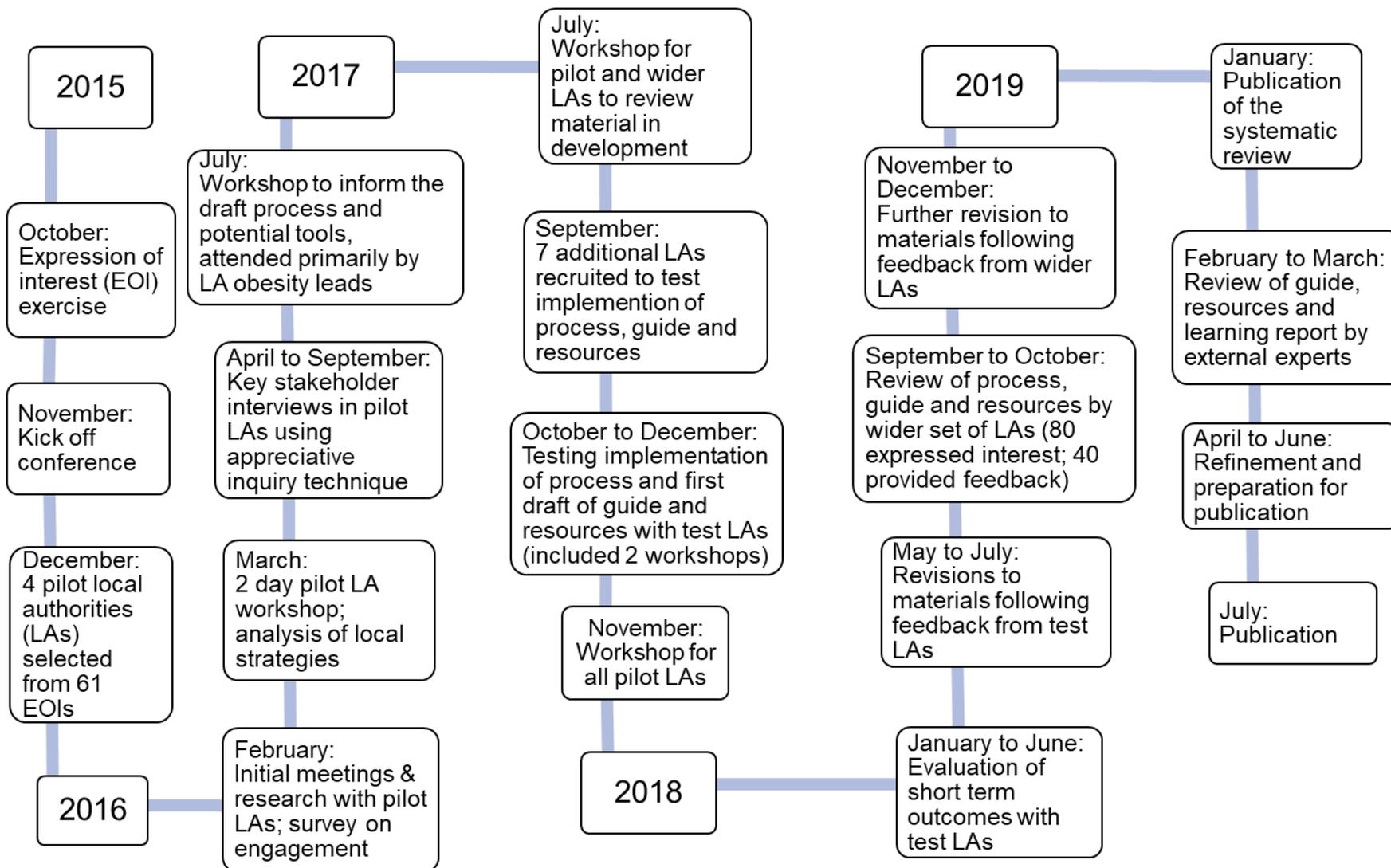
The resources include an [animation](#), which shows why a whole systems approach is needed what it could look like and the benefits of implementing such an approach. An edition of PHE's [Health Matters](#), which includes a set of infographics, supports the guide and resources.

PHE is considering how to continue communication with the community of learning set up through the whole systems approach to obesity programme. If you would like to receive any future updates from PHE related to whole systems approaches to obesity, please email: [wholesystemsobesity@phe.gov.uk](mailto:wholesystemsobesity@phe.gov.uk) with your consent to be added onto the distribution list.

## Programme milestones

PHE has put together the following chronology of key milestones in the whole systems approach to obesity programme.

## Chronological overview of the whole systems approach to obesity programme



## Upcoming events

### 10 September 2019 - PHE conference

PHE will be delivering a session at the PHE conference in Warwick, in partnership with Sport England, called “taking a whole systems approach to tackling obesity, inactivity and other lifestyle risk factors”. The session will include three presentations from local areas about their experiences of using whole systems approaches to tackle obesity and physical inactivity. Registration and additional programme information is available through the [conference website](#).

### Other news

[Trailblazer programme](#): This 3-year programme was announced in chapter 2 of the childhood obesity plan. Councils will be developing and testing innovative action in their local community to tackle childhood obesity and are encouraged to do this as part of a wider whole systems approach. 5 local authorities have now been selected as trailblazer authorities from 13 who undertook a discovery phase. Learning from the trailblazers will be shared throughout the 3 years to encourage wider local action. PHE are supporting the Department of Health and Social Care and the Local Government Association on the programme.

[Sport England Local Delivery Pilot webinars and workshops](#): Sport England are organising a series of workshops and webinars to share learning from the local delivery pilots. You can find further information on how to sign up to these on their [website](#).

### Publications:

[‘Whole systems approaches to obesity and other complex public health challenges: a systematic review’](#) was published in BMC Public Health in January 2019. This was undertaken as part of the programme to understand what was known about whole systems approaches to tackle public health issues and how they could be implemented in practice.

Kensington, Chelsea & Westminster Borough published the [report of their Go Golborne pilot project](#) that took place between May 2015-October 2018 to prevent obesity and promote the health and well-being of children living in the Golborne area of North Kensington. The report provides an overview of the activities that took place, key learning, and interim outcomes. A further report to summarise the final evaluation findings will follow later this year.

Food Active and Sustain have produced a report entitled [“Taking down junk food ads – how local authorities are taking action on outdoor advertising”](#). The report explores what powers local areas have to reduce advertising in their area, which promotes less healthy food. It includes a case study on the work done in Greater London who have introduced advertising restrictions on food high in fat, salt and/or sugar. It also provides recommendations

## Update on PhD and MRes Projects associated with the programme

### Contribution of food environment to obesity in England (Windi Marwa) – PhD project

This PhD project explores the actual (activity-based) food environment and its contribution to obesity, taking into consideration exposures to multiple contexts in time and space at an

individual level. The research involves triangulation of data on individual choice, consumption and weight status. A [paper](#) has been published on the pilot study.

### **Defining Adolescent Activity Space (Alex Christensen) – PhD project**

This project investigates adolescent activity space, physical activity behaviour and perceived self-drawn neighbourhoods, by using GPS and accelerometers to objectively measure adolescent behaviour. Three themes are explored - the accuracy of predetermined buffers (radial, street-network and ellipse) in capturing objectively measured activity space and individuals perceived self-drawn neighbourhoods; the accuracy of predetermined buffers in comparison to activity space and self-drawn neighbourhoods when assessing the availability of physical activity facilities determined from Points of Interest data and objectively measured moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) and sedentary behaviour, matched with GPS location to explore the accuracy of predetermined buffers in capturing activity behaviour. Alex has presented aspects of her work at a number of national and international conferences.

Both PhDs are close to submission.

### **Using planning powers to promote healthy weight environments (Michael Chang) – MRes project**

The research phases of the project have been completed. Provisional results indicate practitioners overwhelmingly believe there are sufficient planning powers available but that external forces such as local government resourcing and lack of capacity, awareness and knowledge are main barriers.

### **Investigating the barriers primary schools face in implementing the physical activity recommendations set out in the Childhood Obesity Plan (2016) in the context of reducing childhood obesity (Yancy Jensen) – MRes project**

Data collection is now complete. Early analysis demonstrates that the barriers schools face in implementing physical activity are similar to those found in the literature such as time, subject priority and in particular in the context of London, space has been a common theme. Further analysis is to be undertaken to uncover further themes around this topic.

*All project will be completed in September 2019.*

### **Completed MRes Project**

Two MRes projects have been completed and students have been awarded their degrees:

#### **The representation of bodies and weight in Sport England's "This Girl Can" (Madeline Sweetman)**

#### **Exploring portrayals of childhood obesity: Weight stigma in policy, news media and public perceptions (Beccy Smith)**

