



How Change4Life is supporting families in Leeds to be food smart

What is the scale of the challenge?

In Leeds, almost a quarter (21%) of Reception children and over a third of Year 6 pupils (35%) are either overweight or obese.

Leeds is a city with considerable socio-economic inequalities. One fifth of people in Leeds live in areas ranked in the most deprived 10% in England. In 2015, some 21% of children in Leeds were classed as living in poverty, rising to 40% in the three most deprived wards of the city.

Childhood obesity in deprived parts of the city is double that in the most affluent areas and barriers to making healthier lifestyle changes are often higher. Families in deprived areas are therefore a particular priority for Leeds City Council.

“The Change4Life campaign is making a valuable difference in Leeds. It is really popular with local schools and encourages children and their families to switch to healthier behaviours. Whether it is eating a decent breakfast or reducing sugary drink consumption, there are lots of ways to support children and everyone else to be a healthy weight and this investment in healthier behaviour can pay dividends for years to come.”

Councillor Rebecca Charlwood
Chair of the Leeds
Health and Wellbeing Board



What is Leeds City Council's approach?

The Leeds City Council public health team overcome the lack of a social marketing budget by maximising use of the Change4Life brand and resources to promote healthy eating and behaviour change for little or no cost.

Public services are commissioned to focus on nutrition, physical activity and weight management. These include local after school physical activity clubs such as multi-sports, dance and skateboarding, healthy eating and cooking sessions. They all provide valuable access to the target audience and a local, trusted voice.

By working closely with their partners, the council has been able to amplify its overall aims and strategy for improving nutrition and physical activity in Leeds. Collaborative workshops allow the council to share their latest insights and priorities with partners, tap into local expertise and brainstorm upcoming opportunities.

By engaging in this process, the council can ensure partner activities are 'on brief' with the local and national strategy, and activities are linked in terms of their timing, focus, content and reach.

Developing close working relationships with health services in the community has allowed the council to easily share updates on new Change4Life tools, resources and upcoming activities.

