

## Independent Healthy Weight Strategy Development – Terms of Reference for Working Group Members

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### Background

It is not an exaggeration to say that levels of obesity in the UK are at crisis level. Nearly two thirds of adults currently have a weight classified as overweight or obese and with child obesity levels at an all-time high, the problem is set to escalate. The epidemic is stretching the National Health System (NHS) and society with direct costs in excess of £5.1 billion each year and indirect costs estimated at £27 billion. Just a one per cent shift in the number of people putting on extra weight each year until 2035, could avoid around 77,000 cases of disease including 45,000 cases of Type 2 diabetes in the year 2035 alone. The situation will not change without bold and decisive policies to tackle the wider environmental factors that encourage over-consumption and inactivity.

The Obesity Health Alliance (OHA) is a coalition of over 40 health charities, medical royal colleges and campaign groups. We are convening a project to bring together health non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with the research community to identify, agree and prioritise a set of interventions based on existing evidence and expert opinion to achieve a reduction in obesity and an increase healthy weight prevalence across the whole population, published by the OHA as an independent strategy.

The strategy will provide a clear plan for action by national and local policymakers in the UK. It will be used by the public health community to work collectively to influence Government policy.

### Aims of the Independent Healthy Weight Strategy development process:

- Bring together a multi-disciplinary group of researchers, practitioners and policy experts to:
  - set a vision for achieving an increase in healthy weight across the life course and a reduction in inequalities with associated targets.
  - review evidence and expert reports and agree priorities for policy action based on existing evidence and their expert opinion.
  - Develop a comprehensive strategy document outlining with recommendations for policy actions in the short-, medium- and long-term.

### Broad aims of the Independent Healthy Weight Strategy

- Secure consensus for the strategy recommendations across the academic, public health and health care communities.
- Use the strategy as a blueprint for developing a long-term advocacy roadmap for the Obesity Health Alliance members and stakeholders.
- Ensure recommendations are socialised with key audiences at appropriate points in the development process
- Engage wider public audiences with the recommendations

### The process

- The process will be chaired by Professor Dame Anne Johnson, on behalf of the OHA Steering Group.

- A small working group will support Professor Dame Anne Johnson to develop the content of the strategy. The multi-disciplinary working group includes researchers, clinicians and policy experts.
- It is anticipated that the strategy development process will take up to two years. The working group will meet in person, five times during this period to discuss evidence papers and agree recommendations.
- A team of researchers, led by Professor Linda Bauld, will conduct rapid evidence reviews to inform working group discussions.
- Other academics, clinicians and subject-matter specialists will be brought into the process on an ad hoc basis to act as expert advisors to the working group and provide guidance on specific areas.
- An experienced medical writer will attend each meeting and produce drafts of the report based on meeting discussions. These will be circulated for review ahead of each subsequent expert group meeting.
- The strategy content will be reviewed and agreed by the OHA Steering Group at each stage. Steering Group members may also attend working group meetings depending on the subjects being discussed.
- The secretariat will be provided by the Obesity Health Alliance. Agenda and papers will be circulated ten working days before each meeting date.
- The report will be launched to stakeholders with an event and a series of dedicated meetings in 2021.

### **Objectives**

Members of the working group will:

- Provide strategic oversight and advice to shape the scope and depth of the obesity strategy.
- Use their expert knowledge to critically appraise evidence reviews and advise on the place of recommendations in the strategy accordingly.
- Support the strategy development process through the sharing of intelligence, challenge and advice.
- Be named in the strategy (and have the opportunity participate in any relevant interviews or events at launch).

### **Responsibilities**

- Commit to the two year process, attending meetings and providing feedback and input in a timely manner.
- Work with the academic review team to feed into evidence reviews on their speciality subject.
- Work constructively with other working group members to agree consensus based recommendations for the strategy.
- Provide a responsive advisory/informing role, enabling the secretariat to ask members for advice between meetings.

### **Accountability and governance**

- *Confidentiality*: Papers considered by the working group should not be circulated any wider without permission from the secretariat.
- *Conflicts of interest*: Working group members are required to declare any relevant business interests and positions of authority related to obesity, food or weight management industries. You must inform the secretariat of any changes to these commitments. At the beginning of the each working group meeting members will be asked and expected to declare any changes of interests and any declarations with respect to agenda items as appropriate.

### **Expenses**

- Standard class travel expenses will be reimbursed where receipts are provided. If required, overnight accommodation and subsistence can be covered with approval by the secretariat. The secretariat can help organise all travel and accommodation requirements.