



**An Eating Well Strategy for
Cheshire West and Chester
2026-31**

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Get Cheshire West Eating Well Strategy, 2026-2031

A Whole-System Approach to Improving Diet, Reducing Dietary-Related Inequalities and Supporting Health from Childhood to Older Age.

Foreword

Cllr Lisa Denson, Chair of Eat Well be Active and Cabinet Member for a Fairer Future, Cheshire West and Chester Council:

Eating well is one of the most important foundations of good health, but we know that many residents face barriers that make healthy eating difficult. This strategy recognises that improving nutrition is not simply about providing information – it is about creating the right conditions, environments and support systems that help people make healthier choices in everyday life.

Delivery of this strategy will take effort from partners at all levels, across all sectors and all localities. Eating well is so important that it needs to be built into people's daily lives, whether at nursery, school, college, work, home and importantly when they are in care settings. Key to the delivery of this strategy are health colleagues, workplaces, education, leisure, food producers and retailers, community organisations, volunteers, friends and family – we all have a part to play.

By working together across organisations, communities and neighbourhoods, we can make healthy food more accessible, affordable and sustainable, while helping to reduce health inequalities and improve wellbeing for people of all ages across Cheshire West and Chester."

With thanks to

The Get Cheshire West Eating Well Strategy has been co-developed by a range of partners. We would like to thank:

- Active Cheshire
- Blacon Beacon
- Boughton Medical Group
- Brio
- Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board

- Chester School Sports Partnership
- Cheshire West and Chester Council teams, including:
 - Public Health
 - Youth Service
 - Children and Families
 - Commissioning
 - Planning
 - Strategic Transport and Infrastructure
 - Green Infrastructure
 - Environmental Commissioning
- Cheshire West Voluntary Action
- CWAPH
- Cheshire Wirral Partnership NHS Trust
- Cheshire Wirral Partnership 0-19 Starting Well Service
- Countess of Chester NHS Foundation Trust
- Edsential CiC
- Ellesmere Port School Sports Partnership
- Fallen Angels
- Food Active
- Healthbox CiC
- Mersey Forest
- Mid Cheshire Hospital Foundation Trust
- Neston Community Youth Centre
- Nourish to Flourish
- Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (North West)
- Park Medical Centre
- Vale Royal School Sports Partnership
- West Cheshire Food Partnership
- Westminster Families
- University of Chester

If you find your organisation not named here but would like to find out more and be involved in the delivery of the strategy, please contact:

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Introduction

Eating well is vital to health at every stage of life. It supports growth and development in childhood, productivity and wellbeing in adulthood, and independence and quality of life in older age.

In Cheshire West and Chester, many residents want to eat well, but their ability to do so is shaped by affordability, access, time pressures, environments, and wider life circumstances rather than knowledge alone.

The Get Cheshire West Eating Well Strategy supports the Cheshire West and Chester Health and Wellbeing Strategy – Our Place Plan for the Borough 2026-2031ⁱ and the Cheshire West and Chester Borough Planⁱⁱ.

Eating Well is also an important component of other strategies and plans at a borough level. Strategies and plans of note include:

Climate Emergency Response Planⁱⁱⁱ

The Climate Emergency Response Plan aligns closely with the Eating Well Strategy by recognising the links between food systems, health and environmental sustainability. Action to promote sustainable and affordable dietary patterns, reduce food waste, support local food production and increase access to sustainable food choices can contribute to carbon reduction, biodiversity, resource efficiency and wider environmental objectives, whilst also improving population health.

Food for All Plan

The Food for All Plan provides an important delivery mechanism for many of the ambitions within the Eating Well Strategy. Through its focus on food insecurity, community food provision, dignity, local food systems, food growing and sustainable food partnerships, the plan supports efforts to ensure that all residents can access affordable, healthy and culturally appropriate food, whilst addressing wider inequalities and strengthening community resilience.

Fairer Futures Strategy

The Fairer Futures Strategy complements the Eating Well Strategy by addressing the wider determinants that influence dietary health and food access. Its focus on reducing poverty, improving financial resilience, tackling inequalities and supporting vulnerable residents helps create the conditions that enable people and families to eat well, reducing barriers associated with income, transport, housing and social exclusion.

Healthy Weight Declaration

The Cheshire West and Chester Healthy Weight Declaration provides a key policy framework for the Eating Well Strategy. It promotes a whole-systems approach to healthy weight, including action on food environments, planning, procurement,

commercial influences, inequalities and community engagement. The Eating Well Strategy contributes directly to a number of Healthy Weight Declaration commitments and helps translate these into coordinated local action across the borough.

The Local Plan^{iv}

The Local Plan supports healthy eating indirectly by improving residents' access to food retailers, services and healthy environments; protecting local centres; promoting active and sustainable communities; and addressing wider determinants such as housing, accessibility and health inequalities.

Local Transport Plan^v

The Local Transport Plan supports residents to eat well by improving physical access to food retailers, community services and healthcare, particularly for groups at risk of transport-related exclusion. Through enhanced public transport, active travel infrastructure and better connections to local centres, the strategy can help reduce barriers to obtaining affordable, healthy food while also promoting healthier lifestyles.

Children and Young People's Plan

The Children and Young People's Plan aligns with the Eating Well Strategy through its focus on giving children the best start in life, reducing inequalities and supporting health and wellbeing. Actions relating to infant feeding, Healthy Start, school food, food literacy and healthy weight contribute to improved outcomes for children and families.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy supports the Eating Well Strategy through opportunities to connect people with nature, increase access to food-growing spaces and strengthen local environmental resilience. Activities such as community gardening, orchards, green social prescribing and biodiversity enhancement can deliver co-benefits for health, wellbeing, sustainability and community resilience.

Cheshire West and Chester Infant Feeding Strategy (in development)

The Cheshire West and Chester Infant Feeding Strategy supports the ambitions of the Eating Well Strategy by promoting breastfeeding, supporting healthy infant feeding practices and ensuring families receive consistent, accessible support. Through workforce development, community-based support and a strong focus on evidence and evaluation, the strategy seeks to give every child the best possible nutritional start in life and reduce inequalities in early years health outcomes.

Why is it important to eat well?

A healthy diet is a foundation for good health throughout life, yet national dietary surveys consistently show that most people in the UK do not meet the recommended nutritional guidelines. The Eatwell Guide^{vi} sets out what a balanced diet should look like, but the National Diet and Nutrition Survey highlights persistent gaps, including low consumption of fruit, vegetables and fibre and higher intakes of sugar, saturated

fat and salt than recommended. These patterns vary across the different life stages and are strongly shaped by wider social conditions meaning that dietary opportunities are not equal for all. As a result, poorer diet quality is more common in communities facing financial hardship, limited transport, fewer local healthy food outlets and greater exposure to low-cost, calorie-dense foods. Evidence suggests that poor diet is more closely linked to deprivation than to household income alone, showing that factors beyond money can affect people's diet and access to healthy food^{vii}.

Poor diet is also a major contributor to obesity and a range of diet-related long-term conditions, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, some cancers and mental health conditions. Additionally, nutrition and health influence each other in both directions. Long-term conditions, disability, insecure employment, disrupted sleep patterns and financial strain can all affect what and how people eat. This reinforces the importance of prevention and wider support to help people maintain healthier diets, particularly in the face of the everyday pressures that shape eating patterns.

What makes a healthy diet?

The UK Government advice on a healthy, balanced diet is presented in the UK's national food model, the Eatwell Guide^{viii}. The Eatwell Guide reflects the latest dietary recommendations and key public health messages. The Eatwell Guide applies to most people regardless of weight, dietary restriction or preferences or ethnic origin. The proportions shown are representative of food consumption over the period of a day or even a week, not necessarily each mealtime.

Figure 1: Eatwell Guide



Source: UK Government, Department of Health and Social Care

The Eatwell Guide (Figure 1) provides a visual representation of the types and proportions of foods needed for a healthy balanced diet to promote long-term health at a population level. The recommendations include advice to consume at least five portions of fruit and vegetables per day, wholegrain, higher fibre carbohydrates and lower fat, sugar and dairy options. The Eatwell Guide also recommends consumption of no more than 70g of red and processed meat a day, and replacing meat with lower fat, higher fibre proteins such as beans, pulses, fish and eggs. Other recommendations include choosing unsaturated oils and spreads, limiting consumption of foods high in fat, salt and sugar, and drinking six to eight glasses of fluid every day.

National approach

National policy consistently highlights that poor diet is a major cause of obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and other long term health conditions, and that these health problems affect some communities more than others. The National Food Strategy brought together evidence demonstrating this and framed diet-related ill health as both a public health and equity challenge, concluding that approaches focused on individual

behaviour change and voluntary industry action have been insufficient. Instead, it identified the food environment as a key determinant of diet quality and called for sustained population-level intervention to improve diet quality, increase access to healthy food and reduce health inequalities.

More recently, the UK Government's food strategy and wider food policy agenda have reinforced the importance of creating a healthier, more sustainable and resilient food system. This includes improving access to affordable healthy food, supporting local food systems, reducing food insecurity, promoting healthier dietary patterns and strengthening the role of food in improving health, environmental sustainability and economic resilience. These priorities align closely with local ambitions to create food environments that make healthy choices easier, more affordable and more accessible for all residents.

National obesity policy also highlights excess weight as one of the most significant public health challenges and recognises that it affects people in more deprived communities disproportionately. The policy paper on tackling obesity highlights that current food environments promote overconsumption through product formulation, pricing, placement and marketing. This focus on food environments reflects a shift towards making healthy choices easier for everyone, rather than relying solely on individuals to change their behaviour. It recognises that the places where people live, work and shop have a major influence on their diet.

The 10 Year Health Plan for England^{ix} positions poor diet and obesity as central to the shift from a system focused on treating sickness to one focused on preventing ill health. The plan highlights that people are developing long-term conditions earlier and spending longer in poor health, particularly in more deprived communities where access to affordable, healthy food is constrained. It reinforces the Government's three shifts for health and care reform: a shift from hospital to community, analogue to digital, and sickness to prevention. Within this context, improving diet and reducing obesity are recognised as key prevention priorities.

The 10 Year Health Plan also emphasises the development of neighbourhood health models and community-based services, bringing support closer to where people live. This presents opportunities to integrate healthy eating, food access, weight management and nutrition support within neighbourhood health hubs, primary care, community pharmacies, social prescribing, family support services and wider community settings. This approach recognises that supporting people to eat well requires coordinated action across health, local government, communities and the wider food system.

Finally, government guidance on obesity and food environments helps explain how national trends and challenges affect local communities. It identifies obesity as strongly socially patterned and linked to local food environments, particularly the density of fast-food outlets in deprived areas. It also highlights the impact of weight stigma, noting evidence that people living with overweight or obesity may avoid

seeking support or participating in activities because of fear of judgement or discrimination. The guidance emphasises the role of local authorities in shaping healthier environments through a whole-systems approach, including planning, catering standards, procurement and partnership working, underlining the importance of local context in determining dietary risk.

Taken together, this national evidence base establishes a clear rationale for local action in Cheshire West and Chester. It highlights that diet-related ill health is driven by structural factors such as affordability, availability and local food environments, which sit within local authority influence through planning, commissioning, procurement, partnership working and community leadership. For Cheshire West and Chester, this reinforces the importance of understanding how national policy translates locally, including identifying communities most exposed to unhealthy food environments and experiencing the greatest barriers to healthy eating, while taking advantage of emerging opportunities through prevention-focused and neighbourhood-based models of care.

Where are we now?

This strategy has been informed by two Joint Strategic 0-19 Needs Assessments (JSNA) (Eating Well and Healthy Weight) published in 2024, and an Adult Nutrition and Health Needs Assessment published in 2026.

Starting Well: Healthy Weight and Eating Well (2024) JSNAs

The 0-19 JSNA Chapters assessed healthy weight and eating well and present a comprehensive overview of healthy weight and nutritional behaviours among children and young people (0–19 years, up to 25 with SEND) in Cheshire West and Chester. The two chapters bring together evidence on diet, physical health, and wider determinants and were produced to inform strategic planning, commissioning, and service delivery, with a core aim of improving outcomes and reducing inequalities.

Maintaining a healthy weight and a balanced diet remains a significant and complex public health challenge locally. Many children and young people do not meet recommended dietary guidelines, including low consumption of fruit and vegetables and high intake of sugars, which contribute to excess weight, poor oral health, and increased risk of long-term conditions.

Excess weight in childhood is associated with poorer physical and mental health outcomes and is strongly linked to deprivation. Both reports highlight clear inequalities, with children from more disadvantaged backgrounds and vulnerable groups experiencing poorer diet quality and higher levels of excess weight and obesity.

Healthy weight and eating behaviours are shaped by a complex interaction of factors. These include:

- Family environment, knowledge, and behaviours
- Food affordability and the cost-of-living crisis
- Availability and accessibility of healthy food
- Cultural and religious norms
- Physical activity opportunities and local environment
- Wider societal influences, including stigma and cultural norms

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing financial pressures has exacerbated these challenges, particularly for families already facing disadvantage.

A key finding across both JSNA chapters is the importance of early years and a life-course (“Think Family”) approach^x. Nutrition and feeding practices from infancy (including breastfeeding and introduction to solid food) strongly influence long-term dietary habits and weight trajectories. Early intervention, prevention, and consistent messaging are therefore critical to establishing healthy behaviours.

The JSNA chapters found that the borough benefits from a range of universal and targeted services, including the 0–19 (25 with SEND) Healthy Child Programme services, school-based programmes, and community initiatives supporting nutrition, physical activity, and behaviour change.

However, the chapters identify opportunities to:

- Improve coordination and integration across services
- Strengthen data sharing and outcome monitoring
- Increase accessibility and reach, particularly for high-risk groups
- Enhance co-production with children, young people, and families
- Ensure consistent, inclusive and non-stigmatising communication

Both reports emphasise the need for a whole-system, multi-agency approach. This includes aligning work across health, education, local authority, community and voluntary sectors to address both behaviours and the wider determinants of health. Prevention and early intervention should be embedded across services, with a strong focus on reducing inequalities and supporting families in a holistic way.

Improving healthy weight and dietary outcomes requires sustained, coordinated action across the system. Priorities include strengthening early help, supporting families to access affordable healthy food, promoting consistent health messages, and addressing the broader social and environmental factors that influence behaviour. Together, these actions will help to create healthier environments and improve long-term health outcomes for children and young people in Cheshire West and Chester.

Adult Nutrition and Health Needs Assessment 2026

The Adult Nutrition and Health Needs Assessment (2026) shows that many adults in Cheshire West and Chester want to eat well and support their health, but their ability to do so is shaped far more by social, environmental and commercial determinants than by knowledge or motivation alone.

The majority of residents do not meet national dietary guidance, with low intakes of fruit and vegetables, and high intakes of highly processed foods, sugar, salt and saturated fat. These patterns are worse among communities living in more deprived areas where there are also higher levels of obesity, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, cancer and dementia.

Food insecurity remains a significant issue for many residents of Cheshire West and Chester. A sixth (16.7%) of residents live in areas at highest risk, and foodbanks as well as affordable food projects continue to play an important role. Survey and focus-group feedback shows that cost, time pressures, limited cooking facilities, lack of transport and poor mental health are often barriers for people eating well.

Access to affordable, healthy food is inequitable largely due to the rurality of the borough. While many residents live close to supermarkets, others particularly those in rural areas or without their own transport face significant challenges. Data from the Food Equalities Tool^{xi} shows wide variation across neighbourhoods in how easy it is to access affordable food and how much of household income is spent on food shopping.

Confidence and skills in cooking healthy meals vary across different groups. The survey found that people living in more deprived areas, men, and those unable to work were more likely to report lower confidence in cooking healthy meals and greater reliance on convenience food. Exposure to advertising for less healthy food is common, particularly in more deprived areas where people are more likely to see these promotions.

At the same time, Cheshire West and Chester has strong foundations to build on. There is a well-established whole-system approach through Eat Well Be Active, the Food for All Plan and the West Cheshire Food Partnership. The borough has taken meaningful action on healthier advertising, planning and food environments, and offers a tiered weight-management pathway aligned with national guidance. There is a clear commitment to dignity-based, compassionate support rather than blame or stigma.

The main gaps identified are not a lack of activity, but uneven access, affordability and local data. More needs to be done to make healthy food easier to choose, buy, and prepare especially for people experiencing poverty, disability, neurodivergence, mental ill health or unstable housing and to improve insight into the experiences of underserved groups.

Overall, this needs assessment has identified the need to continue shifting from individual behaviour change alone to practical, system-wide action. Making healthy food affordable, accessible and realistic in everyday life, while maintaining compassionate, joined-up support, offers the greatest opportunity to improve nutrition, reduce inequalities and support better health across the borough.

Our vision for eating well in Cheshire West and Chester

Vision

To create a borough where everyone - children, young people, adults, and older people, regardless of their sex, race, religious belief, age, ability, income or geography - can eat well, supported by systems and environments that make healthy, sustainable, affordable, dietarily inclusive and enjoyable food the easy choice.

Aim

Our aim is to work as a system to enable, empower and support all Cheshire West and Chester residents to access an affordable, healthy, sustainable and enjoyable diet.

Core Principles

This strategy is underpinned by a series of core principles, these include:

Whole-system working

Eating well is shaped by a complex interaction of factors including food environments, income, education, health services, and social conditions. A whole-system approach recognises that no single organisation can deliver change in isolation. Instead, it requires coordinated action across stakeholders.

This principle commits to aligning priorities and actions across organisations; sharing responsibility and accountability; coordinating interventions across settings (home, school, workplace and community); and delivering through neighbourhood and place-based partnerships, recognising the role of Family Hubs, Primary Care Networks, Integrated Neighbourhood Teams and community organisations in improving dietary health.

Every stage of life approach (from early years to older adulthood)

Eating habits and nutritional needs change throughout life, and health inequalities can build up over time.

This principle ensures that support is available at every stage of life.

Equity and reducing inequalities

Access to healthy food is not equal across the population. Factors such as income, geography, disability, and ethnicity influence people's ability to eat well.

In line with a proportionate universalism approach, this principle ensures that the strategy prioritises communities experiencing the greatest barriers; targets resources where need is highest; addresses structural issues such as cost, transport, and food availability; and monitors and reduces inequalities in outcomes.

Healthy, Sustainable and Affordable Food

Food choices affect both health and environmental sustainability. Many healthy dietary patterns, including those rich in fruit, vegetables, beans and pulses, can be affordable and support climate and sustainability goals.

This principle ensures that actions to improve diets also support affordability, environmental sustainability, local food systems and reduced food waste, whilst respecting personal, cultural and dietary preferences.

Think Family – recognising the influence of households and carers

Eating behaviours are strongly shaped within households and family environments.

This principle means working with families as a whole, not just individuals; recognising the role of parents, carers, and wider household influences; designing interventions that fit family life, routines, and pressures; and supporting parents and carers as key role models for children.

Prevention and early intervention

Preventing poor diet and related health conditions is more effective and sustainable than treating them later.

This principle ensures a shift from reactive services to proactive prevention across the system.

Dignity and compassion

Food and eating behaviours are deeply personal and often linked to stigma, particularly in relation to weight and poverty.

This principle ensures that all approaches avoid blame, shame, or stigma; respect individual circumstances and lived experience; focus on empowerment rather than judgement; and use person-centred and trauma-informed approaches.

Co-production and lived experience

People who experience barriers to eating well are best placed to shape solutions that work in real life.

This principle commits to codesigning services with communities, not for them; embedding lived experience in decision-making and governance; using co-production methods to shape programmes and interventions; and valuing local knowledge and insight.

Practical, real-life solutions

Many people face everyday constraints that limit their ability to eat well, including food cost, time pressures, limited cooking facilities and transport and access issues.

This principle ensures that all interventions are realistic and achievable within people's daily lives; focusing on affordability, convenience, and accessibility and offering practical support.

Integrated services

People often need support from multiple services, but fragmented systems can create barriers.

This principle ensures that services are joined up across organisations and sectors; providing seamless pathways between support offers; sharing information appropriately to avoid repetition; and linking eating well with wider needs such as mental health, housing and financial support.

Strategic Themes

1. Eating Well Systems – leadership, governance, and integration

- Concerns the broader strategies, policies, and systems that influence healthy weight.
- Ensures that healthy weight is embedded within organisational, institutional, and policy frameworks.

Key to healthy weight systems are system-wide working, data and insight, monitoring and evaluation, learning and impact.

Particular focus will be given to the system levers most likely to create lasting change, including procurement, commissioning, planning policy, healthier food environments, organisational leadership and implementation of the Healthy Weight Declaration.

2. Eating Well Environments – shaping access and availability

- Focuses on the physical spaces and infrastructure that support healthy weight.
- Involves development, accessibility, communication, and sustainability of spaces that are conducive to eating well and being active.

Key to eating well environments are settings, communities and infrastructure conducive to eating well.

3. Eating Well People and Communities – supporting capability across the life course

- Focuses on individuals and community-level action to engage people in healthy behaviours.
- Emphasise inclusion, cultural shifts, partnerships, and addressing barriers to participation, ensuring that diverse populations are engaged.

Key to healthy weight systems is engagement, co-creation, safe and inclusive experiences, asset-based community development.

Ambitions

For Cheshire West and Chester to be a place where eating well is the norm, we will:

- Make eating well an easier choice for residents.
- Empower and enable leaders to ensure eating well is embedded within systems, advocating for eating well champions at all levels.
- Support the development of health promoting environments and local infrastructure that encourage people to eat well, more often.
- Reduce inequalities in accessing and affording healthy food.

- Work with a wide range of partners including health, social care, voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise (VCFSE) organisations and businesses to embed eating well into daily life for all.
- Work with communities to understand how best to support them to eat well and empower them to do so.
- Ensure that education and work settings understand the value of eating well and actively promote it.
- Enable local food producers, growers and retailers to thrive, increasing local procurement.
- Monitor and evaluate, share good practice, learn from challenges and innovate.

How will we get there?

Getting more people to eat well will take a system-wide coordinated approach. The action plan below is presented in themes and high-level actions which are underpinned by a series of deliverables which are detailed in an accompanying plan.

The strategy will be owned and delivered by system partners across the borough, in partnership with local organisations and communities. Local voices will continue to shape the delivery plan for the next five years, to ensure the strategy is meaningful, relevant and impactful for local people. Eat Well Be Active partners are committed to increasing eating well for all, thus reducing diet-related ill-health and inequalities.

Delivery will build upon existing strengths across Cheshire West and Chester, including Family Hubs, Integrated Neighbourhood Teams, social prescribing, neighbourhood health approaches, community food partnerships and wider prevention programmes. These existing assets will act as key delivery mechanisms for the strategy, helping to maximise impact, strengthen integration and avoid duplication.

The delivery plan will be a working document, annually reviewed and refreshed to align with new insight and learning, enhanced partnerships and resource.

THEME 1: Eating Well Systems

Aim: To embed eating well across all policies, services, and sectors, supporting residents at every life stage.

1.1 Establish Governance and Strategic Leadership

Establish a Get Cheshire West Eating Well Steering Group, reporting into Eat Well Be Active.

Agree Group Terms of Reference, membership and chair.

Complete quarterly meetings over a 5-year strategic period with a 2-year refresh.

Achieve formal endorsement for the strategy framework.

1.2 Whole-System Strategic Alignment

Embed eating well across all organisational strategies, by adopting an Eating Well in All Policies approach (including the Healthy Weight Declaration).

Use procurement and commissioning processes to support healthier, more sustainable and locally sourced food where possible.

Align delivery across key life-course settings:

- Early years and family services
- Schools and education
- Workplaces
- VCFSE sector
- Health and social care (including older adults)

Continue and build upon whole-system working and partnerships.

Support initiatives that reduce edible food waste and maximise redistribution of surplus food.

Continue to develop Cheshire West and Chester as a leading Sustainable Food Place where healthy, sustainable and affordable food contributes to improved health, prosperity and environmental sustainability.

Align delivery across neighbourhoods and place-based partnerships to improve outcomes within local communities.

1.3 Consistent, Compassionate Communication

Develop consistent messaging across all life stages, for all stakeholders and all settings; ensuring clear and comprehensive healthy eating messages are aligned

with government guidelines. Ensure messaging is age-appropriate (children, young people, adults, older people) and culturally relevant.
Avoid weight-centric language; focus on health, energy, wellbeing, enjoyment and independence in later life.
Promote compassionate, non-stigmatising approaches to communication.
Centralise information into a single accessible hub or platform for partners and communities.
1.4 Data, Insight and Intelligence
Produce an annual Eating Well progress report and review priorities every two years.
Develop a shared dataset covering the life course: • Infant feeding and early years nutrition • School food uptake and child diet • Adult diet • Food access • Older adult nutrition (e.g. malnutrition risk)
Strengthen insight into inequalities and seldom heard groups.
Identify, monitor and respond to food insecurity across the borough through coordinated action with partners.
1.5 Community Partnerships and Lived Experience
Embed lived experience in governance and decision making.
Strengthen community food partnerships.
Build on existing community food support networks and local voluntary sector capacity.
Ensure dignity-based approaches across services.
1.6 Integration with Health and Care
Embed nutrition into routine care across the life course: - Pre-conception, maternity, health visiting and early years - Education - Primary care, including community pharmacies - Secondary care - Community services - Adult social care and older people's services

Strengthen Make Every Contact Count (MECC) approaches across services to deliver health, wellbeing and welfare brief advice and service signposting.
Regularly review the weight management offer for residents, exploring ways to communicate and increase engagement with the programmes.
Integrate food and healthy diet with other services, including mental health, housing, welfare and financial support.
Build nutrition and healthy eating skills across the wider workforce, including education, VCFSE, care and community settings.
1.7 Capacity and Sustainability
Ensure sustainability of delivery across system reforms - mitigate threats from NHS reforms and sector financial efficiencies by embedding healthy weight as a cross-cutting priority in organisational plans.
Support innovation, research and evaluation to continuously improve the Eating Well approach.
Identify and pursue external funding, research opportunities and grant programmes that support food security, food growing, healthy food access, sustainable food systems, community resilience and health inequalities reduction.

THEME 2: Eating Well Environments Aim: To create environments that support healthy eating at every stage of life.
2.1 Access and Affordability
Expand affordable food initiatives.
Improve access to healthy, affordable and dietarily appropriate food.
Improve transport and active travel connections to food provision.
Strengthen community food provision and support.
Work with partners to prevent and reduce food insecurity through coordinated local responses.
Integrate food support with wider welfare and health services.
Increase availability of locally produced healthy food.
Increase opportunities for residents and communities to grow food.
2.2 Planning, Infrastructure and Food Systems

Embed healthy food access within planning and regeneration.
Shape healthier local food environments.
Reduce exposure to unhealthy food environments.
Promote sustainable and affordable dietary patterns.
Support sustainable local food systems.
Use procurement and commissioning to improve food environments.
Protect and incorporate food-growing opportunities through planning policy and development.
2.3 Food in Public and Community Settings
Improve food provision in leisure centres, community venues and public buildings.
Work with the private sector to support healthier offers, particularly through vending and procurement.
Expand access to free drinking water.
2.4 Early Years Settings
Strengthen healthy food provision in nurseries and childcare settings.
Support healthy early feeding practices and provide consistent guidance for parents.
Promote good nutrition and oral health through integrated early years support.
Maximise uptake of Healthy Start through proactive identification, promotion and support.
2.5 Schools and Education Settings
Ensure children have access to healthy school meals and healthy food during school holidays, including maximising uptake of Free School Meals and the Holiday Activity and Food Programme provision.
Ensure consistent healthy food environments across all education settings including primary, secondary and colleges.
Address influences on children's choices, particularly in terms of food availability, marketing, and peer influence.
Strengthen links between food education, cooking skills and school culture.
Encourage school food growing, edible gardens and orchard projects alongside cooking and nutrition education.

2.6 Workplace Food Environments
Support workplaces to improve catering and vending and to promote healthy eating.
Embed eating well within workplace wellbeing.
Recognise workplaces as key system drivers to improving population dietary health.
2.7 Commercial Influences
Further strengthen advertising policies locally.
Advocate for, and support, national action on planning and licencing of less healthy food and drink outlets.
Advocate for, and support, national action on marketing and promotions.
Advocate for, and support, national action on commercial sponsorship of grassroots sport and school initiatives.
2.8 Reducing Barriers
Address key barriers identified for families, including • Cost of food • Time pressures • Lack of cooking facilities • Transport challenges
Focus on making healthy eating realistic for families' daily lives.

THEME 3: Eating Well People and Communities

Aim: To support people at every stage of life with the skills, confidence, and opportunity to eat well.

3.1 Early Years and Families (Start Well)
Support breastfeeding, healthy introduction of solid food and early eating habits.
Provide consistent support through health visiting and Family Hubs.
Work with childcare settings as opportunities to influence dietary patterns.
Support parents and carers as key influencers in their child's diet, whilst recognising the challenges that the wider environments present.

3.2 Children and Young People
Build food knowledge, cooking skills and confidence in trying new foods.
Support healthy habits that continue into adulthood.
Develop and support peer champion opportunities through schools, colleges, youth services and community settings.
3.3 Working-Age Adults (Live Well)
Provide support that reflects real life, particularly time pressures, cost constraints and work patterns.
Promote behaviour change focused on habits and wellbeing.
Support people out of work to eat well and build positive routines.
Identify key transition points in adulthood where habits may change and explore opportunities to influence.
3.4 Older Adults (Age Well)
Support nutrition for independence, preventing malnutrition and managing long-term conditions.
Integrate nutrition into adult social care and community health services.
Address isolation, access, and mobility barriers.
Identify key transition points in adulthood where habits may change and explore opportunities to influence.
3.5 People living with a physical or learning disability
Support nutrition for independence and enjoyment, whilst also supporting conditions they may have.
Take a whole-person approach, supporting the individual, the carer and addressing the environment in which they spend time.
3.6 Skills, Confidence and Food Literacy
Increase cooking skills across all ages, focussing on those who need it most.
Provide budgeting support, meal planning and practical non-judgemental advice – ensure this is done in a variety of ways to support different cohorts and needs.
Explore opportunities to combine healthy eating support with nature-based activities, green social prescribing, community gardening and outdoor wellbeing programmes.

3.7 Support wider drivers of poor diet

Acknowledge and support the impact that routine, sleep and stress can have on dietary choices.

Embed psychology and holistic approaches, incorporating mindful eating, confidence building, routines, sleep support, stress management and motivational support into support services.

3.8 Community Empowerment and Co-Production

Support and expand community-led food growing, orchard, food-sharing and cooking initiatives through local leadership and volunteer programmes.

Embed co-production with residents across all age groups, building on the Cheshire West Voluntary Action Food Ambassadors Programme and applying the principles of the Local Voices Framework.

Tell local stories to build relatability, motivation, and community buy-in.

Delivery of the Get Cheshire West Eating Well Strategy

The five-year Get Cheshire West Eating Well strategy is supported by a delivery plan which details specific actions, roles and responsibilities. The delivery plan is a working document and will continue to be reviewed, refined and informed through emerging evidence, national and local priorities and local voice. The year 1 milestones have been included here to show what the strategy aims to achieve in the first year.

Year 1 milestones

Milestones for the first year of the strategy will include, but not limited to:

1. Establish and embed the Get Cheshire West Eating Well Steering Group

Governance arrangements, terms of reference and cross-sector membership agreed, with quarterly meetings established.

2. Secure formal endorsement of the Eating Well Strategy and adopt an Eating Well in All Policies approach

Eating well embedded across partner strategies, plans and decision-making processes, including implementation of the Healthy Weight Declaration commitments.

3. Develop a borough-wide Eating Well Outcomes Framework

Shared dataset and intelligence framework established to monitor diet, food access, food insecurity, inequalities and outcomes across the life course.

4. Launch a single Eating Well information and resources hub

Accessible platform providing consistent messages, information and signposting for residents, communities and professionals

5. Establish integrated neighbourhood delivery

Delivery aligned through Family Hubs, Integrated Neighbourhood Teams, social prescribing and other place-based partnerships to improve local outcomes.

6. Develop and implement a Healthy and Sustainable Food Procurement Framework

Food procurement standards reviewed and a shared framework introduced across council, education, leisure, health and commissioned services.

7. Develop a three-year West Cheshire Food Partnership Action Plan

Strengthening community food provision, addressing food insecurity and supporting coordinated action across partners.

8. Increase access to affordable food and reduce food insecurity

Gap analysis completed using the Food Equalities Tool, expansion of affordable food initiatives and stronger links between food support, welfare advice and social prescribing.

9. Achieve Sustainable Food Places Silver Award

Recognition of progress towards a healthier, more sustainable and resilient local food system.

10. Publish the first annual Eating Well Progress Report

Reporting against outcomes, inequalities, system transformation measures and partnership achievements, with priorities refreshed as required.

How will we measure success?

Success will be measured across the life course, including:

Measure	Indicators
Stronger system transformation and partnership maturity	Partner engagement, adoption of policies, Healthy Weight Declaration commitments implemented, commissioning changes, neighbourhood collaboration, food environment improvements.
Improved diet and nutrition outcomes	PHOF Adult 5-a-Day indicator, National Diet and Nutrition Survey.
Improved overweight and obesity prevalence	PHOF National Child Measurement programme and Adult Active lives data.
Increased breastfeeding rates	PHOF indicator for breastfeeding initiation and at 6-8 weeks.
Increased school meal uptake and improved child diet	School meal uptake – Edsential, FSM uptake, Healthy Start Uptake, provision and uptake of inclusive meals.
Increased access to affordable food	Food Partnership data.
Improved cooking confidence across age groups	Potential project – baseline and post-delivery.
Reduced food insecurity	National data (Food Foundation).
Improved nutrition among older adults	Malnutrition data.

Reduced inequalities in diet-related outcomes	Incidence of diet-related disease by IMD, sex, age and race.
Stronger system integration	Number and level of engagement of partners across the system.

This strategy recognises that eating well is shaped by systems, environments, communities, and personal circumstances.

By taking a balanced life-course approach, partners across Cheshire West and Chester can support children to get the best start, enable adults to live healthier lives, support older people to remain independent and reduce inequalities across the population.



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