



Healthy Community Challenge Fund: Invitation to local areas

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For Recipient's Use	

HEALTHY COMMUNITY CHALLENGE FUND: INVITATION TO LOCAL AREAS

1. INTRODUCTION

Local areas are invited to submit an expression of interest in the Government's Healthy Community Challenge Fund.

The purpose of the fund is to test and evaluate different approaches to making regular physical activity and healthy food choices easier for local communities, with the aim of preventing overweight and obesity in England. Successful applicants will be designated 'Healthy Towns', to acknowledge their commitment and aspiration to promoting health in their communities.

This document sets out the background to the programme, the criteria for making an application and the process for selecting which areas receive funding.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION FOR BIDDERS

2.1 Background

Britain is in the grip of an epidemic. Almost two thirds of adults and a third of children are either overweight or obese, and work by the Government Office for Science's Foresight programme suggests that, without action, these figures will rise to almost nine in ten adults and two thirds of children by 2050¹.

In response to this challenge, in January 2008, the Government published *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: a cross-government strategy for England*. This set out the first steps to meeting the challenge of tackling overweight and obesity in the population, with a new ambition: *to be the first major country to reverse the rising tide of obesity and overweight in the population by ensuring that everyone is able to maintain a healthy weight. Our initial focus will be on children; by 2020, we aim to reduce the proportion of overweight and obese children to 2000 levels.*²

Using recent evidence from Foresight, *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives* explained how social and environmental factors – including the food environment and the physical environment – influence the ability of both adults and children to eat healthily and be active.³ *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives* also noted that, because parents and parental behaviour have such a strong influence on child behaviour, excess weight in children can only be

¹ Foresight (2007), *Tackling Obesities: Future Choices*

² HM Government (2008), *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: a cross-government strategy for England*

³ Foresight (2007), *Tackling Obesities: Future Choices*

tackled and prevented in the context of the whole family, and society more broadly.

To test out different approaches to addressing these two environmental factors, *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives* committed the Government to investing £30 million over a 3-year period, between 2008/09 and 2010/11, in a Healthy Community Challenge Fund.

2.2 The Healthy Community Challenge Fund

The Government is looking to work with a small number of local areas (PCTs and local authorities working together) which have a commitment to promoting healthy food choices and increased physical activity within their communities. Building on the progress they have made to date, these local areas will receive additional funding to test out their ideas on what further action needs to happen to make regular physical activity and healthy food choices easier for their population. The aim of this initiative is to learn more about how environmental factors can help to prevent overweight and obesity in adults and children. Therefore, it is vital that applicants put forward creative and original proposals which offer the opportunity to learn something new.

In view of this focus on learning, the successful localities should be willing to collaborate with an independent evaluation team in a programme of monitoring, evaluation and dissemination, and this will be a condition of funding. Further information about what this will involve will be provided at stage 2 in the application process.

2.3 Who can apply?

Applications are welcome from all local areas. They must, however, be submitted jointly by the local authority and PCT.

2.4 How much funding is available and how much must be matched?

The Healthy Communities Challenge Fund can provide revenue funding of up to approximately £5 million to each local area over a 3-year period, between 2008/09 and 2010/11.

However, local areas should focus on identifying the activities that they want to deliver and the costs associated with this, rather than accessing the maximum amount of funding. The exact allocation of funding to each local area will depend upon the nature of the bids received, and the total funding required across the programme.

Localities will be expected to contribute additional funding to at least match the grant they receive from Government. This can be either from capital costs or revenue costs or both. The match funding should not be from any other Government ring-fenced grant regime.

As with all Government programmes, the Healthy Community Challenge Fund is only confirmed for the current spending review period, from 2008/09 to 2010/11. However, there is an expectation that successful localities will sustain their programme of work after this period, with continuing support from Government.

3. THE SELECTION PROCESS

There will be a two-stage process for selecting which localities will receive additional resources from the Healthy Community Challenge Fund.

3.1 Stage 1: *Expression of Interest*

PCTs and local authorities are invited to submit a joint application indicating their interest in the Healthy Community Challenge Fund, and a short explanation of what they would do with these additional resources to prevent and help reduce rates of overweight and obesity in their population. Annex A includes some examples of best practice that local areas might want to draw on for ideas and inspiration, although the expectation is that areas will put forward proposals that are broader in both their scale and scope.

As the Government is keen to work with areas with a real commitment to increasing the levels of physical activity and promoting healthier food choices in their communities, each expression of interest must be accompanied by a short statement which explains how the following criteria are met:

- Evidence that achieving a healthy weight for all is a shared local priority. This might be demonstrated, for example, by a local obesity strategy or by the indicators selected for the Local Area Agreement.
- Evidence of a commitment to creating a 'Healthy Town'. This might be demonstrated through process measures (for example consultations, local structures in place) or planned or existing interventions (for example through existing programmes such as Cycling Demonstration Towns, Sustainable Travel Towns, Play Pathfinders or local healthy food and/or physical activity initiatives).
- Senior level commitment in the PCT and across the local authority (political and officer), with a proven record of partnership working. Indications of wider support, for example from voluntary or community groups, would also be welcomed.
- Clear demonstration of the links between obesity and other policy priorities. For example, this could include priorities such as reducing health and other inequalities (for example in relation to age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation), reducing CO2 emissions, creating sustainable communities, regional spatial strategies or other local plans.

All applications should be submitted using the template attached at Annex B.

3.2 Stage 2: Full bids

Local areas that are successful at stage 1 will be invited to submit a full bid for funding, comprising a more detailed explanation of what they hope to achieve, the anticipated cost and a plan for delivery. The application will also need to include an explanation of how the interventions will be managed, reflecting the high-level commitment that is needed to deliver a coherent cross-sectoral plan.

At this stage, the application will also need to outline sources of matched funding, as well as how the long-term sustainability of the interventions will be secured.

Further details on the criteria that will be used to assess applications, as well as information about monitoring, evaluation and dissemination will be made available at stage 2.

4. TIMETABLE

Expressions of interest in the Healthy Town programme should be sent to the address below to arrive no later than 5pm on 11th July 2008:

Suzanne Turnock
Cross-Government obesity unit
Area 707, Wellington House
133-135 Waterloo Road
London SE1 8UG

Timetable	Milestone
Monday 9 th June 2008	Bidding opens
Friday 11 th July 2008	Stage 1: Expressions of interest deadline for applications
End July 2008	Successful stage 1 applicants informed
Tuesday 30 th September 2008	Stage 2: Full bids deadline for applications
End October 2008	Announce successful applicants

ANNEX A – CASE STUDIES

These case studies provide illustrations of healthy eating and physical activity interventions that local areas may want to consider when making an application to the Healthy Community Challenge Fund. When considering these examples, local areas should remember that they will need include interventions that cover **both** healthy eating and physical activity in their submission.

Exeter

Since becoming a Cycling England Cycling Demonstration Town, Exeter has focused on extending its existing network of cycle routes in the city to provide good links to schools, colleges and industrial estates. Around 16 kilometres of new routes were constructed in the first 18 months of the project, taking the network of cycle routes in the city to 50 kilometres.

In addition, the city has been working with employers and schools to try and encourage more people to cycle. This has resulted in 8.5% of employees cycling regularly to work, compared with 4% five years earlier in the 2001 national census. Moreover, among employees who had recently started cycling to work, a third said that they had done so because of improved cycle routes.

Wirral

'Bag a Bargain' is a scheme which aims to encourage healthy eating in areas of deprivation by offering local communities access to cheaper locally grown fruit and vegetables. First launched in October 2006, the initiative originally operated out of just three venues in the Tranmere and Rock Ferry areas of Wirral, providing residents with access to quality fruit and vegetables and salad at a cost of just £2.50 a bag. Following a successful bid for Neighbourhood Renewal Funding, the number of venues has grown to eight and expansion into other neighbourhoods and schools across Wirral is planned. The scheme currently sells around 250 bags per week, with around 9,000 bags having been sold in total.

'Bag a Bargain' was set up as part of 'Together', the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders' Healthy Neighbourhood plan, which is led by Wirral PCT and The Riverside Group in partnership with residents. Its success is largely due to the involvement of local volunteers who help run the scheme. 'Together' recently appointed Green Apprentices (the organisation helping unemployed young people access training and employment) to support residents in delivering 'Bag a Bargain'.

Riverside Housing supported the scheme earlier this year by funding a greenhouse for Church Road allotments to encourage locals to grow their own fruit and veg for 'Bag a Bargain' and reduce their carbon footprint.

Riverside has recently secured £450,000 lottery funding, which will not only support the extension of the 'Bag a Bargain' scheme and fund more

allotments in Tranmere, but also develop an eco-gardening scheme for schools and provide horticultural training for residents.

'Bag a Bargain' is also part of the Healthy Start Scheme, which means that Healthy Start Vouchers can be exchanged for bags of fruit, vegetables or salad at any of the 'Bag a Bargain' venues.

Darlington

Darlington is one of three sustainable travel towns with funding from Department for Transport for a programme of 'smart' measures to encourage people to change their behaviour away from driving to more sustainable options. Becoming a Cycling England Cycling Demonstration Town has helped to drive these programmes.

As there were few dedicated cycle lanes or paths, Darlington focused on improving the town's cycling infrastructure. Alongside these measures to improve the physical environment for cycling, the town is running a travel awareness campaign –'Local Motion' - to encourage residents to think about the travel options available to them. This includes a range of actions to promote cycling such as guided bike rides and a cycle loan scheme. A major plank of the campaign has been to provide personalised travel information to local households.

Australia

'Be Active, Eat Well' is a community-based initiative based in Colac (population 11,000) in south-west Victoria, Australia. The aim of the programme is to improve the health and wellbeing of the community. It focuses on creating local environments (social, physical, economic and cultural) that promote healthy eating and physical activity, as well as supporting the development of a local culture that encourages and endorses a healthy lifestyle.

One of the programme's objectives, identified in consultation with the local community, is to increase the amount of active play after school and at the weekend. Baseline data revealed that children did on average 64 minutes of active play per day. A range of interventions are used to encourage active play such as working with local sports clubs to provide activities free of charge. In 2004 and 2005, more than 550 children participated in a range of sports at 12 sports clubs.

The project has a support and evaluation programme in place, which is being led by a local university. Data and interim findings are available at: www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au.

Cheshire and Merseyside

The ChaMPs Public Health Network (Cheshire and Merseyside) Snack Right campaign aims to change the snacking behaviour for the under 4's living in some of their most deprived communities. The campaign supports families in making healthier choices when choosing snacks for their children in a number

of ways, for example through special events at venues such as children's centres which encourage pre-schoolers to try fresh fruit and vegetables by using games and play. The various strands of the campaign were developed using insight into what the target audience perceived as their barriers to healthy eating.

Phase one of the campaign was launched in May 2007, in partnership with food retailer Aldi and Healthy Start. Aldi were chosen because they had stores in the right geographic area, appealed to the target audience, and had a local supply policy on fresh produce. Aldi also had a fruit and vegetable campaign planned that Snack Right could 'piggy back' on. Aldi supported the project launch and provided free fruit and vegetables for the children's events. During phase one, 15 Snack Right events took place, reaching 1,500 children, parents and carers and healthy eating leaflets dropped to 113,000 households in the most deprived areas of Cheshire and Merseyside. Phase two of the campaign begins in June 2008, in partnership with Healthy Start.

France

EPODE (Ensemble prévenons l'obésité des enfants, or Together, let's prevent obesity in children) is a community-based, family-orientated nutrition and lifestyle education programme. It aims to prevent child obesity by bringing together influential individuals and groups in the community – including education and health professionals, retailers and the media - in a five-year campaign of local physical activity and healthy eating initiatives aimed at both children and their parents. Since the programme was launched in 2004, more than 100 French towns have joined the 10 pilot communities. The programme is now being extended into Belgium and Spain.

The official results from the 10 EPODE pilot towns will be published in 2009. However, early results seem promising. For example, in 2004, 19% of the children in Saint Jean, a town in the Midi Pyrénées region, were overweight, a year later this figure was down to 13.5%.

Scotland

The Scottish Executive, working in partnership with food retailers and distributors, launched a *Healthy Living Neighbourhood Shops Initiative* in April 2004. Its objective is to encourage convenience stores to develop the fresh produce and healthier products they offer to communities in order to help improve the eating habits of people living in Scotland. It is a positive example of how promoting healthier options in convenience stores can increase healthy eating in a profitable and sustainable way. The project worked with store keepers and partners to:

- Increase the availability of fruit, vegetables and healthier choices in-store
- Re-design stores to encourage increased sales of these products
- Improve the knowledge and skills within the convenience store sector to handle fresh produce

- Establish a template or model for local convenience stores to develop and promote healthier choices

Data collected by HIM! (Harris International) showed that between April 2005 and May 2006 shoppers increasingly used convenience stores to buy healthier food. Participating shops also reported increased profits. In December 2006, responsibility for managing the project shifted from the Scottish Executive to the Scottish Grocers Federation. Currently there are around 300 shops across Scotland involved in the initiative.

ANNEX B – EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST APPLICATION

Please use the template provided, using Arial 10pt, to submit your expression of interest to the Healthy Community Challenge Fund.

The template is available on the Department of Health website at www.dh.gov.uk/obesity.