**The Great Weight Debate – key messages and statistics**

You may find these key messages and statistics useful if you choose to hold your own Great Weight Debate events and activities. Feel free to amend as appropriate to suite your needs and audience.

**Key messages**

* London has more overweight and obese children than any other global city, including New York
* Over a third of children in London are overweight or obese by the time they leave primary school
* Two out of every five children in London are overweight or obese when they start secondary school
* XX school is joining London councils and NHS organisations in the capital to launch London’s first conversation on childhood obesity
* The *Great Weight Debate – a London conversation on childhood obesity* aims to raise awareness of London’s childhood obesity epidemic, gather ideas from Londoners about how children can be supported to lead healthier lives and galvanise action for change
* Parents, carers and teaching staff can fill in the Great Weight Debate survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/GWD2016>
* You can also pledge your ideas online at [http://gethealthy.london/greatweightdebate](http://gethealthy.london/greatweightdebatehttps:/www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/GWD2016#greatweightdebate)
* email your ideas and thoughts on childhood obesity to [greatweightdebate@gethealthy.london](mailto:greatweightdebate@gethealthy.london)
* or talk on Twitter #greatweightdebate
* Obese children are at risk of high cholesterol, high blood pressure, pre-diabetes, bone and joint problems and breathing difficulties
* Being overweight or obese can affect a child’s mental well-being and lead to low self-esteem
* There is also a high probability that it will continue into adulthood, causing diabetes and an increased risk of cancer and heart disease

**Childhood obesity rates:**

* London has more overweight and obese children than any other global city, including New York, Madrid, Sydney and Hong Kong
* One in five four to five year olds is overweight or obese (boys 22.7%, girls 21.6%)
* One in three ten to eleven years olds is overweight or obese (boys 39.6%, girls 34.7%)
* Over a third of children in London are overweight or obese by the time they leave primary school
* Two out of every five children in London are overweight or obese when they start secondary school

**The environment and childhood obesity:**

* On average, 11 to 18 year olds consume three times more than the recommended amount of sugar every day
* There are 8,000 fried chicken shops in London
* The average chicken shop meal of chicken, chips and a drink contains 70% of an adult’s daily calories
* The average child in England spends six hours a day in front of a screen
* Only 28 per cent of children in England achieve the recommended activity levels

**Obese children are at risk of:**

* Increased absence from school
* High cholesterol, high blood pressure, pre-diabetes bone and joint problems, breathing difficulties
* Emotional and behavioural challenges
* Increased risk of stigmatisation, bullying and low self esteem
* Risk of ill-health and premature death
* Tooth decay is the most common reason why five to nine year-olds are admitted to hospital;
* In 2014-15, there were over 33,000 tooth extractions due to decay in children aged 10 years or younger who were admitted to hospital. Tooth extraction is a serious procedure that frequently requires a general anaesthetic and is often a result of excessive sugar Increased risk of becoming overweight adults

consumption. [vi]

**Obese children are also at increased risk of becoming overweight adults. Currently over half of London adults are overweight or obese. Obese adults are:**

* Less likely to be in employment
* At increased risk of discrimination and stigmatisation
* At increased risk of hospitalization

**Obesity harms health. It can lead to a raft of health complications including:**

* An increased risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer, liver disease, depression and anxiety, sleep apnoea, asthma, type 2 diabetes, reproductive complications and osteoarthritis and back pain

**Obesity harms communities. It can lead to;**

* Increased sickness absence, increased demands on health and social care services – severely obese people are more than three times more likely to need social care than those who are a healthy weight
* A less physically active population and reduced productivity

**Obesity does not affect all groups equally. It is far more common among:**

* Children and adults from more deprived areas
* Some black and minority ethnic groups

**Other obesity statistics include:**

* Obesity causes poor life quality as well as premature death
* An obese person is much more likely to be living with a life-limiting long-term illness, like heart disease or depression [i][ii]
* Hospital admission rates for obesity and related conditions amongst children and young people in England have quadrupled over the past decade.[iii]
* Obese adults are nearly seven times more likely to become a type-2 diabetic than adults of a healthy weight [iv] often causing blindness or limb amputation. According to Diabetes UK, in England alone there are now 135 diabetes-related amputations each week.[v]

**References:**

[i] Health and Social Care Information Centre (2015) Health Survey for England 2014. [ii] Gatineau M, Dent M (2011) Obesity and Mental Health. Oxford: National Obesity Observatory. [iii] Jones Nielsen JD, Laverty AA, Millett C, Mainous Iii AG, Majeed A, Saxena S. (2013) Rising Obesity-Related Hospital Admissions among Children and Young People in England: National Time Trends Study. PLoS ONE. 8:6, e65764. [iv] Asnawi Abdullah, Anna Peeters, Maximilian de Courten, Johannes Stoelwinder (2010) The magnitude of association between overweight and obesity and the risk of diabetes: A meta-analysis of prospective cohort studies. Diabetes Research and Clinical Practice. [v] Diabetes UK (2015) Putting Feet First: Diabetes UK position on preventing amputations and improving foot care for people with diabetes. [vi] Health and Social Care Information Centre (2016) NHS Outcomes Framework, England February 2016: Quarterly Publication