**How to run a ‘Great Weight Debate’ hackathon**

This guide aims to support London borough councils to hold their own half day Great Weight Debate Hackathon. The guide includes a template agenda and suggested challenges for attendees to tackle. It also includes template power point slides for your hackathon and a list of resources that will be needed, including facilitators on the day. There is also template copy for your websites and a template media release. The focus is on supporting councils to hold a hackathon on a budget using existing council resources and facilities.

**1. What is a hackathon?**

It's a fun and creative ideas event where people from all backgrounds work together to come up with innovative solutions for tackling a specific problem.

The event is about getting a group of energetic, motivated people together to create positive suggestions for lasting change. Bringing together a diverse mix of people, rather than the usual suspects, can help to find new solutions to old problems.

Read more about a recent [hackathon](https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/articles/news/2016/05/we-want-your-ideas-have-your-say-and-help-improve-health-young-people) held by Hammersmith and Fulham which aimed to find innovative new ways of helping young people lead healthier lives.

**2. Great Weight Debate hackathon - what happens on the day?**

After hearing from experts about the childhood obesity challenge facing the borough/ London, participants will be asked to be part of a team to help develop a practical solution to one of four challenges.

Supported by health experts, teams will develop an idea and create a short pitch (on film) to showcase it.

At the end of the day, a panel of judges and everyone taking part will view all the live pitches and identify those ideas that can be turned into reality.

The intention is that a wide group of people take part in the hackathon; children, young people and their families, community groups, local business owners, health and care professionals, developers and designers.

Boroughs can draft their own agenda depending on their specific challenges and priorities but we have included the following as a template:

**3.The four challenges:**

Boroughs can choose their own four challenges but some suggestions are:

* How can we help our children to be more active every day?
* How can we help young people eat and drink sugary foods and drinks less often?
* How can we help young people understand which food and drink options are healthier in a restaurant, café or takeaway shop?
* How can we help young people in London not buy as much take-away and convenience foods?
* How can we help young people and their families eat healthier?
* How can we help young people maintain a healthy weight?

**4. Template agenda:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Time**  | **Activity**  |
| 9am | Welcome and introductions – including background from experts on London/the borough’s childhood obesity problem Photos of all participants (hackers) to be taken before 9am and placed on the board (cost and equipment permitting) |
| 9.20am | Time for questions from hackers  |
| 9.30am | Break out into groups to develop ideas and the pitch |
| 11am | Each group to present their ideas (5 mins per group) with time for Q&As |
| 11.30-midday  | Judging panel convenes |
| Midday | Winners announced, prizes given |
| 12.30pm  | Wrap and thank you’s  |

**5. Planning your hackathon:**

**When should I hold the hackathon?**

We would suggest holding your hackathon ideally at the weekend to encourage attendance from as many people as possible, or failing that in the evening after work.

**How many people (hackers) should I aim to have attending?**

It really depends on the space you have available to hold the hackathon, but we would suggest aiming for around 100.

**Setting objectives for the day –** make sure clear objectives for the day are set, for example we will come up with four ideas for tackling childhood obesity in our borough that can be realistically taken forward.

**Planning timeline** – You need at least eight weeks to plan your Hackathon. Please see the suggested timeline and activities below:



**6. Getting people to attend:**

**Publicity** – make sure a wide and diverse audience know about the event by using as many communications channels as possible. Include a good hashtag, registration details and contact information. Your Borough communications team will be great at advising on the best methods to use.

**Who should be invited –** ideally you want to ensure a broad and diverse mix of people at your event not just from within the health and healthcare arena but Londoners from all backgrounds and walks of life. If it’s the usual suspects you’ll get the usual answers. Anyone who wants to help solve the problem should be welcomed. Your Borough communications team will be able to advise on how to encourage attendance to ensure a diverse mix.

**Pre- registering for the event –** getting people to register to attend the event and asking what skills and background they bring helps you plan more effectively and ensure you have a good diverse mix of participants

**Copy for your websites** – please find template website copy below

**Media release** – please find template media release below

**7. Resources you’ll need on the day**

**A room –** each venue should have a main room and breakout facilities, accessibility access, parking, wifi and phone signal, projector and screen and a chill out zone away from the hackathon

**A lead facilitator –** to run the event

**A group of other facilitators** – to work with the break out groups. One facilitator per 15 people is a good ratio

**Experts and helpers** – it is good to include a number of experts and helpers to host and facilitate the hackathon. This will also help to ensure the pace is set and maintained and to ensure everyone feels comfortable participating.

**Food and drink –** it is good to haveongoing tea, coffee and water available. For food, a good option is to offer brown paper bag lunches that can easily be taken back to peoples tables

**Delegate packs –** these should ideally include a welcome, logistic information, agenda and any reading materials for the hackathon

**Digital –** a main screen, tablets/laptops for participants, iphones to record their pitches and equipment to show pitches on the main screen

**Analog –** flip chart, pens, post-it-notes, blutack

**Parking space board –** use a separate board for any ideas or questions that couldn’t be answered or were a little off topic. This is to ensure people feel their voices have still been heard

**Room arrangement**

Ideally round tables in a banquet layout, for participants to work on, which have a good view of the stage.

**Ground rules**

Be sure to set ground rules for the day that include; a commitment to sticking to the agenda, that everyone will have a chance to have their say, listening to each other with respect and for people to feel free to ask if there any questions.

**Cost/packages**

The cost of running a hackathon event can be kept low by using in-house resources and facilities.

The Horizons team, a national improvement support unit within the NHS in England, can provide a package of support to run a hackathon. For details of the costed packages available email: dominic.cushnan@nhs.net

**Get in touch**

If you have any questions or require more information on running A Great Weight Debate hackathon please get in touch:england.healthylondon@nhs.net

**Hackathon copy for your websites:**

**Come to the XX (insert name of borough) Great Weight Debate Hackathon**

**What is a hackathon?**

It's a fun and creative ideas marathon. People from all sorts of backgrounds will work together, designing innovative solutions to tricky challenges.

**What's it about?**

The health of young people in xxx (insert borough here)

London has more overweight and obese children than any other global city.

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.

Too many young people find it hard to eat healthily and exercise enough and global evidence shows that unless we change our environment, we won’t stop London’s childhood obesity epidemic.

**When and where?**

**xxx**

**How does it work?**

The challenge is to find new, creative and exciting ways to tackle childhood obesity in xx (insert borough) by getting young people and families eating well and moving more.

The event's all about what can happen when a group of energetic, motivated people get together to create positive suggestions for lasting change.

No experience or homework is required - just turn up on the day! Please bring a laptop, tablet or other device if you have one, but it is not a problem if you do not. It's free and there will be refreshments to keep you energised. Your ideas could change lives.

We'll ask you to be part of a team to develop a practical solution to one of four challenges. Choose from:

**List your hackathon’s four challenges here**

Supported by health experts, your team will develop an idea and create a short pitch to showcase it.

At the end of the day, a panel of judges and everyone taking part will view all the live pitches and identify those ideas that can be turned into reality.

A wide group of people will take part; children, young people and their families, community groups, local business owners, health and care professionals, developers and designers.

The hackathon will be fast, fun and full of hands-on teamwork. We want to show what can happen when motivated local people get together to develop ideas that can have a lasting effect.

**Where do I sign up?**

**Insert link to sign up here**. We will then send you more details. Don't forget to share this with your friends.

**How do I get there?**

You can plan your journey to the xxx (insert hackathon location here) [through the TfL website](https://tfl.gov.uk/).

**More information**

If you need more help or information, email us here **(add hyperlink)**

**Template Hackathon media release:**

**We want your ideas! Have your say and help improve the health of young people**

Residents in xxx (insert borough) are being invited to attend the borough’s first ever ‘hackathon’ on xxx (insert date) to come up with new ideas for tackling childhood obesity.

XX (insert name of council) Council wants to bring people from a wide range of backgrounds together to help find innovative new ways to help young people lead healthier lives.

Anyone can attend including young people, parents, healthcare and policy professionals, developers, designers, coders, social entrepreneurs, food bloggers, chefs, teachers and students.

The xxx (insert borough) Great Weight Debate Hackathon will be held at xx (insert location) where groups will be trying to find solutions to the following questions:

* Insert your four challenges

Cllr XXXX, xxx said hackathons are a great weight to harness ideas from the community to solve difficult social problems.

“London has more overweight and obese children and young people than any other global city, including New York,” he/she said.

“We want to harness the knowledge and wide range of experiences of xx (insert area) residents to develop innovative solutions that work locally.

“A lot of work is already happening to reduce childhood obesity in xxx (insert borough) but we want to hear from people about what more we can do.

The hackathon is being held as part of the *Great Weight Debate – a London conversation on obesity*, which aims to seek the views of all Londoners on how to tackle London’s childhood obesity crisis.

Residents are also being invited to share their views on childhood obesity by completing a short survey online at [**www.gethealthy.london/the-great-weight-debate**](http://www.gethealthy.london/the-great-weight-debate).

For more information about XXX’s free weight management support for residents visit XXX (Borough website)

If you want to get involved in work to tackle childhood obesity in xxx (insert borough) please email xxx (council email address).

**Ends**

**Notes to editors:**

**Obesity statistics:**

* London has more seriously overweight children than any other global city
* One in five four to five year olds in London are overweight or obese
* Two out of every five children in London are overweight or obese when they start secondary school
* Only 28 per cent of children in England achieve the recommended activity levels
* On average, 11 to 18 year olds consume three times more than the recommended amount of sugar every day
* The average child in England spends six hours a day in front of a screen
* The average chicken shop meal of chicken, chips and a drink contains 70% of an adult’s daily calories
* There are 8,000 fried chicken shops in London
* Tooth decay is the most common reason why five to nine year-olds are admitted to hospital