

# CHANNELLING THE SUGAR LEVY TO EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS CHILD OBESITY: LAMBETH COUNCIL WORKING WITH SCHOOLS

Bimpe Oki and Vida Cunningham  
publichealth@lambeth.gov.uk



## INTRODUCTION

The Soft Drinks Industry Levy took effect from April 2018. Revenue generated was provided for the **Healthy Pupil Capital Fund (HPCF)**. Councils were given the flexibility to distribute to their schools based on the health and wellbeing needs and priorities in their communities.

Lambeth supported the London commitment to use the funds to tackle child obesity. London borough of Lambeth has higher levels of overweight and obese children than England. About a quarter of children are overweight or obese at reception and by year 6 this increases to 40%. The fund, allocated for capital use only, provided the opportunity for schools to take specific actions to address obesity.

## AIM

To take an evidence based approach to support Lambeth schools to contribute to tackling obesity by improving and increasing availability to facilities for healthy eating, physical activity, mental health and wellbeing.

## RESULTS

- A total of 67 schools applied. (Included, primary, secondary and special needs schools).
- All 67 schools were successful and allocated funds (up to £10K).
- The majority of items schools bid for were for physical activity equipment and items and resources to improve healthy eating and the food environment.
- Over 23,000 Lambeth pupils are benefitting from the facilities provided from the funds.

## METHODS

Public Health, in consultation with stakeholders agreed allocation to schools would be via a bidding process. Alongside this, to avoid inequities, schools less likely to have the capacity to bid or had greater needs were encouraged and supported.

The bidding process was simple, with a provision of a list of items to encourage physical activity and healthy eating, costs and the outcomes they contributed towards.

Schools identified their needs and linked them to the relevant intervention and expected impact for their school. To enable more schools to benefit, Public Health attracted additional resources through match funding from external organisations.

A set of criteria was used to assess bids. This included:

- socio-demographic deprivation,
- obesity,
- school participation with health and wellbeing programmes and;
- other qualitative information and knowledge about the school.

As part of the application, schools were asked to describe how they intended to use the funding and encouraged to apply individually, jointly with two or more schools or by cluster(s).

Support was offered and given by negotiating on behalf of schools when they were potential economies of scale for the purchase of equipment e.g. water fountains, cook stations, physical activity equipment etc.

## SUMMARY / CONCLUSION

This approach ensured that allocation was related to school's need and the assurance that the funding would be channelled into tackle childhood obesity. It highlighted evidence based interventions to schools and encouraged joined up work and synergies with other relevant health and wellbeing initiatives in the borough.

The approach facilitated a stronger relationship between Public Health, the council and schools. Feedback from schools shows that this approach is acceptable to schools and is a model that can be used for local distribution of national grants

### TABLE 1: THE PROPORTION OF ALL BIDS REQUESTING FUNDING IN RELATION TO EACH CATEGORY

Category	Proportion of bids
Physical activity	65.9%
Healthy eating	45.5%
Food environment/education	27.3%

### TABLE 2: LIST OF MOST COMMON ITEMS REQUESTED

Item requested	Proportion of bids
Cooking equipment	31.8%
Playground equipment & markings	29.5%
Water fountain and coolers	27.3%
Gym equipment	11.4%
Edible garden	9.1%

