



Resource S: Workshop 2 presentation and facilitator notes¹

This resource provides facilitator and presentation notes to accompany the workshop 2 presentation – whole systems approach to obesity: identifying opportunities to change the current system.

Welcome & introduction (10-15 minutes)

Slides 1 to 5

We strongly recommend that a senior figure (senior officer or elected member) from the local authority opens the workshop to demonstrate the importance that they, and the local authority, attach to tackling obesity and to using a whole systems approach.

Suggested content:

- team introductions
- housekeeping notices
- icebreaker activity/introductions so everyone can find out who's in room
- aims of the workshop
- recap on the systems behaviours, and those being worked on in this workshop
- agenda for the day

¹ This resource is part of Public Health England's wider whole systems approach to obesity programme. Please search to find the main guide and additional resources.

Presentation 1: The process so far (5-10 minutes)

Slide 6 to 7

Key points:

- restate the rationale for wanting to take a whole systems approach
- outline the different phases of working towards a whole systems approach and what has been done within each of the phases to date. This will help participants to understand the bigger picture. For example, you may wish to talk through the processes of action mapping, network analysis, engaging senior leaders
- restate the importance of participants' contribution to the whole systems approach, and that you are on a long journey to bring about sustainable change
- explain the benefits of participants attending and where you are now in the process

Presentation 2: The outputs and learning to date- workshop overview (20-30 minutes)

Slides 8 to 12: Mapping the local system

This sub-set of slides explains the process used to create the collated system map.

Key points:

Slide 9

Central to a whole systems approach is the need to understand the bigger picture- the complex, interdependent and dynamic system that causes obesity.

Slide 10

Participants in workshop 1 created a number of individual systems maps that looked at different areas (themes) of the system.

Slide 11

Provide some examples of the system maps created in workshop 1.

Slide 12

Explain that members of the core working team brought these maps together to form one collated system map which illustrates the local complexity and nuances.

Highlight how many system maps were created in the first workshop and what they focused on.

State how many causes in total were identified in the local system, and how many themes emerged, compared to the national picture from the Foresight (108 causes, >300 interlinkages and 7 themes). Emphasise why singular actions to tackling obesity will have limited impact by themselves if the complexity of the system is not appreciated.

Provide a recap on how to interpret a system map (such as the direction of arrows and feedback loops). This is particularly important for stakeholders who did not attend workshop 1 (whole systems approach to obesity: Understanding the local reality, causes and linkages).

Slides 13 to 18: Collated systems map

The aim of these slides is to break down the complexity of the collated system map and provide clear examples for what is included within each theme.

Key points:

Slide 13

This map is fundamental to the process.

System maps are complex and difficult to interpret. Involving your system network in its development should prevent it becoming overwhelming. No system map is perfect; it reflects the realities and perceptions of the participants attending workshop 1.

Explain how the system map was created and why causes were grouped as they are. Are there any reflections from the core working team at this point? Does the map look how the core working team expected?

Slide 14 to 17

Introduce the themes in the collated systems map. The themes are important later in the workshop. Ask participants to think about which themes they/their organisation believe they could influence.

Encourage participants to provide feedback or ask questions throughout, to ensure all participants are engaged in the process. If necessary, allow participants more time to familiarise themselves with the collated system map.

The last slide overlays the current actions undertaken locally on the collated systems map. It shows where the local authority (and partners) is already intervening in the system, and where the gaps may be. Some actions may not yet be included; these can be added to the map later.

Local authority insights

There are different ways to present the themes: one or several members of the core working team can present them or participants involved in workshop 1 can be asked (in advance) to help present and interpret sections of the system map. Whichever method is chosen, it is important to give participants time to understand what each theme includes and how it may relate to their work and the expertise they have. Participants will be asked to prioritise these themes in the next stage of the workshop.

Local authority insights

At this stage in the workshop, some pilots ran an activity to ask participants to consider whether there were any actions missing from their system map. They were given 10-15 minutes to write down any other known actions onto the printed version of the system map. These were taken away by the core working team to refine their action plan.

Slide 18: Other outputs and learning

Key point:

The core working team may wish to include outputs and learning from work completed earlier in the whole systems process (for example: phase 2 – action mapping, network analysis). This will make stakeholders aware of what has been done to date, and the findings of any earlier analyses.

Slides 19 to 21: Workshop overview

The remaining section of the workshop focuses on identifying actions to change the system. It aims to build momentum amongst stakeholders. Participants may not have it in their powers to tackle all elements of the local system that causes obesity, but they will be able to influence certain areas. It is the collective impact of aligned working around a common goal that will help change the system. As momentum gathers, impacts may be seen elsewhere across the system. It is important that participants consider different views of other stakeholders, think about unintended consequences (for example that an action implemented in one part of the system might have an impact elsewhere), and consider the changing nature of the system.

Key points:

This workshop provides the opportunity to think about new actions and how to strengthen and maximise current and planned actions. Your local authority (and partners) will already be doing a lot of good work; the workshop will help you consider what can be done to enhance this and make your actions align better.

Recap on systems behaviours presented in workshop 1.

Explain how the information generated by participants in the next 2 hours will be used. This will improve the quality of the outputs.

Explain that pragmatic and realistic approaches are required. Evidence suggests that using a whole systems approach can help tackle complex social issues such as obesity. A whole systems approach will bring all participants together around a common goal. The aim is to create a comprehensive, co-ordinated, aligned and long-term action plan. Stakeholders need to be realistic about the outcomes that can be achieved. Gold-standard evidence (for example: randomised controlled trials) will not be available to support all decisions around action; this should not prevent you from trying new things.

Group activity 1: Prioritising areas to change

Slides: 22 and 23

Steps:

1. State the purpose for prioritising areas for action:
 - identify where there is momentum among stakeholders to change the system.
 - work towards a common agenda.
 - recognise that not all themes can be prioritised at this stage; some will be revisited by the system network in the future
2. Give participants 5-10 minutes to familiarise themselves with the causes for each theme in the system map.
3. Ask participants to prioritise three themes which they believe they, or their organisations, could influence. Prioritise themes by placing a dot in the bottom corner of the theme on the large theme maps on the walls. Participants should prioritise a whole theme, not a single cause within a theme.
4. Once themes have been prioritised, the presenting member of the core working team can deliver the slides on system levels and the action scales model. During the presentation, the remaining members of the core working team should count the number of times that each theme has been prioritised. After the system levels/action scales presentation has been delivered, each table should be allocated one or more prioritised themes depending on the number of tables and participants in the room. Stakeholders can move to a table with a theme that they believe they can influence.

Presentation 3: Understanding system levels and the action scales model

Slides 24 to 34:

This section of the presentation helps participants understand how and where to intervene within a complex adaptive system. It will introduce the action scales model (details below) which underpins the main activity of the workshop. The concepts presented in this part of the workshop can be challenging for participants. We

recommend that presenters have a thorough understanding of the model beforehand, so they can explain to participants with confidence and answer any questions. explanation.

Slide 25: Understanding our systems

Although you have mapped out what your local system looks like, you now need to look at how it functions through the lens of four **system levels**.

Events – These are happening now and can be seen in our day-to-day lives. They are the behaviours and outcomes that arise from how the system functions. Two examples include few families walking to school and people consuming high sugar drinks. Actions at this level generally provide short term fixes, but do not address the underlying structures that caused the behaviours/outcomes to occur in the first place. For example, the introduction of a walking bus initiative, or information campaigns on the risks of consuming too many sugar-sweetened beverages.

System structures – These are the underlying structures that cause the events to occur. These could include the physical infrastructure, relationships between parts of the system and the flow of information across the system. Actions at this level, which seek to reshape or redesign these structures, are more likely to reduce the frequency of events occurring in the future. For example, providing physical infrastructure (for example, pavements, street lighting, safe cycle storage), encourages active travel or reducing the marketing and advertising of high fat, salt, sugar foods and drinks, encourages reduced exposure / consumption.

System goals – These are the goals that the system, or a part of the system, is working to achieve. For example, increasing neighbourhood walkability, reducing the consumption of high sugar/calorie foods and drinks. The system goals drive the system structures. Competing goals across different parts of the system may also make it harder for change to occur. Actions taken at this level alter the goals, targets or ambitions that the system - and people within the system - are aiming to achieve. For example, establishing targets for increased neighbourhood walkability; or healthy school accreditation schemes including healthy food award schemes and strategies for improving the local food offer.

System beliefs – These are the deeply held beliefs, norms, attitudes and values of the individuals and organisations within the system. They are the foundations that allow the system to keep functioning as it does and are reflected in the systems

goals. Actions taken at this level aim to change the deeply held beliefs of the stakeholders and/or organisations who steer the direction of the system and sub-systems. For example, development of evidence to demonstrate that pedestrian infrastructure is a key factor in a sustainable and prosperous local economy, or the adoption of guidelines for healthier food procurement across all key stakeholder organisations (for example local authority, NHS and contracted service providers).

Slide 26: Actions in the context of a system

Participants need to think about actions in the broadest of senses. An action is any concerted and intentional effort to change the functioning of the system, or an aspect of the system. This could include changes to any aspects of our local systems map.

Slide 27: Identifying places to intervene

Levels can also be used to think about where we can make changes in a system. The deeper the level of action (for example: towards system beliefs), the greater the leverage for changing the functioning of the system. At the same time, changes to the deeper levels of the system are often harder (and often more politically challenging) to implement and will take greater time and effort to change. The current system unintentionally promotes obesity through many interacting causes. The purpose of this workshop is to identify ways to create a system that promotes a healthier weight.

Slides 28: The action scales model

The action scales model is a way to conceptualise where to intervene in a system to bring about the greatest long-term sustainable change.

The model: On the left-hand side of the scales is the current system; one that makes it difficult for people to maintain a healthy weight. On the right-hand side of the scales is a healthy weight system; a system which increases the likelihood of the population having a healthy weight. The aim is for systems network to shift the balance of the system towards healthy weight.

Slide 29: Intervening at the event level

Most actions are taken at the event level because events are seen happening around us, and actions are put in place to tackle these events. These event-level actions, which tend to be easier to implement, often have short-term impacts, and fundamentally, do not change the system which drives the events to happen (for

example: they do little/nothing to stop the event occurring again). For example, some people have high sugary drink consumption (event) and so education or campaigns might be provided to inform the local public about the danger of these drinks (action). These actions alone will be unlikely to change the system functioning.

Slide 30: Intervening at the system structures level

Action at this level seeks to reshape or redesign the structures of the system which cause the events to occur. By mapping out the system in the first workshop, some of the system structures can be observed. For example, the implementation of a local or national sugar tax would alter the system that contributes to a high intake of sugary drinks. As another example, the local authority could look to link a variety of data sets (for example: National Childhood Measurement Programme, educational attainment, school attendance) to provide clearer insights about the links between obesity and relevant local outcomes that reach beyond public health.

Slide 31: Intervening at the system goals level

Actions taken at this level aim to change the goals that the system is working towards. Whilst intervening at this level is more challenging, the amount of leverage for changing the system functioning is greater. For example, getting cross-party agreement (at the local or national level) that reducing the prevalence of obesity by $x\%$ by year x would provide a long-term ambition for stakeholders to work towards. Such an agreement - if enacted- would enable the system structures to be changed and sustained.

Slide 32: Intervening at the system beliefs level

This level involves changing mindsets and deeply held beliefs of people who shape the system. It is probably the most difficult level to change but it also offers the greatest opportunity to change the system. For example, changing public beliefs about the causes of obesity would help to destigmatise the condition; this would help to reshape system goals and the system structures.

Slide 33: Changing how the system functions

Action is needed across all four levels to bring about sustainable systems change. There are many different events that need to be tackled, many system structures that need to be re-designed, goals that need to be re-focused, and system beliefs that need transforming.

If these can be identified, participants can refocus their efforts to where greatest leverage can be found. It will take efforts from many stakeholders from across all

sectors, and for these efforts to push in the same direction. The action scales model helps identify what level of action may bring about system change, and this is why the action scales and the system levels are so important.

Note: Because the majority of the population in the UK have overweight or obesity, the system does not advocate prevention more than treatment. A combined approach is needed so that people can avoid weight gain, and individuals in need are supported with managing their weight.

Slide 34: Plastic bag usage

One example of system change is plastic bag usage (please note: the examples provided here are hypothetical and are for illustrative purposes only). Before asking shoppers to pay for plastic bags, people were encouraged to voluntarily re-use their shopping bags to reduce single bag usage (for example: buy a Bag for Life)- this represents an event level action. This guidance was initially enacted without targeting other system levels (such as structures, goals, and beliefs). When reducing waste, litter and pollution became a national and local priority, the goals of the system were refocused, and the system structures were subsequently changed (for example: plastic bag charge, law affecting larger retailers, bags not automatically offered, staff trained to prompt consumers). These actions alongside others have started to change the public beliefs towards the use and disposal of plastic bags. Since introducing this charge, the number of plastic bags being used has reduced by 80%. As you might notice, changing one system level has knock on effects elsewhere (unintended consequences). Some actions at the event and system structure levels may change the system beliefs elsewhere. Who and what the action targets is important to consider. The action scales help identify what level of action may bring about system change.

Group Activity 2: Identifying actions to change the system

Slides 35 to 44

Note for facilitators

Tables should be assigned the prioritised theme system maps. During this activity, participants will be asked to move to the table with the theme which they, or their organisation, can help influence. Participants will have the opportunity to move to 2-3

tables/themes during the activity element of the workshop. See resource Q-Preparing for workshop 2.

Steps following:

Slide 36: Action registers

Action registers: The action register is a tool designed to link with the action scales model to capture information about actions proposed by participants at different levels in the system. It also enables participants to state their interest in taking forward specific actions.

Alignment of actions: Many actions will already be happening across the system. It is important for stakeholders to consider how new actions will align with, and strengthen, these actions. This reflection will help avoid duplication of efforts and bring stakeholders together around a common agenda. Alignment of actions can be achieved by considering the different system levels or other actions. For example, new actions may contribute to the local authorities work on air pollution, such as reducing car use for short journeys or increasing active travel. A lot of momentum can be gained by grouping more actions around those that are already under way.

Slides 37 to 42: How could we intervene?

Ask participants to move to a table with a theme that they can influence.

1. Ask participants to review their prioritised theme map (bottom image) and discuss what actions they could take to address the identified causes or relationships between causes. Remind participants to think about their ideas in the context of the wider systems map (top image), to consider any positive or negative unintended consequences that may occur across the system if this action was implemented, and to consider how this action might impact on health inequalities.

Tip: Actions don't all have to be new, they could include ways to strengthen an existing action. This should be an option that participants are encouraged to think about.

2. When the group identify an action, they should write a brief (around 2 to 3 word) description of it onto the prioritised theme map. The presentation slides provide an example for the themes fast food and cooking skills.
3. Participants should add each proposed action (described in 1-2 sentences) to the appropriate column of the action register. Each row of the action register should be completed for one action only. Here the example is written in black on the action register in the events column.
4. Participants need to consider what other actions at different levels of the system would help strengthen the impact of their proposed action in order to change the functioning of the system. For example, if participants identified 'provide opportunities for parents to learn how to cook with their children' as an event action, they could then think about actions at the system structure, system goals, and system beliefs level to support it. Another way to think about identifying further action is by identifying barriers that may arise when looking to implement the proposed action (what else needs to be done to help this action happen?). This process should help participants identify additional actions that may have more leverage when compared to an action implemented alone and also help align actions. These additional actions should be written into the action register in a different colour (written in red in the example).
5. When a row, or most of the row, is complete, participants should consider if they can help take any of these actions forward and suggest other stakeholders who might be best placed to help take actions forward.
6. The group should repeat this process and identify other actions which may alter other areas of the theme map.

We recommend that participants are given approximately 30 minutes per theme before moving to another table/theme.

Slide 43: Summary: How and where could we intervene?

This slide provides a summary of the steps in the activity. The core working team should ensure that each table has two printed copies of these summarised instructions (resource V).

Slide 44: Systems map with current and planned actions

Remind participants of the current and planned actions that are ongoing across the system. Participants do not always have to think of new actions, they may wish to strengthen actions which are already being undertaken or planned.

This slide should remain on the screen for the duration of the activity, and facilitators should encourage the participants to refer back to this map.

Slide 45: Break

Group Activity 3: Refining our vision (15-20 minutes)

Slide 46: Refining our vision

Key points:

Explain the process you went through to develop the draft vision statement(s).

Slide 47: Draft vision statements

Steps:

1. Present the draft vision statement(s).
2. Give participants time to reflect and discuss in groups.

Note to core working team and facilitators:

- your role will be to ensure that you capture your tables feedback
- be aware that some might disagree: if there is anyone who disagrees with the draft vision(s), or anyone who is upset because his or her idea was not incorporated, you may want to explore ways to connect the vision to their interests and needs

Next steps (5 – 10 minutes)

Slides 48 to 52: Summary and next steps

We recommend that a senior figure from the local authority closes the workshop alongside a member of the core working team. Key points to consider are outlined below. This is also an opportunity for the core working team member(s) and / or the senior figure to reflect on the event.

Key points:

- recap what has been achieved during the workshop and the principles applied: highlight how systems thinking has been used and encourage participants to continue thinking in this way (for example: alignment of efforts, seeing the bigger picture, thinking about unintended consequences, identifying leverage points)
- reinforce the systems behaviours and encourage participants to continue to think about, and implement these, in their daily work: they are central to the whole systems approach
- explain how the information gathered at the workshop will be used: it is important that participants think of these workshops as a central part of the journey. They are not standalone activities, and their continued engagement will be needed in the future through action and the system network
- a draft action plan will be produced following this session, and all stakeholders will be invited to continue in further systems network meetings: highlight when the next meeting will take place