Diet

What’s the issue?

“A poor diet high in saturated fat, salt and sugar, low in essential nutrients and too high in calories can raise cholesterol and blood pressure, cause dental decay, and increase the risk of obesity, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and some cancers such as colorectal cancer” [134]. “Around one in three people admitted to hospital or care homes in the UK are found to be under-nourished or at risk of under-nourishment, which can be caused by an inadequate diet or a health problem because the body cannot absorb nutrients from the food. Reduced mobility, a long-term health condition and low income are also factors that can influence diet” [135]. Furthermore, in more deprived areas, access to good quality fruit and vegetables, reliance of public transport, cost issues and lack of cookery knowledge are further barriers to healthy eating.

What’s our situation?

From the local adult Prevalence Survey 2014 [66], 68.9% stated that they ate a healthy diet, 23.9% stated they did not and 7.2% reported lack of knowledge about what constituted a healthy diet. Fewer than one in five (19.2%) ate five or more portions of fruit/vegetables per day (15.7% among those living in the most deprived fifth of areas of Hull versus 22.7% in the least deprived fifth). National estimates are much higher for Hull at around 50% [26, 95]. In the local adult Prevalence Survey 2009 [131], 79.3% ate a healthy diet and 27.5% ate 5-A-DAY, so reported diets have become worse. From the local Young People Health and Lifestyle Survey 2016 [86], it was estimated that 50% of year 7 boys and 59% of girls (aged 11-12 years) in Hull ate five or more portions of fruit/vegetables daily, but the percentage fell with age to 26% for both boys and girls in year 11 (aged 15-16 years). National estimates for Hull for 15 year olds are considerably higher at 44% for 2014/15 compared to 52% for England [26, 95]. One in twenty year 7 children never had breakfast on a school day, but this increased to 15% for boys and 28% for girls by year 11 [86].

Within local qualitative projects, participants always mentioned the preponderance of takeaways in their local area. “I was terrible for it, takeaways everywhere. Temptation. I mean, I live across the road from a takeaway and it's lovely and I wish it wasn’t there. I'm glad it's there, but I wish it wasn’t there. It's a kebab, pizza, Turkish takeaway. And within ten minutes walk, there's four of that type, a couple of chicken places, two Chinese, an Indian, three chip shops, these are all in less than ten minute walk and I live in a council estate near the University” [10].

For more detailed information, see the JSNA Toolkit: Diet report.

What are the strategic needs?

It is necessary to work together to improve access to healthy and affordable food, and ensure people understand the benefit of positive life choices and know how to access information and seek early support to change. Furthermore, the family or household environment can have a strong influence on poor diet, so approaches to improving diet involving the entire family is preferable. People need to have the knowledge and confidence to cook cheap, healthy meals, and further education or training may be necessary. There is also a need to support ‘Fuel, Food and Finance’ anti-poverty initiatives that help people minimise the health impact of welfare reform and cost of living rises. Improving diet should be tackled using a life course whole system approach (page is not defined.) looking at a combination of strategies and settings. This includes giving nutritional advice to pregnant women, encouraging healthy weaning practices, making affordable food available, healthy cooking sessions on a budget for families, and changing the food culture approach to food and nutrition across a variety of settings such as schools, workplace canteens and hospitals, etc. The way services are commissioned and delivered, and the way in which neighbourhoods are designed and change can influence health and wellbeing, and health inequalities. The impact on health should be considered as part of the process of commissioning...
and planning. For example, the number and location of takeaways already in the area should be considered when there are new takeaway applications.

References


