

# SUPPORTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTHY NUTRITION

## Guide for Child Health Colleagues

### The problem

- Millions of children in the UK are not meeting the recommended levels of physical activity, contributing to poor physical and mental health.
- Increasing rates of childhood obesity, especially in deprived communities, are straining the NHS.
- Many children and young people (CYP) are malnourished due to poor diets with high fat, sugar, and salt which negatively impacts development and education outcomes. .

### What you can do as a child health practitioner

- **Partner with schools to deliver whole-school approaches** that integrate physical activity and healthy eating into daily routines and culture.
- **Support school-based health initiatives** like universal breakfast clubs, active play schemes, and healthy lunch programmes.
- **Advocate for trauma-informed physical activity and nutrition support**, especially for children with adverse childhood experiences or special educational needs.
- **Champion the use of local health data** to identify areas with high rates of inactivity or poor nutrition, and target interventions accordingly.
- **Collaborate with local authorities and community organisations** to co-produce tailored, place-based solutions addressing food insecurity and physical literacy.

## Evidence-based insights

Almost **2.2 million children** in England are physically inactive, getting less than 30 minutes of activity per day.

**82%** of 5–15-year-olds do not consume the recommended five daily portions of fruit and vegetables.

## Examples of good practice that you may wish to explore:

### FUNMOVES

FUNMOVES enables a cost-effective, more equitable and expedited pathway to support children with motor skills difficulties, not only improving physical activity outcomes, but also broader developmental outcomes including academic achievement.

### Keighley Schools Together

Developed resources to support parents that needed support with food insecurity to find the right help at the right time. Keighley Schools Together also promoted the national Healthy Start Programme, so that more families were able to access free food and vitamins.

### Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme

The HAF offers improved wrap-around services including nutritional education, provision of a safe place to play and be physically active, and improved community cohesiveness and reduction in anti-social behaviours.

### Bite Back

Bite Back is actively shaping a future where child health takes precedence through empowering young activists to challenge the status quo of the food industry and advocate for healthier options.

Check out the innovative approaches outlined in this briefing and **consider taking inspiration from these approaches to reflect on how you can help create positive change.**



Scan the QR Code for the report

**Please share this guide and start a discussion with your colleagues about how we can all play our role in building a country that works for all children and young people.**