

# Picture this, crossing barriers in childhood obesity

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## Project overview:

Childhood obesity is a serious risk factor for cardiovascular disease in adulthood, especially hypertension. Manchester is particularly afflicted by this phenomenon with some of the highest rates of childhood obesity in the UK; by age 11, one in four Manchester children are obese.

Central Manchester NHS Foundation Trust (CMFT) have established an online IT-based feedback programme, Children's Health And Monitoring Programme (CHAMP), that allows families in Manchester to access data on their children's weight, height and body mass index, as measured at reception and age 11.

A crucial first step in the development of the new technology will be to liaise with end-users (i.e. parents), in order to explore their views, experiences, and needs with respect to managing and supporting their children's energy balance.

To this end, we conducted a 1 hour mini-workshop with 20 parents from 6 schools across Greater Manchester using a creative engagement tool called Ketso to explore and identify barriers to engaging with the topic of childhood obesity and to identify strategies for increased, diverse engagement.



## The Workshops:

- 1 hour workshop: 20 parents from 6 schools (6,9,3,2,2,9)
- Key questions asked:
  - What should schools and the NHS do to support healthy weight in children?
  - What is the role at home to support healthy weight in children?
  - How could technology be used to help manage healthy weight?
- Use of creative engagement tool to facilitate and structure discussions.

*We had an interesting discussion centred on the question of "what is healthy eating"*

## What is Ketso?



Ketso offers a structured way to run a workshop, using re-useable coloured shapes to capture everyone's ideas. Ketso gives everyone a voice, so everyone is more engaged: [www.ketso.com](http://www.ketso.com)



Workshop participants discuss ideas using Ketso.



## Outcomes:

From this workshop we developed a set of values and principles for health partnerships with parents and schools, these included:

- Balance and choice: Achieving healthy balance in ways that give individuals choice, control and variety rather than excluding/mandating specific foods or behaviours
  - Evidence-based information: Parents and schools want access to up-to-date, credible health information and interventions that are backed by current guidance and research. We also need to acknowledge where evidence is conflicting, incomplete or lacking
  - Challenging/avoiding stigma: Weight can be a sensitive topic and there is the potential for interventions and information about healthy balance to isolate or embarrass individuals. Understanding where messages are relevant to everyone or delivering them sensitively.
  - Supporting positive change: Encouraging steps in the right direction and helping individuals to achieve this.
  - Responsibility without judgement: Parents and schools see their roles in encouraging healthy balance in their children and want access to non-judgemental advice and information to help them in this task.
  - Acknowledging complexity: Helping parents to make sense of complex and changing health messages about food, physical activity and energy balance.
  - Healthy partnerships: Working with families and schools to develop solutions, to ensure they meet their needs. Also being transparent about the purpose and extent of our partnerships with other organisations
- Respectful and realistic: Understanding that none of us have all the answers and that we can all learn from each other.

These values informed our thinking in terms of designing research and tools developed by the CHAMP team: <https://www.champ.mft.nhs.uk/>