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## Two Hours PE for All Kids to Beat Obesity

PLANS were unveiled today to make schoolchildren do at least two hours of PE a week to help tackle Liverpool's obesity crisis.

Health experts also want to make sure youngsters have the chance to do a further three hours of physical activity a week outside school.

They laid down the three-year target today as part of a wide-ranging plan to improve a problem which costs the NHS in Liverpool £5m a year.

Other proposals include:

Increasing the size of the weight management service, so more people can get help to lose weight.

Making sure people can get access to weight management drugs through community pharmacies.

Giving healthy eating advice to daycare services for children.

Letting the council be flexible when deciding where to allow fast-food outlets to open.

A senior head teacher today said the two-hour PE target was achievable, but said some schools would struggle to fit it in on top of other classroom commitments.

National Primary Headteachers vice-chairman Peter Price, from St Christopher's primary in Speke, said: "I think the aspiration should be welcomed. It is how it can be fulfilled.

"Improving provision is one thing, take-up is another."

Although children will not be forced to take part in extra-curricular exercise, they will be encouraged to take part in more activities by expanding opportunities available to them.

Improvements will be made to publicly-owned sports facilities and more will be done to tell young people what activities are out there.

The targets were revealed as new figures showed obesity can shorten people's lives by as much as 13 years.

Liverpool primary care trust's three-year plan aims to halt the rise in obesity in adults and children in the city by encouraging people to get active and eat well, while improving services for those who are already overweight or obese.

PCT chairman Gideon Ben-Tovim said: "Obesity is a complex problem, individuals will need to take responsibility for their own health and it will be up to them to make positive lifestyle changes."

Liverpool FC star Jamie Carragher, who backed the strategy today, said: "I am delighted to launch this because it will help so many people across the city eat better, be more active and, as a result, live longer."



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