

Soft Drinks Industry Levy Wiltshire Report

Service: Public Health

Date Prepared: 20 January 2020

Overview

Since April 2018, millions of children across the UK have benefitted from the government's key milestone in tackling childhood obesity, as the Soft Drinks Industry Levy (SDIL) came into effect. The tax on soft drinks, commonly referred to as the 'Sugar Tax', has already resulted in over 50% of manufacturers reducing the sugar content of drinks since it was announced in March 2016 – the equivalent of 45 million kg of sugar every year.

Soft drinks manufacturers who don't reformulate products will pay the levy, which is expected to raise £240 million each year. The SDIL puts a charge of 24p on drinks containing 8g of sugar per 100ml and 18p a litre on those with 5-8g of sugar per 100ml, directly payable by manufacturers to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

This money went towards doubling the Primary Sports Premium, the creation of a Healthy Pupils Capital Fund to help schools upgrade their sports facilities, and give children access to top quality PE equipment. This fund is intended to improve children's and young people's physical and mental health by improving and increasing availability of facilities for physical activity, healthy eating, mental wellbeing and medical conditions.

Wiltshire context

In Wiltshire 20.7% of Reception age children (4-5 year olds) and 28.2% of Year 6 children (10-11 year olds) have excess weight. To help tackle childhood obesity and improve the health and wellbeing of Wiltshire's children and young people, Wiltshire Council was allocated £82,628 of SDIL funding for voluntary aided (VA) schools and £246,870 for Community, Voluntary Controlled and Foundation Schools in the 2017/18 financial year.

The Public Health team at Wiltshire Council identified the priorities in Wiltshire. It was agreed that the funding would target secondary schools, special schools, and the top 20% of primary schools with the highest levels of childhood obesity. This was calculated using the data from the National Child Measurement Programme, aggregated from 2014/15 to 2016/17.

This resulted in 10 VA schools being selected to be eligible to bid for £8,200 for appropriate projects. 29 Local Authority schools were selected to be eligible to bid for £8,500 for appropriate projects. To claim the funding, schools were asked to provide a brief of what they would spend the money on, with Public Health recommending the following guidelines:

- Involve students in the decision-making process and selection of project/s e.g. using the school council or group of nominated pupils.
- To use data taken from the Wiltshire Children and Young People's Health Survey 2017 to identify priorities for investment.
- Use the School Health Needs Assessment provided by your school nurse. Your school nurse will be able to provide a copy of this assessment if necessary.

How Wiltshire schools spent the SDIL

Schools in Wiltshire spent the SDIL on a variety of health and wellbeing projects, including sports and playground equipment and repairs, bike and scooter stands and allotments.

Studley green primary school in Trowbridge spent their funding on implementing a 'daily mile' track. The 'daily mile' is a simple initiative that sees children walk, jog or run for 15 minutes each day to support their physical and mental wellbeing.

Head Teacher Sarah Garbutt reflected on the project '***Having the track has had a positive impact on the amount of physical activity children are doing with each class using it daily. The children have noticed that they can run further and for longer.***





St Paul's Primary School in Chippenham opted to implement a bike and scooter shelter to encourage active travel.

Head Teacher Sheridan Upton said, ***'We wanted to encourage more families to walk to school. Providing the shelter gives parents the confidence to leave their child's bike on the school site during the day. We always invite our Year 6 pupils to take part in 'Bikeability', and it was important that there was a provision for them to store their bikes.'***

Year 5 pupil Omari said, ***'I prefer to ride my bike to school now because it will stay dry.'***

St Paul's Primary School also opted to spend their funding on a project to support their pupils' mental health.



St Paul's rejuvenated the school's secret garden. The Garden is now a place to relax, sit and chat with friends away from the fast-paced playgrounds. The pebbled surface enables it to be accessed all year round. Children and families were involved in weeding, planting and making repairs. 4 flower beds were installed, with flowers planted to represent the four coloured house teams. Children were involved with designing the garden and planting the bulbs.

Head Teacher Sheridan Upton explained ***'The Rainbow Garden is now accessible to all children and provides a quiet, relaxing area for children at break-times. It has also brought families working together in the up-keep of the flower beds.'***

Next Steps

The projects the schools have used their funding towards will support long term health and wellbeing benefits from children. We hope that it will also encourage more schools to apply for Wiltshire Healthy Schools Awards, whether it is Bronze, Silver or Gold depending on previous engagement.

In Wiltshire we are pleased with the outcomes of SDIL. Pupils, teachers and schools have positively benefited from the initiative and it has helped to support our ambition of halting the rise of childhood obesity in Wiltshire.

For more information about the SDIL you can visit www.gov.uk or contact PHPublicHealth@wiltshire.gov.uk.