



2 YEAR REVIEW

2014-2016

What is SWEET?

“Tackling obesity using a family support approach”

In April 2010, The Old Library Trust was awarded a contract by Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT) under the EU Interreg VI Programme. The funding was awarded to pilot a family-based obesity programme known as SWEET (Safe, Wellbeing, Exercise & Eating Together). SWEET was developed to help prevent and tackle obesity by providing a community-based, family-centred programme incorporating a wide variety of interactive interventions through physical play, exercise, diet and nutrition designed to increase physical activity and promote positive physical and mental wellbeing. The programme was initially piloted in the Creggan Central and Victoria electoral wards of Derry and the Lisanelly electoral ward in Omagh.

SWEET comprised two key strands focusing on Prevention and Intervention: Prevention Programme works with families with children aged 0-5 years of age; Management Programme works with families with children age 8-11 years of age who have at least one child in the 91st percentile for obesity. Each programme runs for a maximum of twelve weeks with additional follow-up sessions to track programme. To date, families have taken part in a range of activities to help promote the importance of increased physical activity; having a well-balanced diet through essential cooking skills support as well as educating parents and children on self-esteem issues and the importance of positive mental health and wellbeing. Examples of the types of activities that have been carried out include interactive nutritional quizzes, family cycling events, family pool time, family gymnastics and a SWEET “Come Dine with Me” experience.

SWEET works with families identified as most in need of help through prevention or management of obesity and deals with issues that are often associated with obesity. In each programme, the emphasis is on FUN with all the important themes and messages delivered in natural settings through play and family based activities. Activities are designed to be educational for parents, raising their knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding sedentary lifestyles and obesity and just as importantly giving families the opportunity to spend quality, structured time together. Following the success of the pilot initiative, the OLT was awarded follow-on support from the Public Health Agency, to deliver the SWEET programme across the Western Trust area, initially for 12 months in 2013 and subsequently extended in 2014-2016.

The multidisciplinary team overseeing delivery of the SWEET programme includes representatives from Life and Health Sciences, Ulster University; the departments of dietetics and mental health and wellbeing, WHSCT; and from community and voluntary organisations specialising in promoting health and wellbeing in the community.

Strand 1 – Obesity Prevention Programme

The Obesity Prevention programme is a flexible 8-week programme targeting families with children under the age of 5. The programme includes the following elements:

- Targets 40 families per annum (5 programmes with 8 families per programme)
- Consists of 8 sessions, each lasting 1.5 hours maximum
- An induction and team building session
- Delivery of a 4 week ‘Play to Learn’ component with parents participating in a range of activities with their children (e.g. gymnastics and physical games at home)
- ‘Out and About’ which includes a range of activities to increase knowledge of opportunities for family activity in the local area
- Delivery of ‘Toddler Tummies’ which incorporates a range of key elements: The Toddler Diet; Fussy Eating; Portion Sizes to suit all the family; Food labelling; Shopping on a budget;
- Delivery of ‘Family Favourites’ a good food cooking component encouraging something new and alternative to traditional party foods
- A closing final trip / celebration event

Week	Activity / Event
Week 1	FUN Filled Family Day trip of activity
Week 2	Toddlers Tummies - What do they need? Kids FUN Games
Week 3	Toddlers Tummies- How much is enough? Kids FUN Games
Week 4	Toddlers Tummies- Choosing the right options. Kids FUN Games
Week 5	Gymnastics, Dance and Games - Nutrition: Cooking Toddler favourites
Week 6	Pool time - Nutrition: Cooking Parents favourites
Week 7	Park time - Nutrition: Cooking family favourites
Week 8	Cooking Master Class and Celebration event!

****Please note that this schedule is subject to change slightly****

THE SWEET PROJECT
The Old Library Trust Healthy Living Centre
T: 028 7137 3870

Healthy Living Centre @ The Old Library Trust
HSC Public Health Agency
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Strand 2 – Obesity Management Programme

The Obesity Management programme is flexible in its design and delivered over 12 weeks focusing on 5-11 year olds with a BMI equal to or above 91%. Key elements include:

- Target of 32 families per annum (4 programmes each targeting a minimum of 4 families)
- Sessions lasting approximately 1-2 hours
- An introductory meeting including a family / team trip
- Pre and post health / fitness assessments
- Delivery of an initial workshop focusing on Cognitive Behavioural Techniques designed to help individuals and their families. Also included are a number of informal information sessions and activities focused on health, self-esteem, confidence, team-building, physical activity, diet and nutrition (e.g. Boxercise and designing a scrapbook to capture the journey)
- Delivery of 5 sessions of Family Team Games and activities focusing on bonding and relationships between parents and their children. Activities include old fashioned games, obstacle courses, sports day games and group exercise classes.
- Delivery of various nutrition sessions: The Eatwell Plate; How much is enough? School lunches – healthy choices; The Calorie Ladder; Healthy Eating on a Budget; and Cooking for Health
- The delivery of 'Out and About' in the community to get children and adults more involved in being active within the community and to widen their knowledge of the different opportunities available.
- Delivery of a final trip / celebration event to close the programme.
- Delivery of follow up sessions for all those who complete the programme



THE SWEET PROJECT
A FUN FILLED HEALTH
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME
FOR FAMILIES

At a Glance

Week	Activity / Event
Week 1	FUN Filled Family Day of activity
Week 2	FUN Obstacle Course Challenge - Interactive Food Quiz!
Week 3	Fun Crazy Games! - Nutrition: Do you get the right Balance?
Week 4	'Beat the World Champ' - Food Fit for the champ!
Week 5	Know your Clubs Day - Nutrition: How much do we need?
Week 6	Family Cycling - Family dining
Week 7	Pool Time - Shopping & Family Dining
Week 8	Cooking Master Class and Celebration event!

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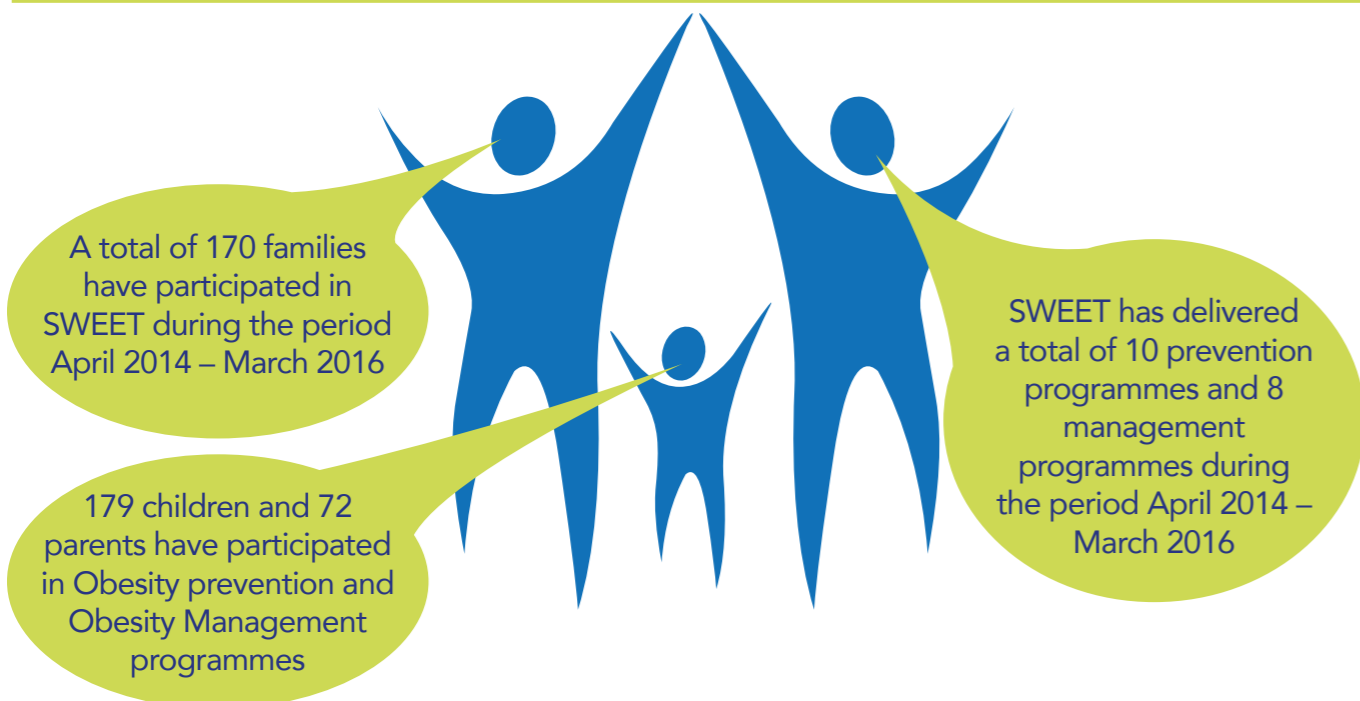
SWEET Outcomes

SWEET is tasked with delivering the following key outcomes for participants:

1. Children will reduce / maintain their BMI / weight relevant to their appropriate age / sex weight status
2. Families will have an increased understanding of the health effects of obesity
3. Increased awareness among participants of food habits
4. Increased knowledge around diet and nutrition
5. Children / parents / families will try new foods
6. Healthier food choices will be made within whole family units
7. Increased awareness of obesity related messages
8. Families will have an enhanced ability to make healthier food choices (reported through positive dietary changes)
9. Increased participation levels in play and physical activity
10. Better awareness of local community amenities



Delivery of SWEET?



SWEET was delivered all across the Western Health and Social Care Trust area, the programme was supported by a range of partners across the geography:

Key Partners:

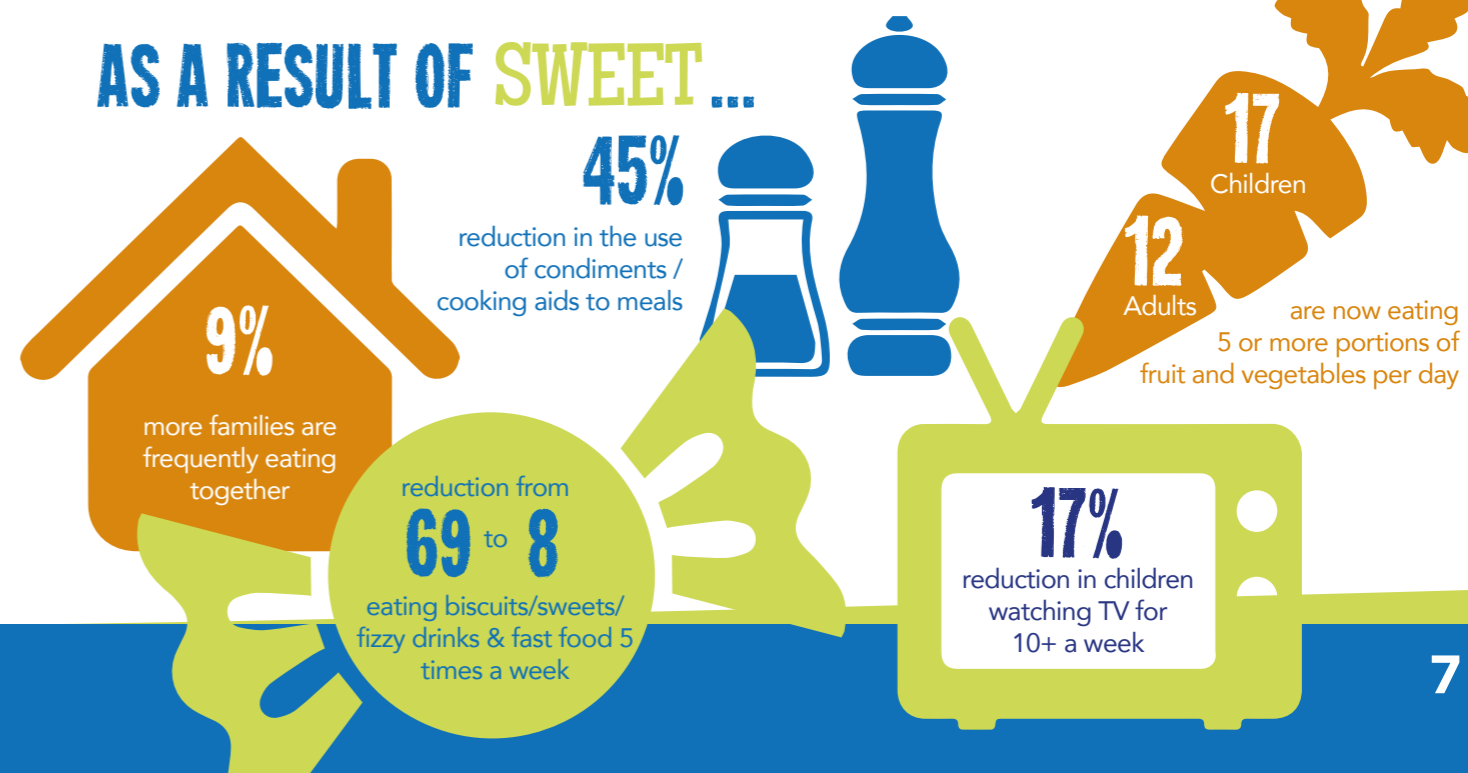
- Surestart Edenballymore
- Hillcrest House
- Derry City Council
- Waterside Surestart
- Jack N Jill Day care Nursery TOTH
- Irish Street Youth and community Centre
- The Bogside and Brandywell Health forum
- Family Intervention Team WHSST
- WHSST- Diabetics department
- Local Primary Schools across Derry
- Omagh District Council
- Strathroy Community Centre
- LAST Surestart
- GK House
- Local Primary Schools in Omagh
- The School Nursing Team
- The Arc Healthy Living centre
- Active Allsorts afterschool Club
- Cherish Surestart
- Devenish Partnership Forum
- Strabane Community Project
- Strabane District Council
- Local Primary schools in Strabane
- Limavady Borough Council Sport development
- The Dry Arch Centre
- Limavady Central Primary School

SWEET Impacts

91 Pre and Post questionnaires for project participants has been analysed, highlighting the following key impacts from strand 1: the obesity prevention programme:

	PRE SWEET	POST SWEET
	80% of adults identified the correct amount of recommended daily fruit and vegetables before the programme	97% of adults identified the correct amount of recommended daily fruit and vegetables after the programme
	47% of families stated that they done physical activity together 'every day or most days' before SWEET	59% of families stated that they done physical activity together 'every day or most days' after SWEET
	60% eat breakfast every-day	75% eat breakfast every-day
	27% of adults answered correctly that the recommended daily activity levels for adults was 60 minutes.	90% of adults answered correctly that the recommended daily activity levels for adults was 60 minutes.
	35% of parents identified that their childrens recommended daily activity level was 60 minutes.	85% of parents identified that their childrens recommended daily activity level was 60 minutes.

AS A RESULT OF SWEET ...



How does this affect the children?

A core part of the Obesity Management programme was to measure changes to the BMI of participating children. BMI estimates how much body fat you have. It's based on height and weight. But for kids, height and weight alone aren't as accurate as they are for adults. Why? Because kids' body fat percentages change as they grow. Their BMIs vary based on their age and gender. That's why when healthcare professionals talk about a child's BMI, you won't usually hear a plain number, like 25, but rather a percentile, like 75th. They show how a child's BMI compares to other children of the same age and gender. BMI percentiles are grouped into weight categories:

- Underweight: below the 5th percentile
- Healthy Weight: 5th percentile to the 85th percentile
- Overweight: 85th percentile to the 95th percentile
- Obese: 95th percentile or higher

31% OF CHILDREN MEASURED HAD A BMI HIGHER THAN THE 91ST PERCENTILE (50 CHILDREN)

28 OF THESE 48 CHILDREN ACHIEVED A REDUCTION IN THEIR BMI BECAUSE OF THE PROGRAMME (58%), 22 CHILDREN RETAINED THE SAME BMI (42%)

2.99% IS THE AVERAGE BMI REDUCTION (RANGED FROM 6% TO 0.2%)

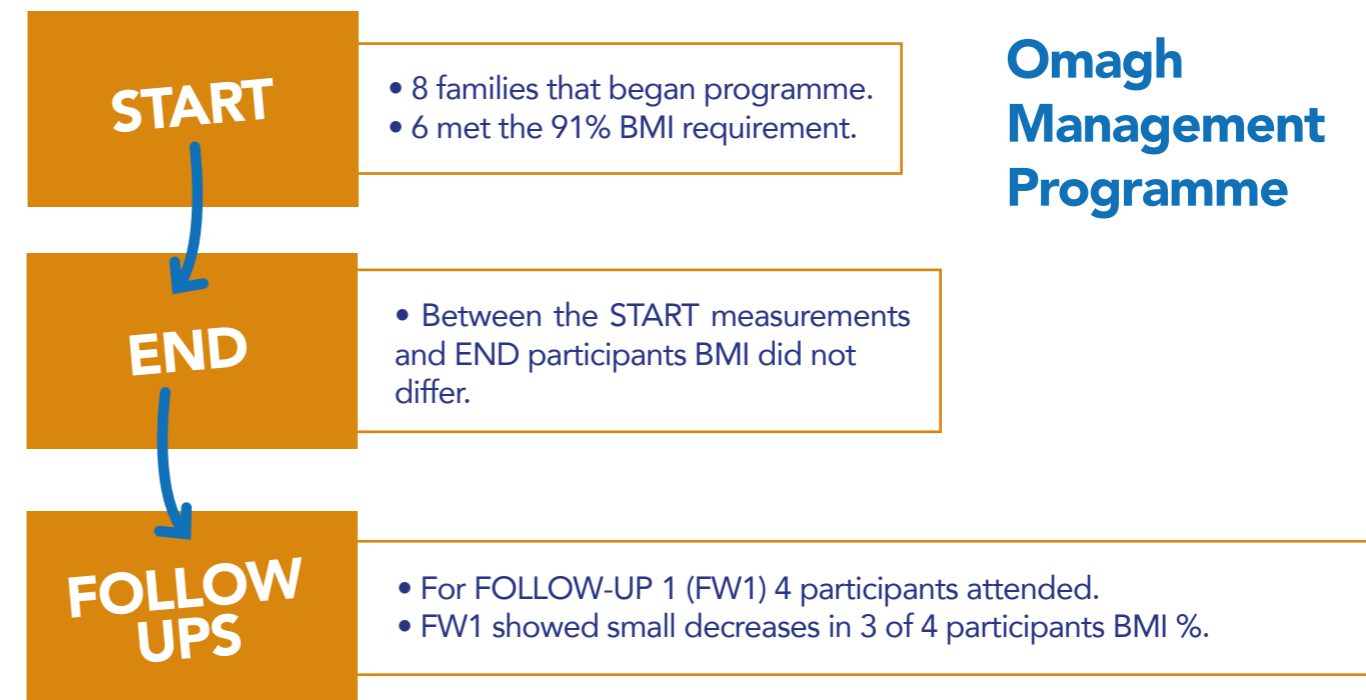


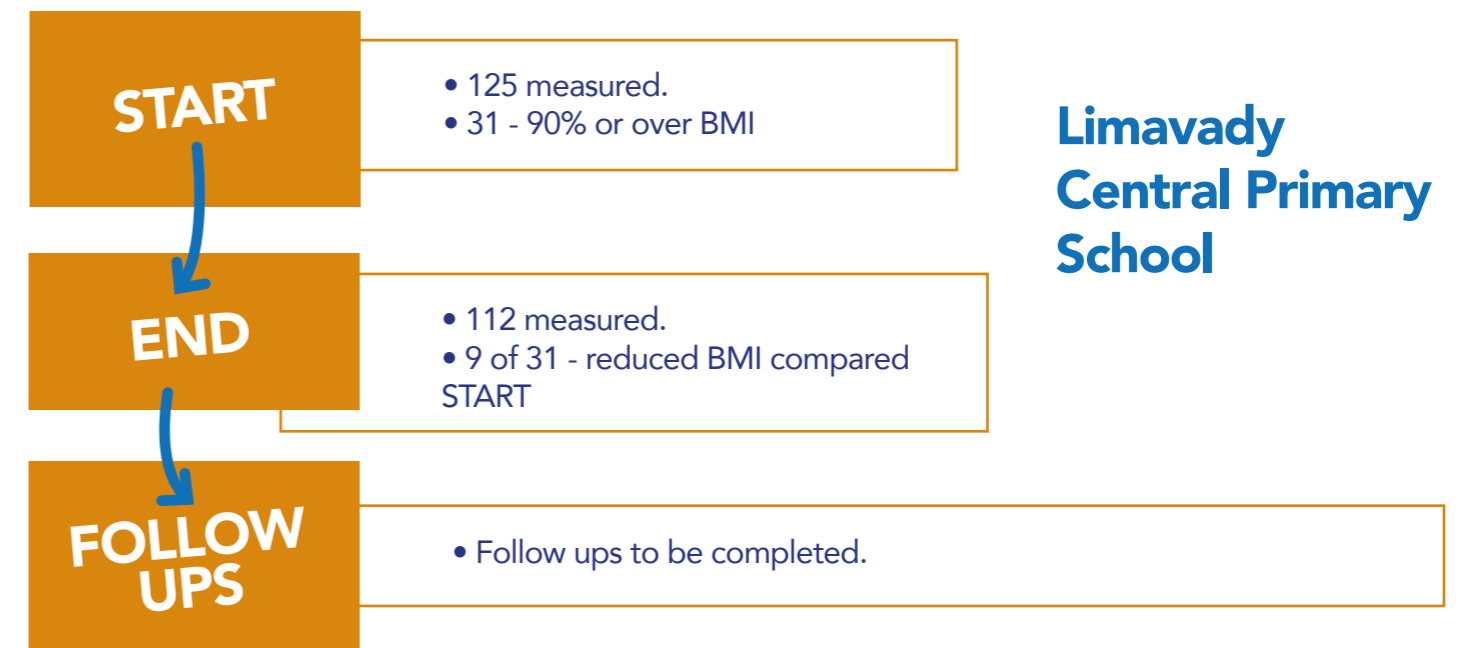
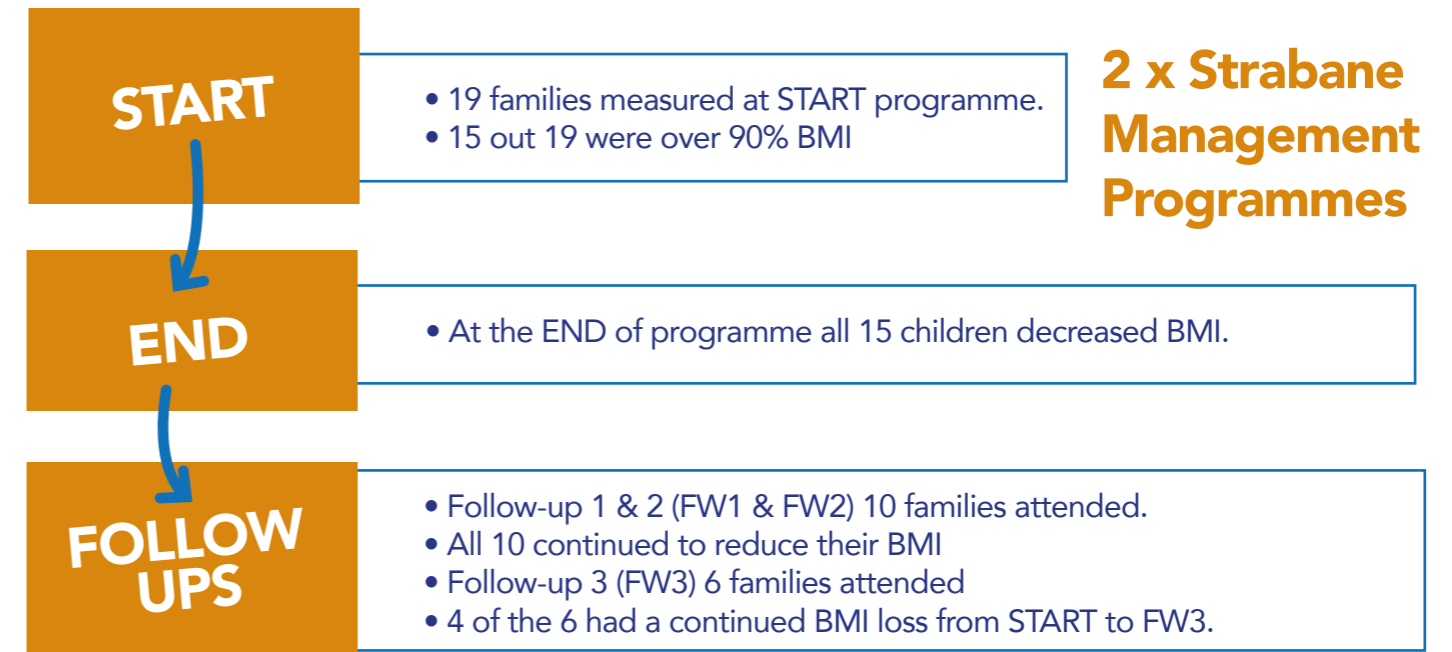
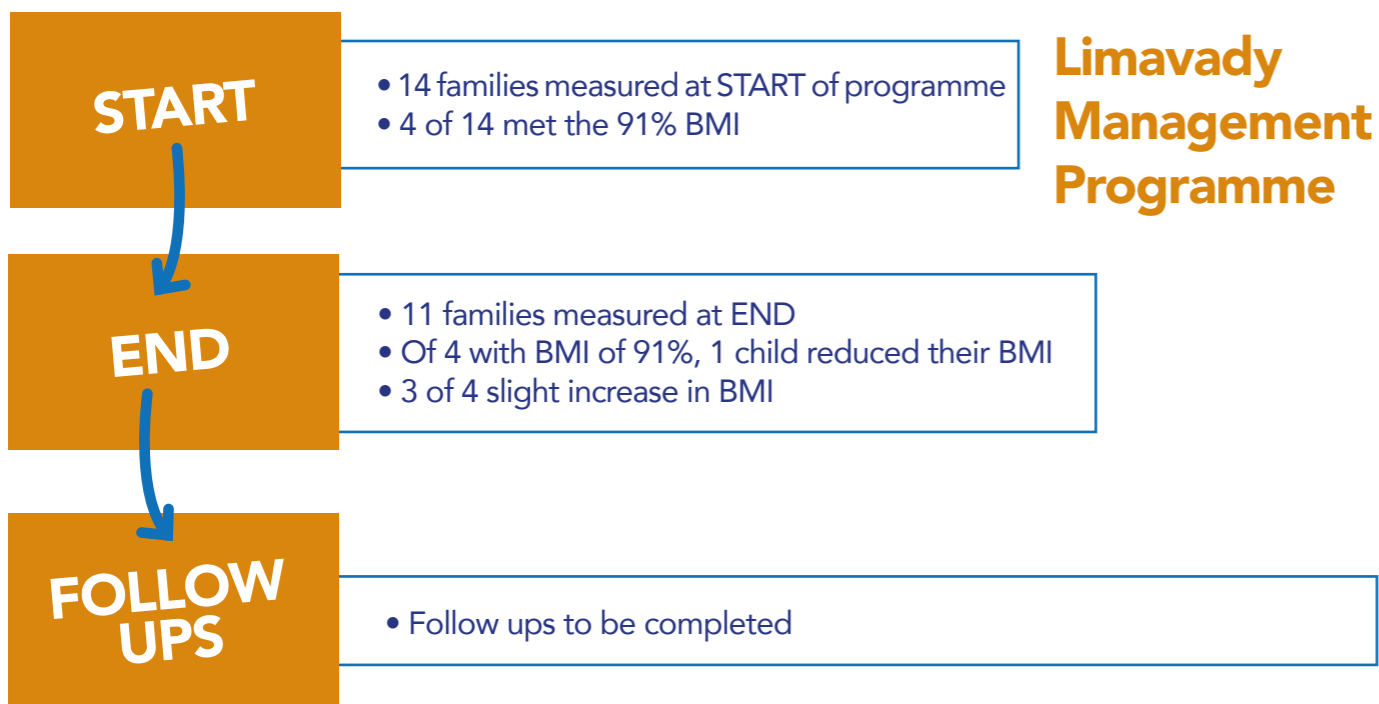
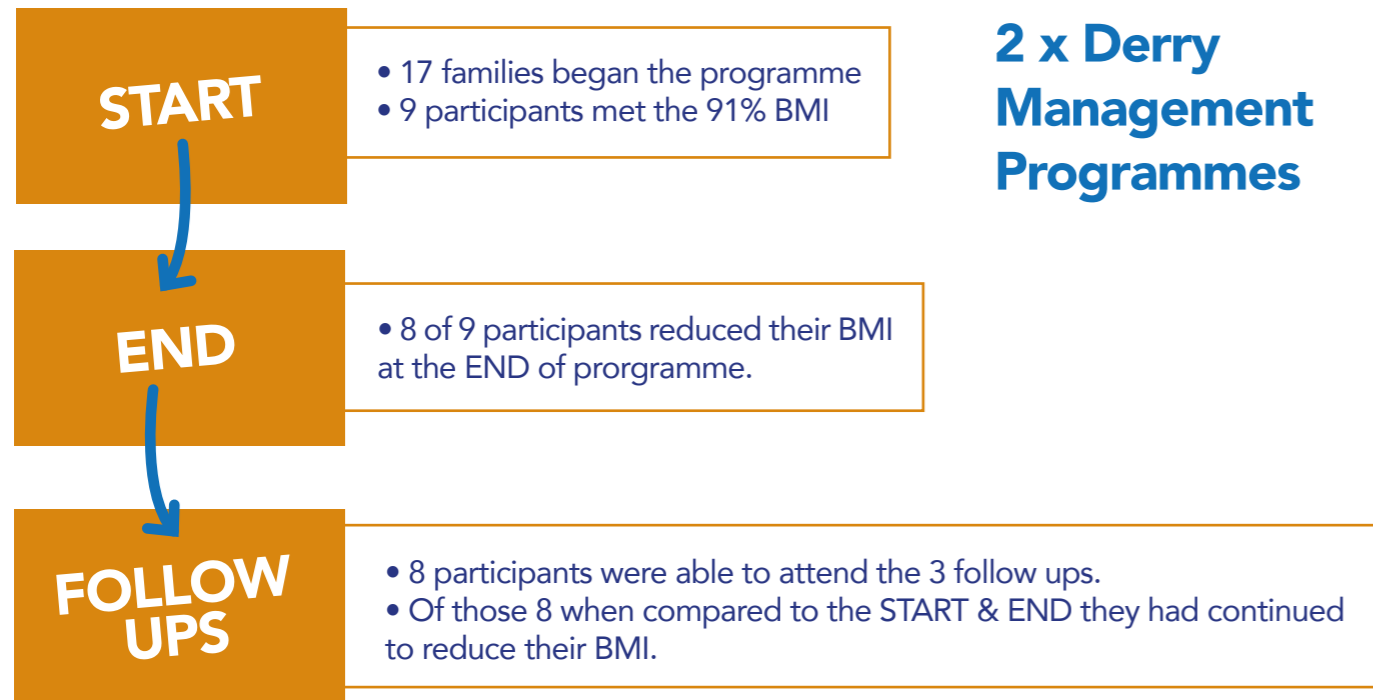
How does this affect the children?

In order to track the long term impact of SWEET, the programme implemented follow ups with those children that had identified as having a BMI higher than the 91st percentile. The follow ups were planned at 3 months, 6 months and 9 months post the programme delivery and were designed to measure the long term impact of the programme. A typical programme is presented below. To deliver the 12-week intervention and 3 follow ups, each programme should last for 1 year in total:



During the timeframe for this evaluation, only 2 of the programmes had completed in full (i.e. 12 week intervention and 3 follow ups). The findings from these programmes include:










Despite some positive feedback and positive results for participants at follow up 1 (3 months), there was not sufficient engagement to enable this to represent a true reflection of the impact of the project. Only a very small number of families engaged beyond follow up 1 i.e. At 6 months & 12 months. In addition, there is not currently any engagement with parents between the end of the 12 week programme and the various follow up sessions, so if BMI has increased, the programme is essentially back to where it began. This is symptomatic of the approach taken in schools whereby the school nursing team check BMI at P1 and then again at Year 8, at which stage it is too late to intervene.

The project has identified clear challenges in terms of retaining engagement of parents and families and the level of tracking and intervention is too dispersed to affect real change where there appears to be ongoing concern. A better approach to tracking would be to enable greater monitoring of change and the implementation of interventions to address on an ongoing basis.

SWEET Impacts

In the obesity management programme, both parents and children were asked to complete pre and post questionnaires to record impact. 159 children and 66 parents completed questionnaires.

	PRE SWEET	POST SWEET
	67% of people don't undertaken any moderate intensity physical activity	35% of people don't undertaken any moderate intensity physical activity
	67% / 63% % of parents / kids that were able to identify the recommended portions of fruit and vegetable intake for adults	100% / 100% % of parents / kids that were able to identify the recommended portions of fruit and vegetable intake for adults
	56% / 44% % of parents / kids the highlighted they eat 4 or 5 portions of fruit and veg per day	82% / 69% % of parents / kids the highlighted they eat 4 or 5 portions of fruit and veg per day
	50% / 59% % of parents / kids said they watched tv between 11-20 hours per week	48% / 46% % of parents / kids said they watched tv between 11-20 hours per week
	28% / 39% % of parents / kids that were able to correctly identify the recommended daily activity levels for adults over a week	100% / 100% % of parents / kids that were able to correctly identify the recommended daily activity levels for adults over a week



Increase in the number of families who participate in activity 2-3 times per week, and a drop in the number who are involved in activity only once per week.



14%
increase in the number of parents who eat breakfast every day



16%
drop in the number of people who didn't walk for 10 minutes on any of the last 7 days

How does this affect the children?

In both questionnaires, the children were asked to respond to a series of statements around their perceptions of themselves. Comparing results, the post programme data indicates improved confidence, self-esteem and self-efficacy. Comparing the percentage of responses across these statements for the pre and post questionnaires, there were increases in the number of children who:

- Like what they look like in pictures (77% vs. 94%)
- Have a perception that other children like their looks (77% vs. 91%)
- Feel happier about how they look (68% vs. 89%)
- Proud of their body (67% vs. 80%)
- Are happy with what they weigh: (48% vs. 69%)
- Feel as though they look as nice as other people (68% vs. 89%)
- Had a positive response to the statement 'I feel satisfied with myself (84% vs. 97%)
- Are more proud of themselves (39% vs. 74%)

Again comparing the results of the pre and post questionnaires, there has also been a decrease in the number of children who:

- Feel other children have a nicer body than them (42% vs. 23%)
- Wish they were thinner (42% vs. 23%)
- State they often feel ashamed about how they look (13% vs. 6%)
- Had a negative response to the statement 'At times I feel no good at all' (23% vs. 6%)
- Say they feel useless (84% vs. 67%)



What have participants said?

“Some of us from the parent and toddler group who attend the Dry Arch in Dungiven have been going the past few weeks! The information I have got is really helpful to keeping my family healthy! I thought I knew it all but these have opened my eyes even wider! Would recommend it to everyone! Looking forward to meeting again tomorrow!”

“The best wee programme for the kids! Educational & Fun”

“Hi, I am writing this review for my daughter at Limavady Central. She says the SWEET class was CLASS! She got to taste lovely healthy food and exercise. She thought it was brilliant and so much FUN...Thanks you SWEET!”

“Had an AMAZING time. Loved the games, the great information and the cooking. The whole team was brilliant.”



What the participants have said?

Mother:

“We’ve learned a lot of new healthy games to play as a family and that it only takes 5 minutes to get up and go. Learning that taking extra time to read labels can help make good choices. Also the confidence that we have built up has been great too. I will definitely remember the SWEET programme and how it has helped me and my daughter”

Daughter:

“I now know how to read labels to find out how much fat and sugar are in food. Me and my Mum are now able to discuss together which foods we should be eating and then try them out together”



What the partners said?

Strabane Community Project Coordinator remarked,

“ The SWEET programme has been great for the Strabane Community Project. We have been able to work in partnership to provide an excellent Health and well-being project to those most in need within the Strabane area. The SWEET programme content and delivery is second to none and I would highly recommend it”

LAST Surestart Manager, Strathroy, Omagh commented,

“ We have been working with the SWEET project from its inception 4 years ago and will continue to do so in the future. The Project has been delivered across various venues in Omagh and the feedback has been great. Parents really enjoy the informal but factual education and awareness sessions and take a lot from the programmes to implement into their growth & development as parents”

Family Support Worker, Cherish Surestart at The Arc Healthy Living centre,

“ The SWEET project has been an excellent add on to the work that we do here. The variety on offer and the fact that both parents and children are involved across the programme increases interest. We help to provide crèche when needed and the SWEET team deliver the project to our parents, it's a win win situation”



Conclusions & Recommendations

The SWEET project has demonstrated positive outcomes both in terms of increasing knowledge and understanding of key health related issues for children but also practical outcomes with regards the maintenance or reduction of BMI amongst children that are, or are at risk of, becoming obese.

This report provides 4 key recommendations for SWEET to consider in working to deliver even greater outcomes and impacts for children and young people:

Conclusion and Recommendation 1

It appears that schools represent one of the key 'access' points for children. Working through schools enables programmes like SWEET to engage large numbers of children, from which the project can identify larger numbers that present as obese (positive example is the Limavady programme, 125 children engaged, 36 present as obese). The project should consider a partnership approach with schools as its key delivery method moving forward

Conclusion and Recommendation 2

Currently school nursing teams are measuring BMI and primary 1 and again at Year 8 which represents a significant gap. More regular monitoring and measurement of BMI is advisable to ensure appropriate actions and supports for children that are presenting as obese or are at risk of becoming obese. Projects like SWEET can plug this gap

Conclusion and Recommendation 3

The monitoring and evaluation process for the existing SWEET project is cumbersome and much of the survey questions and data collated does not add value and contributes little in terms of measuring impact/highlighting the difference that the project has made. A more streamlined monitoring and evaluation process should be developed, reducing the administrative burden on participants and delivery staff and aligning closer to intended outcomes.

Conclusion and Recommendation 4

Greater involvement of parents is critical to the future success of the programme. Current delivery and follow ups with participants do not engage parents sufficiently. All the positive work of the project can be undone by parents who are not engaging or lack the ongoing support to implement lifestyle and nutritional changes. The project should consider to the introduction of technology through apps, webinars or an online action plan/mentoring process. This version of the Sweet model, could provide more innovative ways of engaging parents, children and families.

