



University of Wales
Trinity Saint David
LONDON

Assessment 2
Written Assignment (Report)
2000 Words

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**Module name: Community Care and
Development**

Module code: BMHP6022

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Date: 16/12/2022

Contents

Introduction	3
Demography	3
Issues	4
Violence directed at women and girls	4
Stakeholders	4
Raising awareness and digital technology	4
Theories	6
The legislations associated with violence against women.	6
Childhood Obesity	7
Hackney obesity strategy	7
Stakeholders	8
Digital technology	8
Legislation and policies	10
Recommendation	12
References	13

Introduction

This report will identify two social problems within the Borough of Hackney. It will explore the two given issues and then critically examine and evaluate different methods and developments to attain a change in behaviour with a view to having a positive outcome.

The London Borough of Hackney is in the county of Middlesex. It is in the Northern part of London with the river Lea on its Eastern border. A community can be defined as a number of people who live in an area and have common interests, backgrounds, or nationalities (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019).

Demography

The **population** of the borough currently stands at 259, 200, a 5.3% increase from the previous figure of 246,300 in the 2011 census. Approximately forty percent of the population are from minority, black and ethnic groups. The white population is the highest number at 134, 143, or 54.6%. the black population is 56,858 or 23.1%. people from mixed backgrounds are approximately 15,869 or 6.5%, while others are 13,059 and 5% (Hackney Council, 2020)

Of those who identify their **religion** as Christianity is 94, 948 or 38.6%. Buddhists are 3069 or 1.2%, and Hindus are 1,574 or 0.6%. the Jewish religious believers are 15,447 which is 6.3% while the Muslim believers are 34, 660 or 14%. The Sikh religious believers are 1,868 or 0.8% and other religions stand at 94,229 or 38.3% (Hackney Council, 2020)

It is a **culturally diverse** borough, and about one in three residents were born in a foreign country (Wessendorf, 2013).

Life expectancy statistics for women and men has been increasing over the years in Hackney, it now stands at 79.6 years for men and about 83.7 years for women. In relation to deprivation **level**, Hackney is 78th on the list of highly deprived boroughs in England according to the 2019 Multiple deprivation index, moreover child poverty is the third highest in London (GOV.UK, 2022a).

Issues

This report will focus on two development efforts to address the problems of **violence directed** against **women and girls** and **obesity** in the London Borough of Hackney.

Violence directed at women and girls

Violence acts against women can be defined as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life." (WHO, 2021). Violence behaviour aimed at women and girls is widespread in Hackney, the UK, and globally. Between 2008 to 2018, 1, 425 women lost their lives through violence with men as the perpetrators. This amounts to one killing every three days. By March 2020, approximately 4.9 million women have indicated that they have been a victim of sexual assault during their lifetimes, furthermore, 7 out of 10 women and girls have indicated that they have been victims of sexual harassment in the public. Statistically, 1 in 4 women will experience domestic abuse during their lifetime. It can happen to anyone (NHS, 2022).

In Hackney, approximately 20% of high-risk or serious domestic abuse involves adult sons abusing their mothers. In the ten years to this report, 9 out of 10 killings were carried out by men. 98.5% of rapes perpetrated in the past year were carried out by men. An effective strategy can curtail or effectively reduce violence suffered by women and girls (Michau et al., 2015)

Stakeholders

The stakeholders include the local authority, Safer neighbourhood board, influential members of the community, faith leaders, law enforcement, local women's advocacy groups, and media outlets.

Several factors will also be taken into consideration such as the empowerment of women and girls (Kiani et al., 2021) working and learning together with the victims and other women, the promotion of self-determination, and acting in a unified manner through taking collective action to influence change.

Raising awareness and digital technology

To raise awareness about this problem several channels were employed, especially using digital media. Avenues for raising awareness include the council's website, radio stations, and social media such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp etc. Also, encouraging the residents in the community to share tweets and Facebook posts of the council to reach more people, community groups, and businesses displaying posters on domestic violence in their establishments, posters will also be produced and made available to the public to educate people more about the subject (Home Office, 2021)

Encouraging women and girls to have wearable technologies that can trigger an alert when necessary can be useful.

Principles of empowerment of women such as focussing on their abilities and strength, self – determination (Rodriguez et al., 2017) working together and learning (Ali et al., 2020), and taking collective action (Gram et al., 2020) will be considered. Powerless women become empowered when they get access to power and adequate resources (Avelino, 2021).

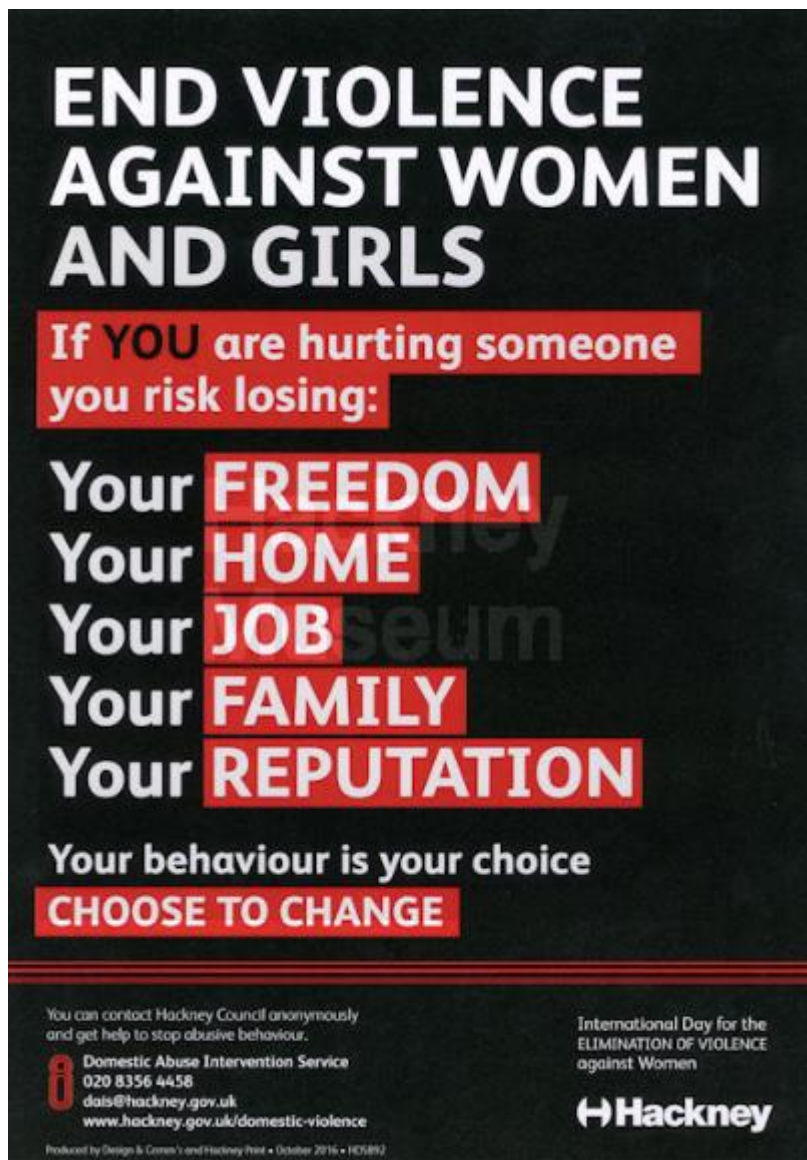


Fig. 1 (Hackney Museum, 2016)

Theories

Attachment theory is **one of the theories** employed to understand why perpetrators direct violent action at women and girls. The theory explains the effect of early childhood experiences and how it influences close relationships in the future. It also assists therapists in determining the interventions needed to address the needs of the patient. Attachment is defined as the lasting and mutual emotional connection that exists between an infant and their caregiver with the two individuals contributing to their relationship (Chambers, 2017)

The cycle of violence theory States that acts of violent victimization, especially physical abuse by caregivers and parents, increases the probability of future violent behaviour among the adults and youths. (Wright and Fagan, 2013)

The legislations associated with violence against women.

There are several key pieces of legislation that have been aimed at domestic violence against women, they include:

“Preventing and Combating Violence against Women AND Domestic Violence (Ratification of Convention) Act 2017”.

“Family Law Act 1996 (as amended by the Domestic violence, Crime, and Victims Act 2004)” (Baker Mckenzie, 2022)

This legislation is useful in allowing victims to apply for civil orders.

“Section 76, Serious crime Act 2011” (This legislation makes coercive, controlling or unwanted behaviour illegal). (Baker Mckenzie, 2022)

“Protection from Harassment Act 1997” (legal protection against stalking and harassing behaviour) (Baker Mckenzie, 2022)

“Sexual offenses Act 2003” (sexual offences including marital rape is a criminal offense) (Baker Mckenzie, 2022)

“Domestic violence Crime and Victims Act 2004” (Amendment to the Family Act 1996, (Baker Mckenzie, 2022) makes it an offense to cause the death of a vulnerable adult or child).

“Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2012” (Amendment)

Deals with cases related to allowing or causing harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

“Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2004” (Baker Mckenzie, 2022)

Deals with marriages carried out that lack the permission of one or both parties because of coercion, threats, or violence.

“Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003” (Baker Mckenzie, 2022)

Criminalizes any excise, or mutilation of a female labia majora, or clitoris.

“S. 39 Criminal Justice Act 1988” (criminalizes common assault against a person) (Baker Mckenzie, 2022)

“s.18, 20 and 47 Offenses Against the Person Act 1861” (Baker Mckenzie, 2022)

This legislation makes any act of physical violence, with or without violence, illegal, inclusive of slapping, punching, head-butting, kicking, and pulling of the hair, false imprisonment, and an attempt to choke. **Strategies and policies** include an online interactive portal that pinpoints areas in Hackney where women and girls feel unsafe (Hackney Council, 2021), sex education offered to all school children, safer streets fund, teachers given more support to give lessons on sex education, and relationships, (Home Office, 2021) and the Hackney Violence against Women and girls partnership (VAWG).

Childhood Obesity

The term obesity or being overweight is **defined** as the unusual, or excessive amassment of fat that can pose a risk to health, a body mass index of above 25 is regarded as overweight and above 30 is considered as obese (World Health Organization, 2022). A (BMI) is the weight of an individual in kilograms divided by the square of the given height calculated in meters (CDC, 2020). One-quarter of children in Hackney start school overweight (Hackney Education, 2022), and approximately 40.2% of young children in year 6 are classified as being overweight (Healthwatch Hackney, 2020). Excessive intake of sugar is one of the causes of childhood obesity (Alexander Bentley, Ruck, and Fouts, 2019), and the high consumption of sugar has been linked to a higher probability of getting type 2 diabetes (Taylor, Al-Mrabeh and Sattar, 2019)

Hackney obesity strategy

The high prevalence of obesity including severe obesity in Hackney (Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 2022) has prompted several campaigns and initiatives by stakeholders to try to address the issue. The **hackney sugar smart campaign** was launched in 2017 to raise awareness about the dangers of consuming excessive sugar (Hackney Council, 2022). The **Hackney food partnership** has assisted in bringing several groups together to encourage and support action on healthy food choices in the borough of Hackney (Hackney Food Partnership, 2022). The UK government has also launched a **national obesity strategy** to reduce the incidence of obesity, this report will examine Hackney council's initiative to support the national strategy.

Hackney council has developed a local plan (Healthwatch Hackney, 2020) to support the government's obesity strategy (Department of Health and Social Care, 2020). The council has strategies in place to support the initiative. For example, the Healthy weight strategic partnership in 2016, brought together different partners from various council services who have an influence on the message of obesity, the partners include those in planning, leisure, transport, housing, green spaces, parks, education, early years, enforcement, social care, and public health.

The partnership resulted in the publishing of a healthy weight framework which was jointly produced by the residents and community organizations. It set out five priority targets that will need collective action, they are working together, targeted help, improving access to food, designing places to make it easier for people to be active and easier access to information.

The council advised residents to shelve or reduce sugar intake and residents should check labels for sugar content. They also advised people to keep track of their calories, swap sugary snacks for a healthy alternative like fruits, and reduce alcohol because it contains starch or sugar and can add to

calorie intake. The council also advised the residents via its website and social media of the support that was available. They could contact the organizations or ask their GPs about existing help such as HENRY charity that supports children from 0 to 5 years to have a healthy start in life, everyone health charity that supports children from 5 to 19 years for a healthy lifestyle, Healthier together Hackney that gives weight management and physical activity programs based on a referral to help support weight loss and the Hackney leisure and physical activity team that gives advice and carries out walks, etc.

Stakeholders

The stakeholders involved in support of the strategy include the health service executive, NHS, Parents, school administrations, influential community leaders, business owners, Department of Health and Social Care, business owners, community workers, Experts in severe and complex obesity, Diabetes UK, Sports clubs, local gyms, the British heart foundation, etc. Principles related to empowerment, learning and taking collective action will be considered.

Digital technology

Several digital media was used to communicate the message to residents and the public. Social media is useful for health promotion (Jane et al., 2018). Some of the communication tools were platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, Instagram, the council's website, Email, and radio adverts.

Theories

Bowlby's Attachment theory states that an insecure attachment history may cause the person to use food to control emotions, consequently, attachment styles influences the management and development of obesity (Nancarrow et al., 2017)

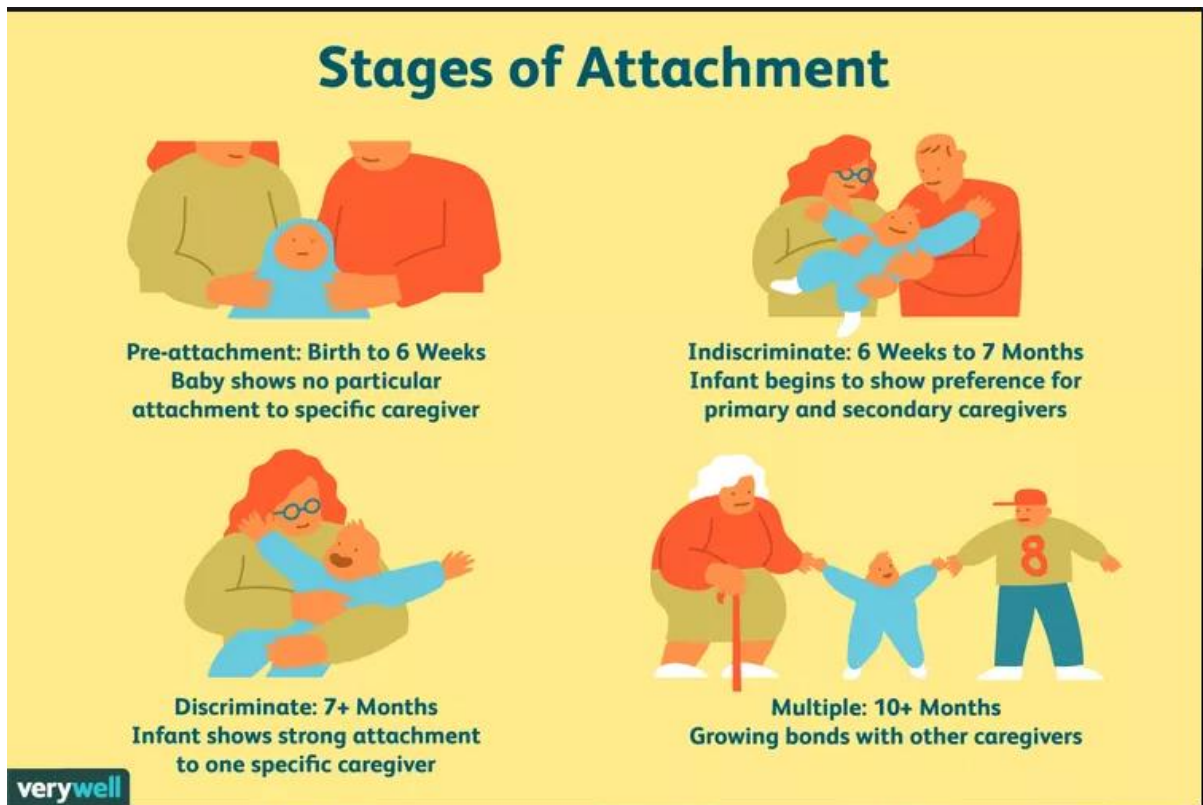


Fig. 2 (Cherry, 2022)

Another theory is the Homeostatic Theory of obesity which suggests that obesity is linked to a hypnotized cycle of discontent (Marks, 2015)

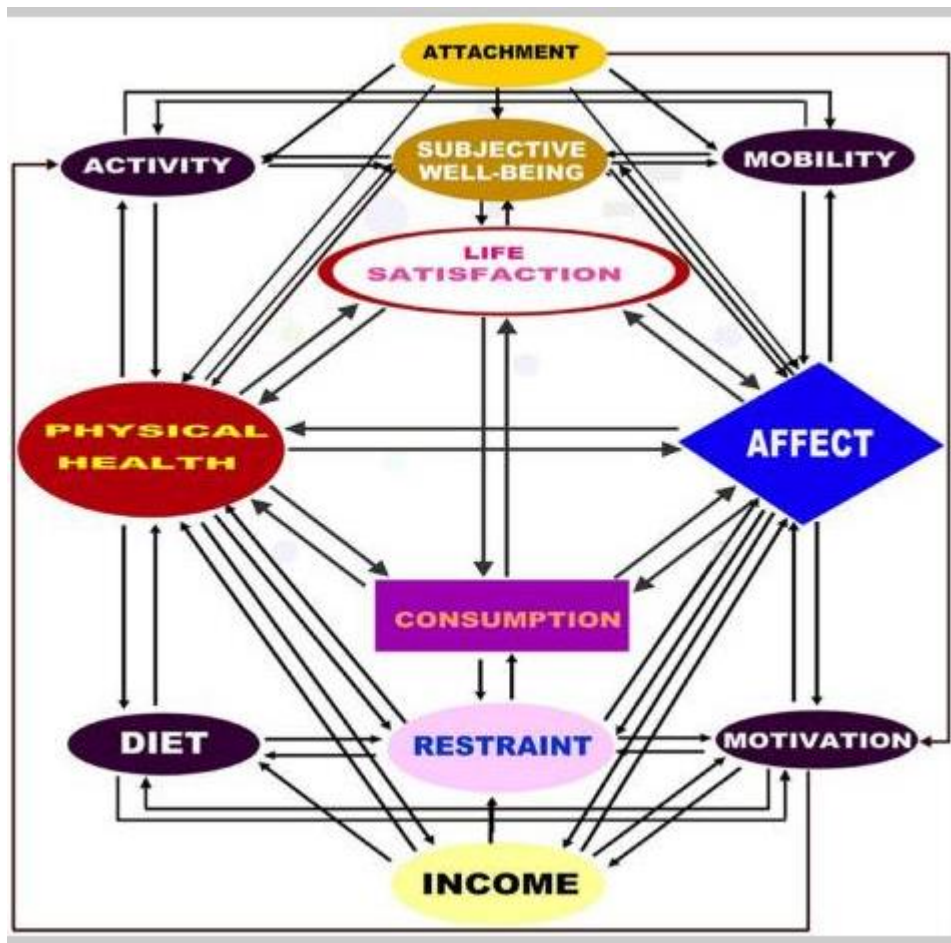


Fig. 3 (Marks, 2015)

Legislation and policies

A key legislation is the “Restricting promotions of products high in fat, sugar, or salt (HFSS) by location and by volume price: implementation guidance 2020” (GOV.UK, 2022b). The restriction by location will come into effect on 1 October 2022 while restrictions by volume will become active on 1 October 2023. (GOV.UK, 2022). The image below shows a list of **14** government **policies and legislation** since 1991 that have been aimed wholly or partly at tackling the condition of obesity in the UK (Theis and White, 2021).

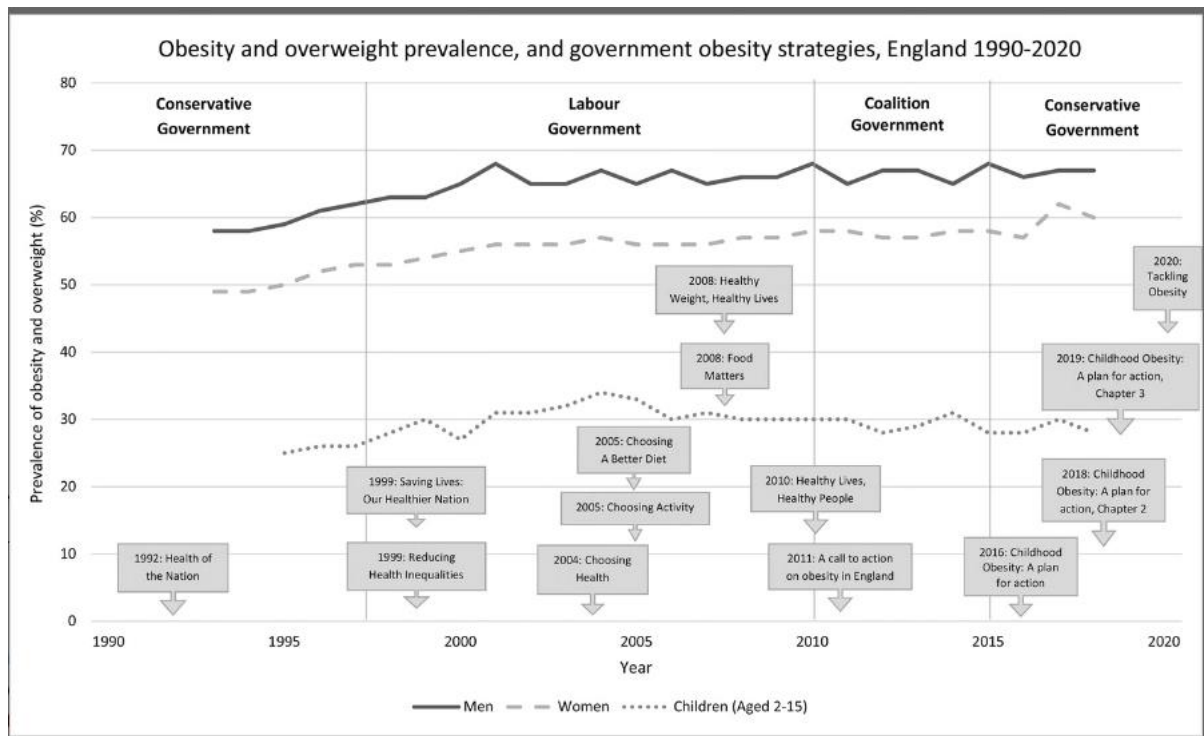


Fig. 4 (Theis and White, 2021)

Examples of other strategies include the Get Hackney Healthy strategy which promotes a healthy lifestyle for children and families in Hackney, “Health exercise, and nutrition for the really young” (HENRY) (Hackney Council, 2022b).

Recommendation

While digital technology can empower female victims of domestic violence by giving them access to information and education young boys and men will also benefit from it to help fight against violence against women and girls. Regarding obesity, selecting healthier foods such as whole grains, vegetables and fruits, and reducing the intake of harmful foods like sweets, sugary drinks, and eating processed meat will give positive results. Other actions including taking part in more physical activity, reduced screen time, and reduced sit time will have a positive result by causing behaviour change. Furthermore, young people should be well educated about gender, power and consent.

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