



# Healthy Living in Barking and Dagenham

The resident perspective

August 2022

**healthwatch**  
Barking and  
Dagenham

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## Summary of Findings

- The survey drew a total of 126 responses from residents across the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. We also received an additional 40 pieces of information from individuals. This was a reasonable outcome although not as strong as some of our previous research. The offer of a free prize draw with the chance of winning £25 worth of vouchers for anyone who completed the survey may have helped with this.
- More than 50% of respondents agreed that it makes a difference if healthcare professionals understand issues relating to their race/culture when providing support relating to healthy living and weight management.
- A quarter of all respondents do not know their BMI but consider themselves to be overweight.
- Two-thirds of respondents told us that they had successfully lost weight in the last 3 years
- Overall, respondents are keen to make positive changes, and know what they would like to do. However, **busy schedules, high levels of stress and low income** appear to be the main drivers that are preventing people from living healthier lifestyles.
- Employers need to be more aware of their employees' difficulties regarding staying healthy, and more flexible with regards to their needs in this respect.
- Majority of the respondents had not heard of or engaged with the healthy living services listed in the survey.

## Background to the report

Obesity is on the rise in the UK. Since 1946, every generation has been heavier than the previous one. The more of their lives people spend overweight or obese, the greater their risk of developing chronic health conditions such as coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and arthritis. The obesity 'epidemic' is projected to cost the UK's National Health Service £22.9 billion per year by 2050.<sup>1</sup> We are also facing rising mental health challenges, with an estimated one in five adults saying they experienced some form of depression during the coronavirus pandemic, and cases of adult depression are making up a larger percentage of overall diagnoses by GPs than pre-pandemic. As a percentage of all diagnoses, depression in adults rose by 1.3 percentage points to 15.6% compared to the corresponding 2019 period.<sup>2</sup>

At the start of 2022 Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham undertook a research project to understand the needs of local people when it comes to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. This continued for a few months to ensure we could speak to as many people as possible.

We are aware that so much of our lives have been disrupted by the COVID pandemic these past two years and that it has changed the way we think, the way we feel, and what we are able to do.

It is also clear that the pandemic has had a major impact the food that we eat, the exercise that we get, and the state of our mental health.

We decided to find out more about how these changes have affected people that live and work in the borough. We conducted a survey, asking people about ways of staying healthy that have worked for them, the services that they feel need to improve or are missing full stop, and any other feedback they may have had on services related to healthy living across the borough.

The following report is a result of our findings, and recommendations moving forward.

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<sup>1</sup> Bradshaw, R. (2017), 'The Rise of the Obesity Epidemic'. Accessed: 13/5/22. <<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/research-projects/2022/jan/rise-obesity-epidemic>>

<sup>2</sup> Vizard, T and Joloza, T. (2021). 'Are we facing a mental health pandemic?' Accessed: 13/5/22. <<https://blog.ons.gov.uk/2021/05/05/are-we-facing-a-mental-health-pandemic/>>

## Methodology

The research was conducted via a survey, for which we used SurveyMonkey. We also had face to face discussions with residents where possible. The team used a targeted social media campaign and face-to-face engagement at Dagenham Library and active age clubs to gather responses. We asked participants questions to ascertain their own awareness of their general level of health, what they are doing to stay healthy, whether they feel there is anything holding them back from living healthily, which health services in the borough they had heard of, and their experiences if they had used them. We also gathered general data on the overall demographics of the survey participants, such as gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, faith background, and disability level. We were particularly interested in gathering responses from carers. The survey was anonymous, and we did not gather any personal data. Participants were encouraged to share as much as they felt able to.

# Demographics

Age	
15-17	1
18-24	15
25-29	13
30-34	38
45-59	30
60-64	11
>65	18
Prefer not to say	1

Gender	
Male	35
Female	81
No gender information given	3

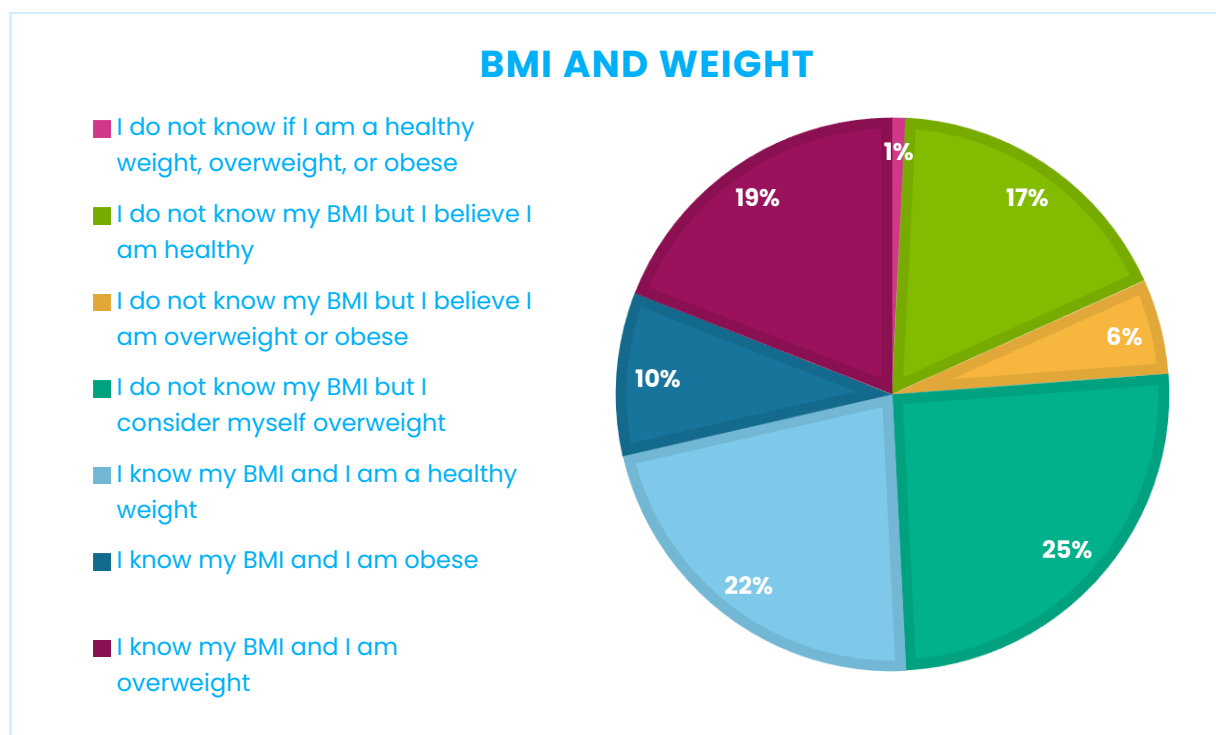
Sexuality	
Heterosexual/Straight	106
Gay man	6
Gay woman/Lesbian	4
Bi-sexual	1
Prefer not to say	5

Religion	
Christian	55
Jewish	3
Hindu	8
Muslim	30
Sikh	3
No religion	31
Prefer not to say	4

Ethnicity	
White British	61
Irish White	1
Any Other White	4
Asian/Asian British - Pakistani	30
Asian/Asian British - Chinese	1
Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi	2
Asian/Asian British - Indian	8
Black/Black British - African	11
Black/Black British - Caribbean	7
Any Other Black	1
Mixed - White/Black African	1
Gypsy/ Irish Traveller	1
Prefer not to say	4
Other	5 (South African, Kosovan, Mixed Black/White British, Mediterranean)

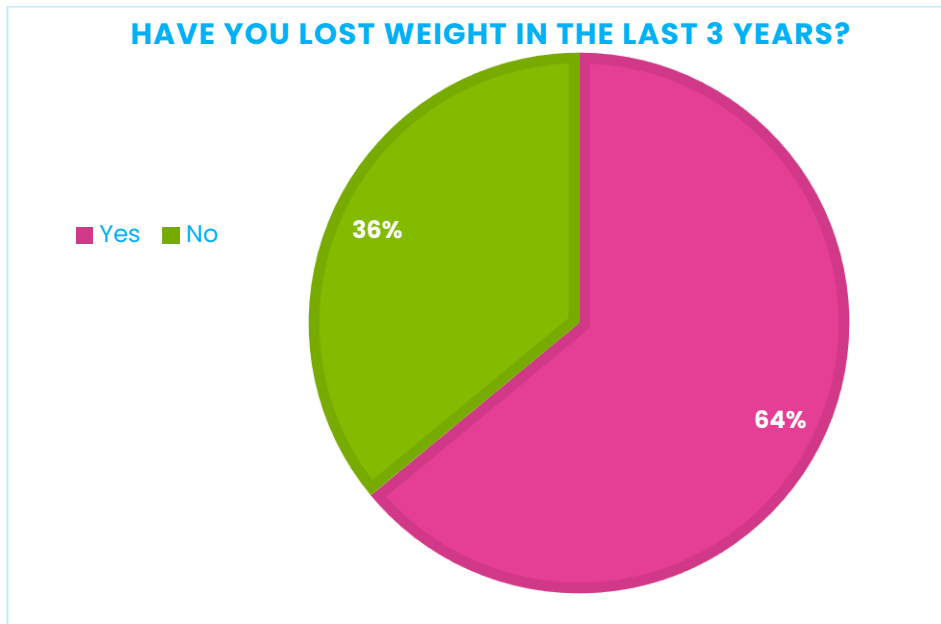
- From this information we can deduce that most of our respondents were White British, heterosexual, and Christian, within the age range 30-59.
- Eighty of the survey respondents have successfully lost weight within the last 3 years, compared to 45 who have not.
- 28 of the survey respondents were also carers.

## Survey responses and analysis



The above pie chart shows that over a quarter of respondents (32%) do not know their BMI but consider themselves to be overweight. Encouragingly, only 1% of respondents had no awareness at all of their level of health in relation to weight or BMI. Most respondents showed an awareness of their health in relation to weight and BMI, although much of this appears to be based on personal perception, with 49% of respondents selecting statements including the words 'believe' or 'consider' next to 51% who selected statements including the words 'I am.' This highlights the need to educate individuals how to check their BMI and the importance of knowing their BMI, not having a true reflection of their weight could influence people's decision as to what actions they need to take to be of a healthy weight.





From the individuals who shared their views with the team, 64% said they have successfully lost weight in the last three years.

According to the responses below, the things that worked for those who have lost weight in the last three years appeared to be: routine, guidance from professionals/a formal support group (such as Weight Watchers), realistic goals, and a combination of healthy eating habits with regular exercise. For all the survey responses please see Appendix A.

### What worked for you/did not work for you? Top responses

*"I have lost weight for the following reasons: I am back in employment, having not worked for nearly 2 years, I walk to work and back 4 miles round trip, I eat less snack food"*

*"Self-discipline was the biggest thing that worked for me. Poor mental health did not work"*

*"Sensible eating and lots of exercise"*

*"I did lots of jogging and intermittent fasting"*

*"Just cutting back on snacks"*

*"Working out in advance what to eat. Avoiding stress was a problem"*

*"Intermittent Fasting worked, counting calories was not effective"*

*"Dieting and having a dietician helping me"*

*"Diet shakes"*

*"Planning what to eat and when worked for me"*

*"Calorie counting, exercise (at home) both worked."*

*"I used the treadmill and watched what I ate"*

*"Exercise, walking and eating healthy snacks."*

*"Increasing veg from 50% to about 70% of my plate; swapping lean chicken for cheese in my lunch salad; drinking more water/sugar free squash; eating a larger lunch and a slightly smaller dinner stopped evening snacking"*

*"Originally meal replacement (750 calls per day) to get the weight off and then to maintain I do a 3/4 fast, 3 days @ 600 calories and 4 days at 1000calories"*

*"Weight watchers"*

*"Portion control"*

*"Having access to a gym"*

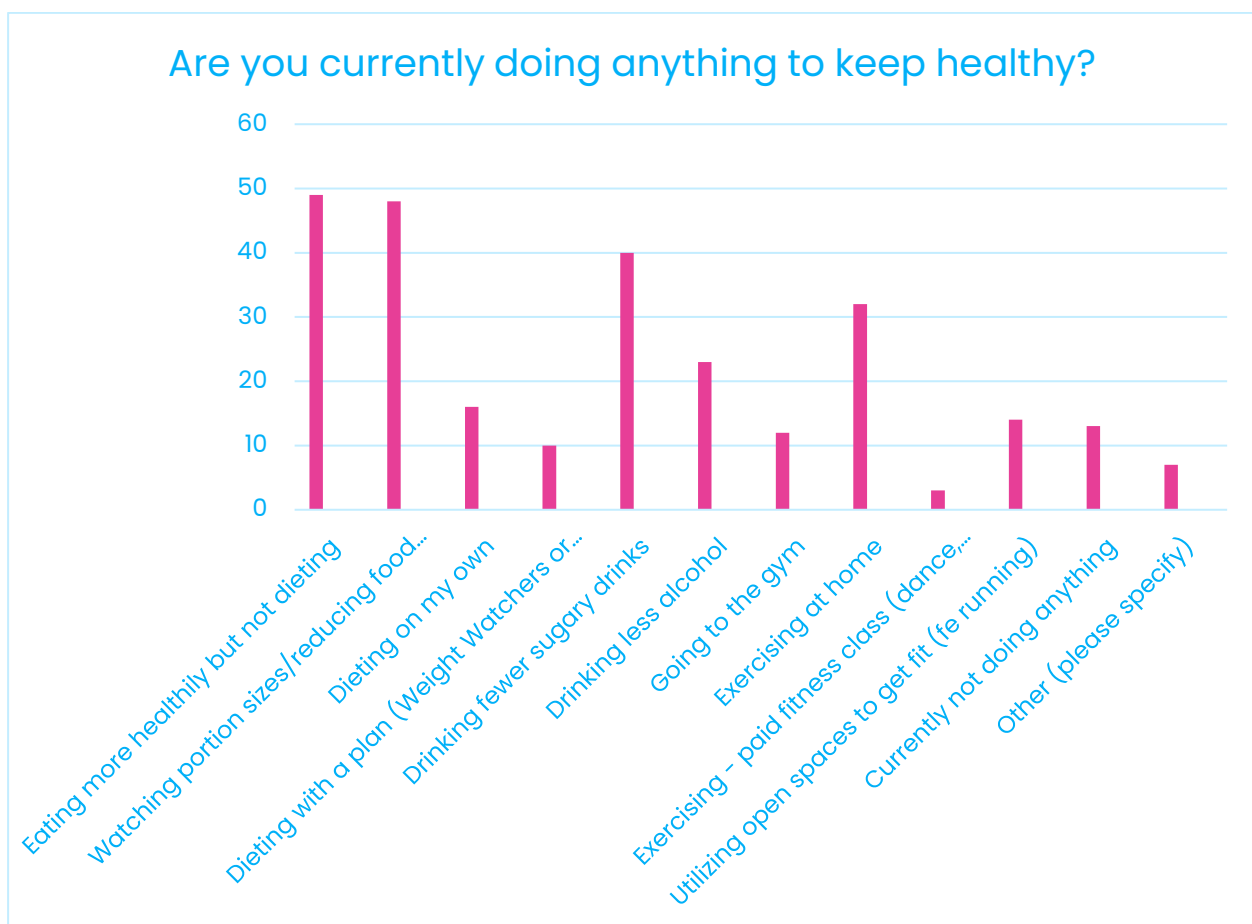
*"Tablets I received from Dr"*

*"Slimming club"*

*"Following a GP referral Healthy Eating Plan through Weight Watchers Slimming World and Calorie Deficit"*

*"Following a GP referral indicated healthy eating plan through weight watchers"*

*"Having a routine, cutting out most, but not all things like sweets and crisps"*



*Other category includes the below.*

*"Drinking lots of water"*

*"My job is physical work I'm on my feet all day and walk over 10,000 steps so I class that as my exercise"*

*"Following CKD diet mostly"*

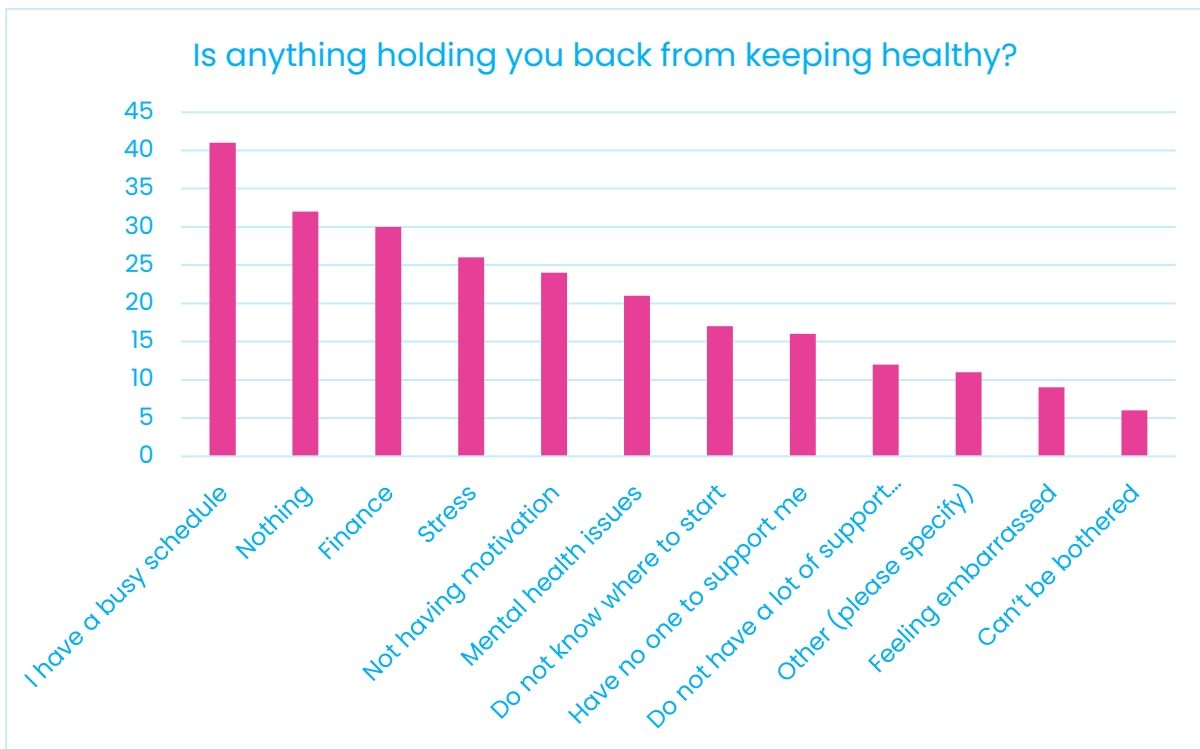
*"Walking"*

*"I take part on Tai Chi lessons once a week"*

*"I practice and teach Tai Chi"*

*“Watching Instagram posts that give tips about keeping healthy”*

Most responses to this question appear to revolve around food intake, food quality and dieting. Very few respondents are currently attending paid-for exercise classes, which may be due to financial strain or anxiety about returning to group classes following successive lockdowns (especially given the number of respondents who have said they are exercising at home). Combined with the data from the previous question, where more than a quarter of respondents said they considered themselves to be overweight, it would appear there is a high level of understanding that a combination of healthy eating and exercise contributes towards positive health outcomes. However, as we will go on to discuss, there needs to be more support around helping people to access exercise opportunities, incentivisation to eat healthily and clear guidance on *how* to combine healthy eating with exercise to achieve the desired results.



The most cited reason for not managing to maintain the level of health respondents would like to be ‘I have a busy schedule.’ This is unsurprising, as anecdotally, the vast majority of people will empathise with the time and energy pressures of working, running a household and looking after family. Healthy habits slip further and further down the priorities list as people are busier and more stressed, which is evidenced by the open-ended responses given below (for all the responses detailed in the survey, please see Appendix B).

Please tell us more about the above points, what do you feel needs to happen in order to support you? What would make a difference to you? *Top responses*

*'I feel that more needs to be done workplaces could do a lot more in terms of healthy eating. The healthy eating team within public health should send out healthy workstyle's notices to all employers in the borough to share with their employees. Should be done for mental health etc as well. I work and have never seen any encouragement. Also, council and NHS staff get more benefits and access to reduced costs of items, but other sectors do not.'*

*'A guide to starting the healthy options. Step by step tips'*

*'Rewards from the government'*

*'Help with childcare and a routine'*

*'More help for disordered eating'*

*'Guidance on how I should utilise my time in a way that I am able to relax, study and exercise sufficiently'*

*'Nothing - I have already taken steps to lose three stone in weight and am now focussing on maintaining a healthy BMI/Weight. Thinking about the past it would be helpful I think if annual health checks, via GPs were available to all, a BMI, weight, blood pressure and blood test would enable the individual to get the right advice hopefully before too much damage is done.'*

*'Good food costs more money being a single mum of four makes it hard to feed myself better'*

*'Maybe having free access to swimming pools or gyms'*

*'Larger green spaces in Barking Riverside - for example making the river walk more of a path'*

*'Advertise availability more widely. Link information to wider Borough advertising. Get it into GP surgeries'*

*'Local gym/swimming focuses on healthy people or families, children. Do not seem supported for older people with complex health'*

*"Workplaces should do more"*

## **Do you feel culture or race influences healthy living?**

When asked if they feel there are certain aspects of their culture or race that influence them keeping fit, a larger proportion of respondents from Global Majority backgrounds said there were, compared with those from White backgrounds (detailed below), who were less likely to reference their race or culture, although familial practices did play a part in some of these responses. For full survey responses please see Appendix D.

**Do you feel there are certain aspects of your culture/race that influences you keeping fit? If so, please tell us about them. Top responses.**

*"Yes! Asian families expect a lot from each other, cooking for big families so may not always have time to cook a separate meal for oneself" (Asian/ Asian British – Bangladeshi)*

*"Yes, I dress modestly so will only use a female only gym which is staffed by females only" (Asian/ Asian British – Bangladeshi)*

*"Eating is seen as showing respect to those who have invited you around to their home" (Asian/ Asian British – Bangladeshi)*

*"A sweet dish is always a must" (Asian/ Asian British – Pakistani)*

*"The traditional dishes in my culture" (Black/ Black British – African)*

*"Yes, we eat a lot of starchy food" (Black/Black British – African)*

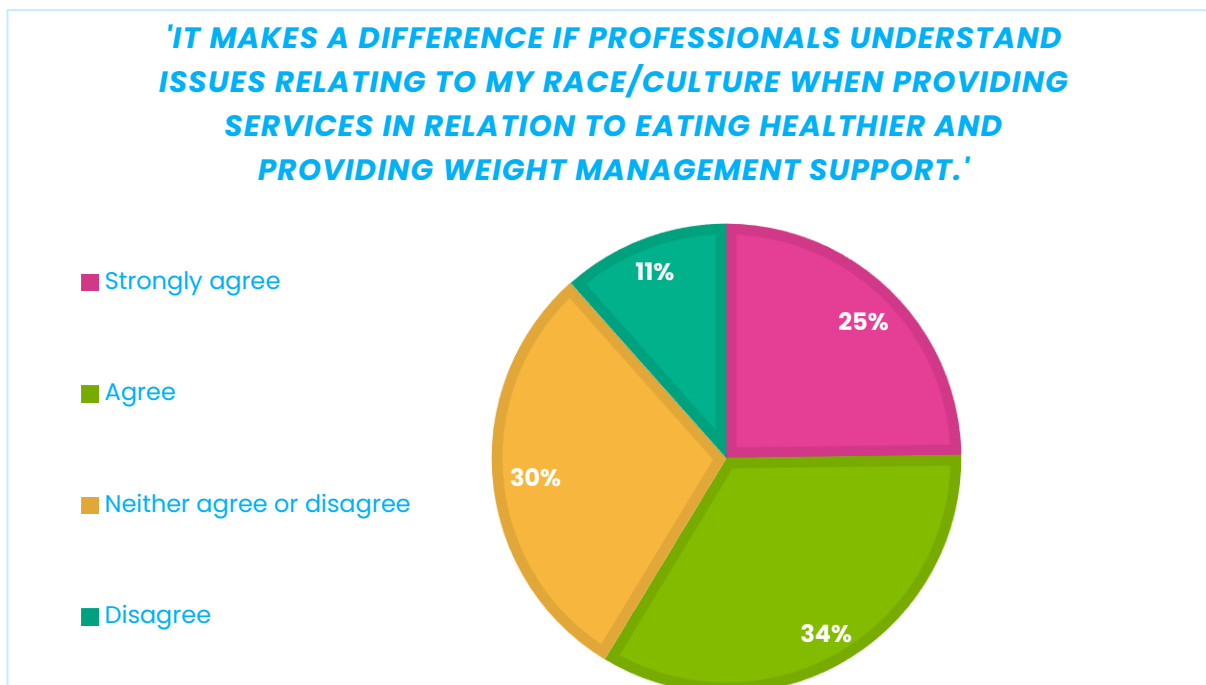
*"I think the fact that African people who live in cold country and still eating the food they used to eat in a warm country might be an issue" (Black/ Black British – African)*

*"Having a bit of a healthy weight is seen as a positive" (Black/ Black British – African)*

*"No none I just love fatty foods" (White British)*

*"I hide my eating" (White British)*

*"I was brought up on a high cholesterol diet" (White Irish)*



59% of respondents believe that it makes a difference if professionals understand issues relating to their race and culture when providing services in relation to healthy eating and weight management support. This also came across very strongly in the open-ended responses, which are detailed below. Those who are carers have all said

that they feel professionals need to be more understanding of the issues they face. For all of the survey responses, please see Appendix C.

### **What kinds of issues do you feel health professionals and those who are supporting you to keep fit and healthy need to be aware of? What would make a difference to you? Top responses**

*"That I have no one to support me"*

*"To be more compassionate"*

*"Family background, mental health issues"*

*"That it is simply not possible for some people to follow the "healthy" diet recommended by the practitioner, as they do not have the means to finance it.*

*Information to control cravings you may have"*

*"How pregnant women should exercise safely"*

*"That society in general tends to be overworked, with most people being unable to survive unless they work 5+ days per week, leaving them with no time or motivation to exercise and keep up with healthy habits"*

*"My cultural food habits"*

*"I do not have any specific cultural differences that a health professional would need to know. What would make a difference is if the professional was up front and asked if there was anything they should be aware of regarding your race/ culture that should be considered"*

*"Not to have an overweight professional telling me I am overweight"*

*"They need to be more aware of the benefits that practicing Tai Chi and yoga can do and help people"*

*"That everyone's body is different & so should also be specific to body types"*

*" Address mental struggle and other such factors that affect health and diet.*

*Someone who understands age"*

*"Prescribing fitness classes, rather than drugs and medication. Social exercise sessions"*

*"Cost of healthy foods, initiatives to get them cheaper"*

*"Motivating me, giving me tips that could work for me"*

*"A GP that you can see and one that understands the menopause and the need to work"*

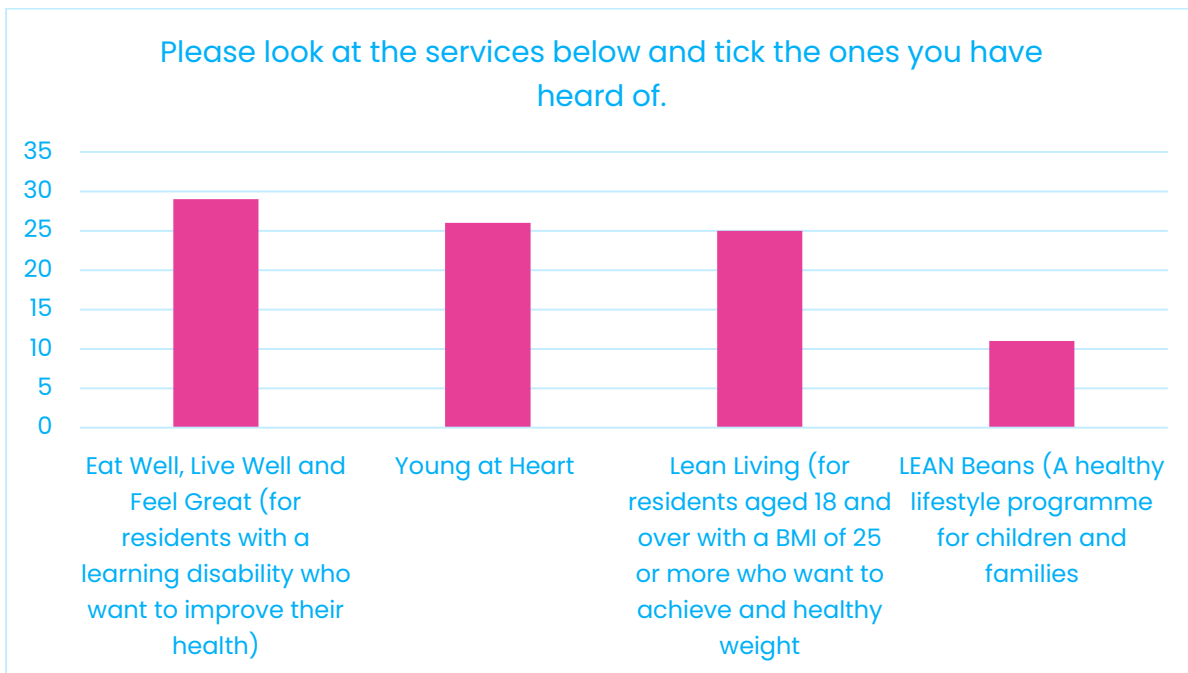
*"After surgery there needs to be more advice and help available to give you more confidence to do more things and not stay indoors"*

*"I do not receive any support, but I do feel that just being aware of different cultures and what their beliefs are could really help. Also, there is more emphasis on those who are overweight than those who are underweight. My sister is underweight and there is not a lot of support or information about how to put on a healthy weight"*

*"I am a carer and I do not have a lot of time"*

*"Carers have limited time"*

*"I need support to look after my mum to be able to go out, maybe a free online session to help, and make plans to keep healthy"*



At least 35 people did not respond to this question, which tells us that around a quarter of respondents at the very minimum had not heard of any of these services. However, the question clearly stated, “*please tick the services you have heard of*” and most people did not tick any service which indicates they have not heard of any of the services. We have no way of knowing how many people selected multiple answers, so this figure could be a lot higher. We also do not know how many of them engaged with these services, although the numbers who gave feedback on them were very low.

Please note the Eat Well, Live Well and Feel Well service is for residents with a learning disability who want to improve their health. Individuals who responded to the survey may have indicated they have not heard of the service as this is a specific service.

Interestingly these findings show that although these services are available more work needs to be undertaken to raise the profile. One way could be for social prescribers to be sharing this information more widely and the healthy lifestyles team could plan and lead on an event that focuses on healthy living.

Of those who have engaged with these services, most of the individuals were satisfied (17), with eight reporting that they were Partly Satisfied and two reporting that they were dissatisfied.

We investigated the feedback from our discussions and survey responses to gain a better understanding of what would improve the experience of those of have accessed the service and what worked.

Women from South Asian backgrounds highlighted the importance of professionals understanding the service users background for example although women are the main individuals who cook and they make some of the decisions about what is made, it does not necessarily mean this is based on what they see as individual feel healthy as the preference of what to cook is also influenced by a number of other factors such as, big family's, what their husband prefers meat or veg, what extended family may like to eat.

### Quotes from individuals

*"I love cooking, but a lot of what I cook is made from what my family around me like to eat" (Asian- Asian British Indian)*

*"There doesn't seem to any in depth knowledge to how my background impacts my health, eating together is seen as a very positive aspect to our culture, my family, everyone from my dad's side and mums side gets together at Eid, and lots of traditional food is made, the healthy living service was excellent, but it doesn't really look at things in a wholesome way, just having that understanding from professionals would make a very big difference, I know they can't do anything about the situation, but just knowing they know it can be very hard would make a difference". (Asian- Asian British Pakistani)*

*"Be realistic, change will take time, even a small change is a big change, especially when you come from another country, I adapted to the way of life here very quickly, but I find it hard to change the way I cook my food. The lady I spoke to did not really understand what I was trying to explain to her, but if I could explain maybe she could have helped me" (Asian- Asian British Bengali)*

(This indicates other underlying issues, Healthwatch are not in a place to comment if other women feel the same way, but working in a holistic way has been mentioned by others, therefore the healthy lifestyles team need to consider, how they improve the service to be more holistic, this can be simple things like signposting, being proactive and mentioning or asking if they are any cultural barriers etc)

*"Have not used the service, if I was to, then I would hope that anyone working with me to lose weight or stay healthy would see that sometimes it's hard to change the mentality of the older generation, and not eating food that is offered, even a little is seen quite defensive, this is changing but we have a very long to go, my children are very open and will tell me and their dad and grandparents, but I am from a different generation. Things are slowly changing" (Asian- Asian British Pakistani)*

*"I like my traditional Nigerian food, if someone tells me it's not good for you, tell me how to make it better, but taste as good" (Black-Black British African)*



*"We tend to eat less fruits and veg, red meat is eaten a lot in our house, and I know we need to eat less of it as a family, but how can I make food spicier and tastier, but still make it taste like food I am used to, we have been eating this type of food for many years, from my parents to there, it goes back and back" (Black-Black British African)*

*"Men in our culture, well some men like their women big, so I could lose weight, but it is not as easy as that, what about how that will make me feel? The service was very good, and I did lose weight, but I felt not myself from inside and now I have gone back to eating the way I use to." (Black-Black British Caribbean)*

*"Every service needs to remember that we all eat different foods and making food is different for everyone, when your pregnant, your encouraged to eat everything because it will keep the baby healthy, and that is a pressure." (Black-Black British African)*

Feedback received from respondents shows that eating together brings a sense of belonging for certain communities particularly South Asian families, eating, and feeding people is not seen as a chore but more of a happy occasion. However, feedback from some individuals shows that this impacts how they make changes to live a healthy lifestyle and their experience would be improved by the following:

- A better understanding that one individual is trying hard to make changes, but surrounding environment makes it a challenge.
- Self-confidence and motivation do not come easily, and professionals need to always remember and show that you can slowly work towards motivation.
- Professionals also need to ensure that where an individual is struggling with mental health or other health concerns, the service they provide will only make a difference if the service user is receiving a package to support with other areas that they need support with.
- Professionals Training staff to ensure they are aware of more than just cultural foods and religious beliefs. More awareness of how other factors can impact an individual trying to live a healthy life or trying to change their lifestyle.

Those who had heard of the services but had not yet engaged with them reported either that the service did not appeal to them, or that they had not been sure how to. **We asked people what they felt could be done to help with promotion of the services. Some of the main themes highlighted are listed below:**

- Advertisement of services more widely – does not need to cost a lot, focus on places where people go.
- More for pregnant women- in terms of exercise

## Quotes from respondents

*"Not sure what the service offers, would love to lose weight, but I can check what is available on the internet, I would love to go to a class where women of similar cultures got together to give each other ideas, the internet is really good, but I prefer to meet and chat"*

*"It does not appeal to me because I don't think I need it"*

*"Don't need these services"*

*"I can't speak English very good and that makes me less confident in going anywhere"*

## Recommendations

Who the recommendation applies to	Recommendation
<p>Public health teams in councils and NHS North East London to provide information about keeping healthy to employers in the borough to share with their employees.</p>	<p>Obesity working group to explore what can be in a resourceful way to support those working in the borough who would like to improve their lifestyles.</p> <p>Public health teams in councils and NHS North East London to provide information about keeping healthy to employers in the borough to share with their employees.</p>
<p>Community Solutions: Healthy living team</p>	<p>An updated summary of all services available to be shared with all organisations in the boroughs.</p> <p>Healthwatch will also share this on their website, promote through social media and face to face engagement.</p>
<p>Community Solutions: Healthy living team</p>	<p>Refresh and provide training and information for professionals on the racial and cultural challenges that might be faced by their service users.</p> <p>Relook at how the service can meet the needs of those from different cultures.</p> <p>Healthwatch are happy to come and present findings to the team about the kind of feedback we have heard and what would be helpful to service users.</p> <p>Devise a communications and engagement plan about how the team will raise awareness using already available resources about the services that are on offer to residents. And then implement the plan.</p>
<p>Campaign on Health Living and a face-to-face event- lead by Healthy</p>	<p>Public health should support this event The event should enable individuals to</p>

<p>Lifestyles team with support and input from other partners.</p>	<p>come and find out more about options and services available. Taster sessions of exercise, healthy eating services, healthy living services can be promoted. VCS organisations should be involved and so should NHS North East London.</p> <p>The obesity working group and partners should explore this as a joint venture as all partners offer different services and support community solutions in delivering this event.</p>
<p>Community Solutions</p>	<p>To explore what can be made available to pregnant women specifically exercises to keep healthy and look at offering these to women in the borough.</p>

## Appendix A: What worked for you/did not work for you?

*What does not work, is being busy and trying to find time to slot exercise in. Maybe more 20 minutes quick videos for people to use at home*

*My friends motivated me, we started off by saying let us focus on keeping fit and being healthy rather than we are overweight- we want to be able to round the block without being out of breath. Setting a small goal and celebrating the goal and then sitting another goal a more challenging one, start small and get big!*

*Cutting out bread and eating more healthy but worried that this will not be possible with all the price increases*

*Going walking with my daughter*

*Being part of the walking group and the social part of that - I am still eating what I want to*

*Being part of the walking group and the social part of that. Getting motivated to do it regular was difficult*

*Good exercise regime*

*Online App*

*People need to begin with something that is not hard, people seem to think that aiming to run a marathon within a week will happen, all health and care professionals and anyone involved with people who are trying to lose weight need to bring people back to basics and encourage small steps.*

*When I have time and decide to focus, I lose weight easily.*

*Did WW for a few months, used Fitbit, started walking*

*Taking into consideration is my life, my health.*

*Being more active*

*Keeping my mind balanced*

*Culture and confidence people look at you like your just fat and do not try.*

## Appendix B: What do you feel needs to happen in order to support you? What would make a difference to you?

*Stress is playing a major part in holding me back from a lot of my goals. There never seems to be enough time in the day, but there is plenty of worries and concerns.*

*I need to take more off-days, I usually take overtime almost every day.*

*A timetable that I stick to, more motivation*

*Living in a cramped place and we need to move. Saving money to move to a bigger house. Have not been able to get financial help.*

*More time for exercise and more opportunities*

*if I had more me time*

*I would be interested in an online forum.*

*I need to make the effort to set aside time to plan healthy meals.*

*More information about fitness*

*My work schedule can be chaotic so finding time in between would be useful to go gym and signing up*

*to a gym closer to home*

*MORE MONEY*

*Getting a higher hourly wage, so I could work less hours and have more free time to exercise.*

*Motivation from my family and friends maybe*

*I need to have a less hectic schedule and need someone to look after the kids while I exercise and unwind*

*There is not an answer to this problem, it is ongoing*

*Better work meals no snacking*

*Support with family*

*Less stressful problems in my life*

*Limited time to exercise due to classes and work. Limited time to cook as well so easier to just have food delivered. More shops around the area that sell fresh vegetables and can deliver healthier but affordable meals.*

*A better night sleep so I feel more energised and motivated to do exercise.*

*I am encouraging myself to keep healthy.*

*Not sure. Comfort eating!*

*I feel quite a lot of stress, so I tend to comfort eat. There is no easy solution in terms of eating something healthy when I want a sweet treat.*

*Living healthy is a good way of structuring your life to be fit and stay safe. I do not need support because all that is necessary to fit and healthy is available within my reach.*

*Nothing - I have already taken steps to lose three stone in weight and am now focussing on maintaining a healthy BMI/Weight. Thinking about the past it would be helpful I think if annual health checks, via GPs were available to all, a BMI, weight, blood pressure and blood test would enable the individual to get the right advice hopefully before too much damage is done.*

*I need to plan my time wisely.*

*Support system to motivate me*

*Local health schemes and activities for my age group*

*Give me more advice and motivation*

*Need to eat more healthy*

*I need to be able to help myself*

*Not having to work so do not have to tired*

*I am a vivid walker and love walking partly everywhere. I have a strong family tie with my children and grandchildren.*

*With the high rise in petrol prices, can get stressful with obviously driving to various service users & vulnerable shops & no pay rise in many years*

*I have thyroid problems and since then I have struggled with my weight, and I also cannot afford to go to the gym*

*I need to lose some weight by myself as its not doing my joints any good due to having rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis*

*I just do not seem to have enough hours in the day to take care of myself*

*Cheaper leisure facilities and better health*

*Due to the high level of service we provide to the community package it leaves little time for our mental wellbeing also with pricing going up i.e., food, petrol, rent/council tax, and our pay stay the same means less holiday and not being able to pay for the gym if we had time in our busy work schedule*

*I just need motivation to do it*

*I am doing slimming world for my weight and am happy with how it is going I do not need any help*

*Grief. Stress at work running a small team*

*Prices of food have gone up and must work more hours*

*Certain times of the day for pension age people to use gym, as very embarrassing to use with younger people*

*Waiting for GP referral - to start routine exercises once hip bone injury has healed*

*I need to take initiative, but some of my medicines make it more difficult to lose weight. I have arthritis so exercise - other than walking is difficult*

*A group more sensitive to my needs*

*Having someone and more places to go in the area to help me to build my courage up to do this.*

*Something in this area being opened like a leisure centre*

*Time*

*Having more time for myself*

*I am self-sufficient, but I do feel that I need to speak to my GP about health and weight, but that is already a barrier!*

*My wife died a couple of months back it has been difficult to cope with. I accept that counselling might help me.*

*Having a good social circle of friends*

*I am on my own, so I eat for comfort not much going on in my life.*

*I am obese... my GP has been good... in my culture being big is healthy... it is when I got to being too big that it became an issue. My husband is also big, he still wants tasty food sometimes unhealthy. This does not help. If someone from my family would have encouraged me to reduce my weight earlier, then this would not be the case now.*

*My medication makes me put weight on. There is not anywhere I know of where there is direct support just for those who are much heavier than others... This would make me feel more comfortable as other people are in the same situation as me.*

*There may be places, but I have not been given with any information for them.*

*Support from my doctors would be great. More affordable gym prices*

*I feel down quite a lot about my weight. I am unemployed so cannot afford classes and gym. There is no support I have and feel alone.*

*I am on medication, and I tried to lose weight but had no success. I feel too overweight to go to the gym or running feels like everyone is watching hence I have stopped.*

*Less pressured life*

*More time for myself*

Supermarkets should have an aisle of "superfoods" and healthy snacks! Instead, they are filled with high sugar but low-fat content items.

Healthy food prices need to be lowered. Working Monday to Friday with a child, and not much access to childcare means I cannot go to the gym, and I feel burned out.

To have more time to do these things other than continually working to pay the bills

Going with someone else to exercise with - my daughter does this to help me

Finding ways to lose weight

My husband has been encouraging me to get out walking more after hospital surgery

Target age groups- motivation- highlight the value of the social aspects of exercising with groups.

A group more sensitive to my needs.

Waiting for a GP referral - start routine exercises once hip bone injury has healed

I need to take initiative, but some of my medicines make it more difficult to lose weight. I have arthritis so exercise (other than walking) is difficult.

I must survive in terms of a small budget from benefits. People do not understand that my medicine is what is making me put weight on, and it is hard to shift. People assume that people who are overweight cannot be bothered to do anything.

I feel that more needs to be done workplaces could do a lot more in terms of healthy eating.

I have recently lost my job, so I do not have money but before I would go to the gym. Also not having someone to motivate me or come with me for a walk or something really does make me not want to go for walk.

Need to have things to do as a family at a reduced cost

Reduced family healthy eating and exercise

I do not think my weight is much overweight so there is nothing that the doctor will do, prevention needs to start now not once it is a problem.

**Appendix C: What kinds of issues do you feel health professionals and those who are supporting you to keep fit and healthy need to be aware of? What would make a difference to you?**

If the person needs to be encouraged more

Motivation.

They do not understand my problem

I tend to have days where I have no appetite.

LOW INCOME

The kind of food my culture eats.

Ability to exercise due to medical conditions

knowing more about mental health

not body shaming

Mental health could be an important issue, some of which may be undiagnosed.

I do not have much time to exercise

mobility issue and time management

Fat legs



*History and all current concerns*

*BMI, they used for example. What race are they basing that from? Because different race would have had their tolerance body mass index, wouldn't they?*

*mental health is an issue - I suffer from a bit of stress and anxiety, and even though it is mild, it still impacts my eating habits*

*They need to aware of diet.*

*Knowing that health checks could be incorporated into the advice given*

*Different jobs require different fitness levels.*

*Mentally stable factors*

*More activeness from doctors and health officials*

*My race*

*People give up*

*Possibility if I was overweight and short, then professionals would be involved in supporting me, but I am neither*

*No face-to-face appointments*

*My health issues and what I am able to do to keep fit and healthy.*

*Social issues*

*More healthy options*

*Gyms to be cheaper childcare to attend fitness would help*

*For me getting outside*

*Consider the mental health*

*Where I suffer with mental health issues, sometimes it is very difficult to even get out of bed, let alone keep fit - I often relapse*

*Not so many fast foods - not enough healthy living food places*

*I have dark moments when I feel down - get emotional. Having people around me like this group helps me with my thoughts.*

*That medication can impact your weight it is not as simple as changing diet and exercise. I tired that. Is it all about losing weight or me keeping healthy too even if I do not lose weight?*

*Understanding Complex health issues that are stigmatising*

*Cultural cooking, family*

*Health restrictions relating to exercise*

*There needs to be more information to help make choices*

*More information about the health benefits and what the health implications might be given the food that I eat*

*My age dictates the kind of exercise I can do*

*That they know about community clubs that promote healthy living i.e., walking clubs*

*Prescribing fitness classes - social exercise sessions - rather than drugs and medication.*

*To a certain extent yes, it is hard for people from other cultures to relate to each other fully. It is like I am from an Indian background, so what would someone else from a different background know about my food? Professionals need to be given a background on culture and background to understand what and how different cultures cook, and how to make their food tasty without using lots of oil etc... also*

*educating the younger population will help to ensure future generations pick up cooking culturally food in a healthy way*

*My GP does not do much. Cannot even see him so trying to get help is difficult as GP is your first port of call.*

*Health professionals need to be aware that some people have never exercised and its extremely difficult to start when they do not know how to*

*Culture Food Recipes.*

*That I have a busy, stressful life and do not enjoy much time for myself. Gyms are expensive and money is tight*

*Healthy food is sometimes more difficult or longer to put together or more expensive to buy.*

*Doctors rarely give out Slimming World memberships and Fit4Life when people need it.*

***Appendix D: Do you feel there are certain aspects of your culture/race that influences you keeping fit? If so, please tell us about them.***

*I do not think my race or culture has anything to do with myself keeping fit*

*No none I just love fatty foods*

*Yes, having to be skinny*

*Laziness*

*Eating healthy cultural foods*

*Race has nothing to do with this, but generally speaking black people are stronger and healthier than Caucasian people*

*Yes, if you are skinny, you are told you should eat! Being too fat is not seen as good either. You are encouraged to eat more, or sometimes a sweet dish when you go are guests, but the culture is to feed guests, so rather than saying, would you like a sweet dish etc... your encouraged to eat a little bit even if you have said no., I don't think this helps.*

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