

15th March 2017

Weighing in on the Great Weight Debate

How to galvanise the public to take
action on obesity

A BritainThinks and Healthy London Partnership
presentation

britainthinks.com

There are over 8,500 fast food outlets in London



That's one for every 1,000 Londoners, and the sector is growing 10% each year

**London has a worse record on
childhood obesity than most other
peer global cities such as New
York, Paris and Madrid**

The Great Weight Debate

A London conversation
on childhood obesity



STAGE ONE

Conduct research to understand what
policies Londoners support to tackle
childhood obesity



Roundtables with
professionals

Online community with
120 Londoners

Great Weight Debate
• 110 Londoners and 27
Health professionals

**Public starting point is personal
responsibility**

BLAME



STIGMA



“My daughter had to change schools she was getting bullied so much. A PE teacher told her it was her own fault for eating so many burgers.”

Great Weight Debate

DENIAL



31% of parents underestimate where their child's body mass index lies on the obesity scales*

The way the debate is framed acts as a barrier to behaviour change

**Reframing the debate has a
dramatic impact on public
engagement with the issue**

IT'S YOUR FAULT



GUILT

DENIAL

DISASSOCIATION

“People know they are making bad choices. They already feel guilty. If you feel judged you won’t want to engage.”

Great Weight Debate

IT'S THE RESULT OF OUR ENVIRONMENT



ANGER

OUTRAGE

SOLIDARITY

“There really needs to be a change in the approach against childhood obesity. You can’t just be neutral. You have to actually be against it, otherwise you are part of the problem.”

Great Weight Debate

What we learned



**The research provided a spring
board for the campaign**

Research design helped to amplify message



“There should be like a party political broadcast to say this is what is happening in our country and we need to fight this obesity now.”

Great Weight Debate

**Generated
passionate
engagement amongst
participants**

**Galvanised
stakeholders who
spread message
through policy circles**

**Toolkit allows local
boroughs to host
mini Great Weight
Debates**

The Great Weight Debate

A London conversation
on childhood obesity



STAGE TWO

Use the research as a platform to reach as
many Londoners as possible



Great Weight Debate
replicated across London
Boroughs

Survey of 4,000 people
using questions and
language developed
through qualitative

Young people invited to be
health champions for a
day

Online platform where
Londoners can make
pledges to lead healthier
lifestyles and exchange
ideas

Value of the research

- 1. Demonstrated public support for interventionist, 'nudge' policies to tackle obesity**
- 2. Impact amplified through research design**
- 3. Tools provided to enable easy replication**