

## Nine Characteristics of a whole system approach

To take a whole systems approach to obesity prevention, you'll need a plan that combines all nine characteristics of good programme leadership.

Characteristic	Brief Description
#1 System thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obesity is influenced by a complex and adaptive system.</li> <li>It's necessary to explore the topic by bringing together many different, and sometimes conflicting, perspectives with data and insight.</li> <li>Then prioritise preventative actions by identifying parts of the system that are both important and can be influenced by you or your partners.</li> </ul>
#2 Learning culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To impact favourably on the systems that affect obesity rates, it's necessary to set-up a process of reflection, learning and adaption.</li> <li>Be ready to share learning on what is and importantly what is not working.</li> <li>Senior leadership has to creating an enabling culture for this.</li> </ul>
#3 Facilitative and Adaptive Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build and sustain collaborative relationships across the system;</li> <li>Be committed to drive change over a longer period;</li> <li>Empower leadership at all levels;</li> <li>Champion, test and learn from new ways of working across organisational boundaries.</li> <li>Be flexible</li> </ul>
#4 Purposeful engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commit to putting the needs of beneficiaries and communities at the heart of your work and keep a focus on local inequalities.</li> <li>Use a mix of professional and community insight to understand how the system is experienced by those most at risk of obesity.</li> <li>Community engagement should help to identify and prioritise opportunities for intervention; it also drives a programme's iterative improvements.</li> </ul>
#5 Governance and resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that senior leadership is engaged in the approach and that your plans are incorporated into the strategies of your area's institutions and community planning infrastructure.</li> </ul>
#6 Sustainable collaborative working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend your influence by reaching beyond the partners you usually work with.</li> </ul>
#7 Shared commitment and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a shared vision and within your programme partnership. This will sustain your collaboration by providing you the foundation for better connection and alignment of actions.</li> </ul>
#8 Place is important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design a programme that meets the unique needs of your locality</li> </ul>
#9 Creativity and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be ready to apply evidence in a flexible way to best fit local need</li> <li>Support creative and innovative actions and ways of working</li> </ul>