

## PROF BORN IN THE CITY FINDS NUMBERS ARE BELOW ANYWHERE IN UK

BY SIMON YAFFE

A LEEDS-born woman discovered that the Yorkshire city has bucked the global trend — and seen a significant fall in obesity.

Professor Mary Rudolf, who now lives in Rosh Pina, Israel, published her study in the *Paediatric Obesity* journal.

She also found that the largest decrease in obesity occurred among Leeds' poorest and most disadvantaged children.

The 68-year-old, who emigrated to Israel with her husband Michael Krom in 2012, conducted her research on the growth measurements of children in England from 2009 to 2017.

And she discovered that, unlike England as a whole and comparable cities, the numbers of obese children in Leeds fell by 6.4 per cent.

"We used nationally-collected data in our study, so it was very

### Set up a healthier lifestyle

obvious that something different was happening in Leeds," said Prof Rudolf, who is head of the Department of Population Health at Bar-Ilan University's Azrieli Faculty of Medicine.

The decline in obesity coincided with a strategy introduced by Leeds City Council in 2009.

It aimed to tackle the obesity epidemic through focusing on families with pre-school children in its poorest areas.

And, at its heart was HENRY (Health Exercise Nutrition for

# Leeds bucks trend as children's obesity falls



STUDY: Professor Mary Rudolf

the Really Young), an intervention developed in 2007 by Prof Rudolf and colleagues for children under the age of five.

She explained: "We trained professionals on how to work effectively with parents of young children to set up a healthier lifestyle.

"We all develop our health behaviours in early life, so if we are given opportunities to be physically active when we are young, we tend to be the same when we are older.

"Children whose parents eat healthier tend to have healthier behaviours, too.

"Of course, it is harder for those parents living in poverty to enforce healthy living, but the key element is to help them rediscover responsibilities to set limits for their children's behaviour, such as less screen time, less unhealthy food and eating together as a family."

Prof Rudolf presented her findings to the Food and Health Forum at Parliament last month.

The cross-party forum meets regularly and advises Parliament on how the health of the nation can be improved.

Prof Rudolf was raised in London and moved to Leeds in 1991 to become consultant paediatrician at the Leeds General Infirmary.

She moved on to become professor of children's health at the University of Leeds, before she emigrated to Israel.

Prof Rudolf and her husband have two children, Aaron and Becca.

Israel has not been immune to the obesity epidemic, either.

According to the Ministry of Health, one in five children are obese or overweight by the time they start Year Two, rising to one in three by Year Eight.

In an effort to address the problem, the Ministry of Health brought HENRY to Israel in 2014.

A team of four professionals was sent to Oxford to learn the

### Israeli children have become more obese

approach, and subsequently trained nurses, dieticians and social workers who worked directly with families that participated in the programme and, in particular, specialists in early childhood.

HENRY has been translated into Hebrew and Arabic, and has been piloted in a variety of disadvantaged Jewish and Arab towns, such as Safed, Kiryat Yam, Daliyat al-Karmel, Ussefiya, Baqa al-Gharbiyye, Ramle, Yeruham and Dimona.

Known in Israel as 'A Healthy Family is Possible', the programme has been tailored to families with children under the age of three.

And plans are being considered to extend it to the nation's healthcare service providers.

"Over the past 30 to 40 years, Israeli children have become more obese," Prof Rudolf explained.

"It is because Israel became more westernised, which meant more junk food.

"Kids are also coming home from school, sticking something in the microwave and not being allowed outside as readily.

"Because Israel is a high-tech society, too, exposure to phones, television and computer screens is very high."

She said it remains to be seen whether Israeli cities can be as successful as Leeds in tackling the problem of child obesity, but when society invests in early childhood, it gets the best returns for doing so.

Prof Rudolf added: "If we are going to make a difference we must start at a young age, before the onset of obesity.

"It can reduce the impact of poor lifestyle later on."

Advertiser's Announcement

## Paperweight celebrates impact of its volunteers



HELPING HANDS: From left: Paperweight co-founder and chairman Benjamin Conway, Board of Deputies chief executive Gillian Merron, Paperweight co-founder Bayla Perrin, and Paperweight trustees Leonie Lewis and Alan Perrin

PAPERWEIGHT, the Jewish community's citizens advice bureau, celebrated the impact of its 148 volunteer caseworkers at its annual summer reception.

Launched in 2010, Paperweight provides practical support to anyone in crisis in the Jewish community.

Its services are delivered free by its team of volunteer caseworkers,

whose professional knowledge and experience helps to provide guidance on financial, legal and welfare, and benefits issues.

In eight years, it has helped to transform the lives of more than 1,500 clients and their families, who have turned to the charity in a time of crisis, such as a bereavement, separation or divorce.

paperweight.org.uk

0161 220 1800 CALL MAURICE  
020 8931 8000  
www.travelinkuk.com  
north@travelinkuk.com

WORLDWIDE HOLIDAYS | CRUISE EXPERTS | ISRAEL SPECIALISTS

Discover the rich Jewish Heritage of **Portugal** כשר KOSHER

Led by the expert Jewish historian **Charles Landau**  
8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> September 2019  
Lisbon, Belmonte & Porto

- Jewish quarter and guided city tour of Lisbon
- Medieval Luso Hebraico Synagogue of Tomar
- Jewish quarter of Castelo De Vide
- Historic city of Belmonte
- Mini cruise on Douro River

Call or email for full details **LAST FEW PLACES!**

**EILAT SUNSHINE**   
Direct flights from London Luton to the NEW Ramon Airport, Eilat

<b>WINTER</b> 26 Dec - 2 Jan Fantastic value 7 night packages	<b>PESACH</b> 7-16 April Prices now available
--	---

Call for the best prices at all your favourite Eilat hotels

**Annual 'Bridge' Holiday to Eilat**  
Escorted by the Bridge expert, **Harold Schogger**  
3-11 November 2019  
8 nights half board at the popular Dan Panorama Hotel

**ONLY £675PP PLUS FLIGHTS**

Book early for a FREE upgrade to a Superior Lagoon View   
A full Bridge programme including tournament with prizes.  
Non-Bridge players welcome, call for full details.