

# [Press release: Latest NCMP data show obesity in reception children rises again](#)

New [National Child Measurement Programme \(NCMP\) data](#) show the number of obese children in reception year has risen for the second consecutive year – to 9.6% in the 2016 to 2017 school year, up from 9.3% in 2015 to 2016. For year 6 children, it has remained stable at 20%.

The latest data from the NCMP, overseen by Public Health England (PHE), also shows a stubborn gap between the richest and poorest. In the most deprived areas, 12.7% of children in reception year are obese, compared to 5.8% in the least deprived. Obesity in year 6 is 26.3% in the most deprived areas, compared to 11.4% in the least deprived.

Today's report (19 October 2017) underlines the importance of PHE's work to tackle childhood obesity. This includes working with the food industry to reduce sugar and calories in the foods children eat the most.

Dr Alison Tedstone, Chief Nutritionist at PHE, said:

Children deserve a healthy future and these figures are a reminder that addressing childhood obesity requires urgent action.

There is no single solution to reverse what's been decades in the making. We need sustained actions to tackle poor diets and excess calorie intakes. We're working with industry to make food healthier, we've produced guidance for councils on planning healthier towns and we've delivered campaigns encouraging people to choose healthier food and lead healthier lives.

Children who are overweight or obese are more likely to suffer from poor self-esteem, bullying and tooth decay in childhood. They are also more likely to be overweight or obese adults, which can lead to a range of preventable illnesses including heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and some cancers.

With the government's [Childhood Obesity Plan](#) published a year ago, significant steps are already being taken to help children avoid a lifetime of poor health.

In addition to PHE's work to reduce sugar and calories in food, the Soft Drinks Industry Levy has become law and will take effect from April 2018. Leading retailers and manufacturers have announced they are, or already have, lowered the amount of sugar in their products as a result of these programmes.

PHE's Change4Life campaign is also helping millions of families to make

healthier choices through meal swap suggestions and the Be Food Smart app, helping parents to identify the sugar, salt and fat in food. It also supports schools to help them embed healthier habits into everyday school life.

Progress on childhood obesity will be monitored through the yearly NCMP data but, with obesity rates increasing over many years, significant change will take time.

Eustace De Sousa, National Lead for Children, Young People and Families at PHE, said:

A healthy weight in childhood lays the foundations for decades of healthy life as an adult. This data underlines how important it is for families to talk about health and weight as part of everyday life.

Each year, more children leave primary school overweight or obese and our most deprived areas are the worst affected. It's never too soon to make a change and there is lots of support from councils and Change4Life to help.