

CHILD OBESITY AND HEALTHY WEIGHT Fact Sheet

Background

The UK is experiencing an epidemic of obesity affecting both children and adults. The Health Survey for England found that the proportion of children aged 2 to 15 classified as obese increased from 11.7 per cent in 1995 to 16 per cent in 2010.¹

The World Health Organisation (WHO) regards childhood obesity as one of the most serious global public health challenges for the 21st century. Obese children and adolescents are at an increased risk of developing various health problems, and are more likely to become obese adults. The health consequences of childhood obesity include increased blood lipids, glucose intolerance, Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, liver disease, exacerbation of conditions such as asthma, and psychological problems including social isolation and bullying.¹

In 2006 the National Child Measurement Programme was introduced to measure the height and weight of all 5 and 11 year old children year on year.

Risk factors

It is known that children in disadvantaged areas have a greater risk of being overweight or obese, and are therefore at greater risk of related diseases and health problems.²

The Local Picture

Key Facts

Statistics from Public Health England published as part of the Public Health Outcomes Framework¹ indicate that 1 in 6 (18%) of children aged 4 to 5 years old in Sutton are classified as overweight or obese. Compared to other London authorities **Fig. 1** shows that Sutton ranks lower (better) than most, 4th from bottom out of 32 boroughs, with a rate that is significantly lower than both London (22%) and the national average (22.1%). **Fig. 2** shows that the proportion of children in this age group with excess weight increased in the latest year.

Statistics for the older age group of children aged 10 to 11 indicate that 1 in 3 (31.8%) of children in Sutton are classified as overweight or obese. Compared to other London authorities Sutton ranks lower (better) than most, 4th from bottom out of 32 boroughs, with a rate that is lower than London (38.1%) but similar to the national average (34.2%). However, it remains of concern that the proportion of children with excess weight rises with age (from 18% aged 4 to 5, to 31.8% aged 10 to 11). **Fig. 2** shows that as for the younger age group, Sutton's rate increased in the latest year.

¹ Public Health England. Public Health Outcomes Framework. <http://www.phoutcomes.info/>

² Griggs J, Walker R. The costs of child poverty for individuals and society. Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2008.

Fig. 1: Proportion of children with excess weight, aged 4-5 and 10-11 year olds, Sutton compared with London boroughs

Fig. 2: Trend in the proportion of children in Sutton with excess weight, aged 4-5 and 10-11 years

Within the borough there is a wide range in levels of excess weight between electoral wards. For 4-5 year olds, this ranges from 16.5% of children with excess weight in Stonecot and Cheam wards rising to 22% in Wandle Valley. This range in levels of excess weight by ward is shown in **Fig. 3** and in the map at **Fig. 4**.

Fig. 3: Percentage of children in Sutton, Reception, aged 4-5 with excess weight, 2012/13-2014/15

Fig. 4: Map of percentage of children in Sutton, Reception, aged 4-5 with excess weight, 2012/13-2014/15

Fig. 5 indicates a strong relationship between deprivation and excess weight. The gradient of the slope indicates that overall as deprivation increases, so do rates of excess weight in children at ward level.

Fig. 5: Correlation between percentage of children with excess weight, Reception, aged 4-5, and deprivation by ward

For the 10-11 year olds, levels of excess weight in electoral wards ranges from 27% of children in Worcester Park ward rising to 39.4% in St Helier. This range in levels of excess weight by ward is shown in **Fig. 6** and in the map at **Fig. 7**.

Fig. 6: Percentage of children in Sutton, Year 6, aged 10-11 with excess weight, 2012/13-2014/15

Fig. 7: Map of percentage of children in Sutton, Year 6, aged 10-11 with excess weight, 2012/13-2014/15

As for the Reception age group, for children aged 10-11 **Fig. 8** indicates a strong relationship between deprivation and excess weight. The gradient of the slope indicates that levels of excess weight rise with deprivation at ward level.

Fig. 8: Correlation between percentage of children with excess weight, Year 6, aged 10-11, and deprivation by ward

Physical Activity

In 2011, the UK Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) published revised guidelines for physical activity. The guidelines take a life course approach for adults, children and young people including guidelines for early years. The CMOs recommend that children and young people should achieve a total of at least 60 minutes of at least moderate intensity physical activity each day. *Start Active, Stay Active* includes guidelines for the early years, encouraging physical activity from birth and for at least 180 minutes a day for those who are able to walk. It also includes guidelines on reducing sedentary behaviour for all age groups.³

Assets

The environment, including street layout, land use, recreation facilities, parks, public buildings and the transport system can impact on physical activity. People are more active when they can easily access parks, green spaces, workplaces and shops.⁴

Fig. 9 shows that Sutton has significant assets in terms of access to green spaces/parks/playing fields/allotments and areas where people can exercise. Work should continue across the borough to promote our environment and raise awareness of the (cost free) opportunities for children, young people and their families to exercise.

Fig 9: Sutton Parks and Recreation Grounds

Sutton progress

- A healthy weight pilot project for families, children and Young People is in the planning and scoping stage - to be commissioned 2015/16.
- Supported by Commissioners, Sutton and Merton Community services have reached UNICEF Level 2 Baby Friendly accreditation which aims to improve breastfeeding rates which is known to decrease child obesity later on.
- Since March 2014 a 3 year contract with Crystal Palace Football Club Foundation to deliver an Improving Health and Wellbeing of Young People through Sport and Physical Activity programme.
- Public Health is working with Education Leads from the Council, schools and local GPs to roll out the Daily Mile in Sutton. The aim of the Daily Mile is to improve the physical, emotional and social health and wellbeing of our children regardless of age or personal circumstances. Just over half of our Sutton state schools are participating.

³ Department of Health, Physical Activity, Health Improvement and Protection. *Start Active, Stay Active: A report on physical activity from the four home countries' Chief Medical Officers*. July 2011.

⁴ Edwards P and Tsouros A. *Promoting physical activity and active living in urban environments*. WHO Europe 2006.

What works

Guidance on **Obesity** (NICE 2006, Updated 2015) on the prevention of overweight and obesity in adults and children in England and Wales aims to:

- Stem the rising prevalence of obesity and diseases associated with it
- Increase the effectiveness of interventions to prevent overweight and obesity
- Improve the care provided to adults and children at risk of overweight and obesity

Detailed actions are included for:

- The public
- NHS
- Local authorities and partners in the community
- Early years settings
- Schools, workplaces
- Self-help, commercial and community programmes

Guidance on **Managing overweight and obesity among children and young people: lifestyle weight management services** (NICE 2013) recommends:

- Planning lifestyle weight management services for children and young people
- Commissioning lifestyle weight management programmes for children and young people
- Lifestyle weight management programmes: core components
- Developing a tailored plan to meet individual needs
- Encouraging adherence to lifestyle weight management programmes
- Raising awareness of lifestyle weight management programmes: commissioners and programme providers
- Raising awareness of lifestyle weight management programmes: health professionals, other professionals and voluntary organisations
- Formal referrals to lifestyle weight management programmes
- Providing ongoing support: health professionals
- Providing ongoing support: lifestyle weight management programmes
- Lifestyle weight management programme staff: training
- Lifestyle weight management programme staff: knowledge and skills
- Training in how to make referrals to a lifestyle weight management programme
- Supporting lifestyle weight management programme staff and those making programme referrals
- Monitoring and evaluating programmes

Promoting physical activity for children and young people (NICE 2009) recommends:

- National campaign
- Raising awareness of the importance of physical activity
- Developing physical activity plans
- Planning the provision of spaces and facilities
- Local transport plans
- Responding to children and young people
- Leadership and instruction
- Training and continuing professional development
- Multi-component school and community programmes
- Facilities and equipment
- Supporting girls and young women
- Active and sustainable school travel plans
- Helping children to be active
- Helping girls and young women to be active
- Helping families to be active

Key indicators and targets

Relevant indicators from the Public Health Outcomes Framework

<http://www.phoutcomes.info/>

Health Improvement Domain:

- 2.06 Excess weight in 4-5 and 10-11 year olds

Links to further information

- See also Factsheets on **Adult Obesity, Breast Feeding** and **Diabetes**
- Child Health Profile for Sutton published by ChiMat – Child and Maternal Health Observatory. Available from: <http://www.chimat.org.uk/profiles/static>
- NHS Digital. National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP). <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/ncmp>
- Public Health England. NCMP Local Authority Profile. <http://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/national-child-measurement-programme>
- NHS Digital. Statistics on Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet - England, 2016. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistics-on-obesity-physical-activity-and-diet-england-2016>
- National Obesity Strategy. Healthy Lives, Healthy People: A call to action on obesity in England. October 2011. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213720/dh_130487.pdf
- NHS Choices. Obesity. <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/obesity/pages/introduction.aspx>

Priorities for Sutton

Specific actions to reduce the proportion of our children with excess weight are as follows:

- Improve support to schools to develop and implement evidence-based healthy eating policies through the London Healthy Schools programme and Food for Life programme.
- Support the uptake of school meals, both paid for and Free School Meals.
- Continue embedding physical activity and healthy eating in Council activities and commissioned programmes, e.g. encouraging walking and cycling and improving food quality around the school fringe.