

The National Child Measurement Programme: Wiltshire's story

What is the National Child Measurement Programme?

The National Child Measurement programme (NCMP) is a statutory requirement of the new Public Health system, underpinned by the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Each year, our Public Health team commission a Great Western School Nursing Service to weigh and measure every child in Reception (4-5 yrs) and Year 6 (10-11 yrs).

This information is shared with schools, enabling them to benchmark themselves against others and encouraging them to think about the role of physical activity in the curriculum. It is copied to the child's GP so it can inform future medical decisions and, most importantly for us, shapes Public Health strategy, priorities and service commissioning.

Why do we do it? Because it means every state school pupil in Wiltshire is seen and counted. As a result of the NCMP, every family is offered support and advice to protect and improve their child's health and our Public Health Team are equipped with the evidence we need to make strategic, focussed and effective decisions.

Wiltshire's Results

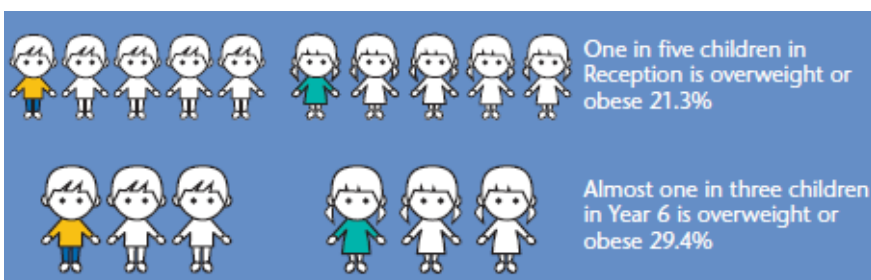
Results from the 2012 school year have confirmed that, once again, obesity in Wiltshire is lower than both the South West and England averages. However, due to the many health issues associated with being overweight, obesity continues to pose a significant challenge to the health and wellbeing of Wiltshire's young people.

2012 school year	Reception year		Year 6	
	Number	%	Number	%
Underweight	20	0.4	33	0.8
Healthy weight	3881	78.3	2966	69.9
Overweight	678	13.7	604	14.2
Obese	375	7.6	643	15.1
Overweight and obese combined	1053	21.3	1247	29.4
Coverage	4954	95.4	4246	93.5

- In Reception Year, 23.6% of boys compared to 18.8% of girls were overweight or obese.
- In Year 6, 29.5% of boys compared to 29.2% of girls were overweight or obese.

- Calne, Amesbury, Melksham, Tidworth and Wilton have the highest percentages of Reception Year children identified as overweight or obese by this year's NCMP.
- Trowbridge, Warminster, Wilton and Mere have the highest percentages of Year 6 children identified as overweight or obese by this year's NCMP

- Some areas within Wiltshire experience notably higher percentages of childhood overweight and obesity than the Wiltshire average. More deprived areas of the county tend to have higher rates of overweight and obesity than the more affluent areas.
- There have been significant improvements in delivery of the NCMP programme. Between the 2006 and 2012 school years the percentage of eligible children weighed and measured has increased from 85% to 94% in Reception Year and from 68% to 94% in Year 6. This means we are measuring more children and can be more confident of the accuracy of our results.



- This is the equivalent of 2,300 children in Wiltshire.

...Complete the picture

The prevalence of obesity in England has trebled since the 1980s. Obesity contributes to the onset of cardiovascular disease, strokes, diabetes, high blood pressure and cancer. Other more immediate risks include early puberty, developing eating disorders, teasing and discrimination by peers, low self-esteem, anxiety and depression. The issue is particularly important locally and nationally because it affects a large proportion of the population.

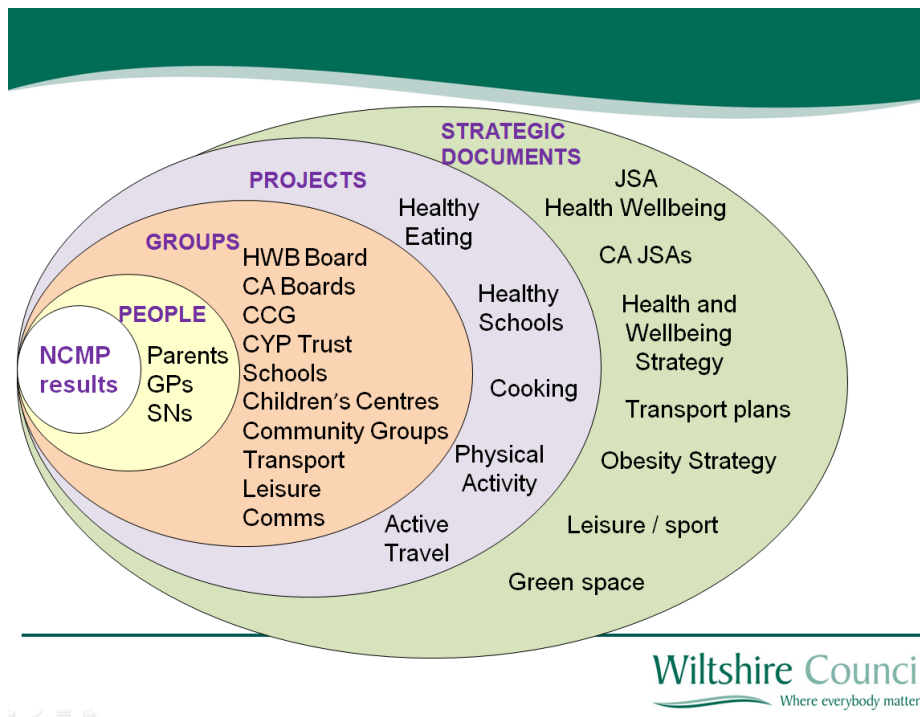
In this context, the National Child Measurement Programme becomes a powerful resource for our Public Health Team, because it allows us to identify families and Community Areas at greatest risk and intervene early to improve health outcomes for these groups. As part of the NCMP follow up process, every family receives a letter detailing the results of their child's participation in the programme. When a child is deemed to be overweight or obese, they are offered advice on healthy eating and free swimming sessions for 3 months. Between April and September 2012, more than 150 families in Wiltshire took up this membership. This opportunity is also offered to participants of the ABC Cook workshop and MEND 7-13 programme, detailed later in this report.

Programmes like this one mean the Public Health team can take full advantage of our new home at the heart of the Council. With Leisure now integrated into our Public Health and Public Protection team, we can connect policies and strategies that encourage healthy lifestyles to the delivery of health and exercise services.

Now housed in County Hall, we are also able to build stronger, more effective links with Children's Services and their School Effectiveness Team. As a result of the Healthy Schools programmes outlined later in this report, Wiltshire is seeing an increasing number of children making healthy, sustainable and safe journeys to school through School Travel Plans. While travel plans are not a direct Public Health responsibility, we can now influence decision makers more effectively, working with a wider range of partners than ever to improve health outcomes for Wiltshire's young people.

How do we use the NCMP data?

The National Child Measurement Picture provides a comprehensive and accurate picture of obesity levels among Wiltshire's young people. For comprehensive results, please see the full NCMP report.



We use this evidence to identify and analyse trends in obesity levels and co-ordinate our messages and strategies. This greatly strengthens our capacity for prevention and early intervention.

Understanding our current position facilitates focussed, evidence-based decisions on how to target our resources. NCMP data informs, shapes and underpins:

- Our Childhood Obesity Strategy (3 yearly)
- Our interactive NCMP spreadsheet (available on the Wiltshire Intelligence Network)
- Adolescent Health profiles
- The Wiltshire Joint Strategic Assessment (JSA)
- The Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing Joint Strategic Assessment (HWB JSA)
- The Wiltshire Community Area Joint Strategic Assessments (CJSAs)
- The Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group Joint Strategic Assessments (CCG JSAs)
- Children and Young People's Needs Assessment
- Corporate performance score card
- Corporate Public Facing indicator basket (in development)

Comparison of this data to earlier years of the NCMP indicates that rates of overweight and obesity in Reception Year children appear to be starting to stabilise. It is too early to say if this is a sustained improvement, but it demonstrates that with access to relevant and frequent data, we are able to take positive steps to improve health outcomes.

Moreover, as almost every child is weighed and measured, this programme offers an unparalleled opportunity to map and reduce inequalities in health outcomes *within* Wiltshire, because we can identify the community areas with the highest levels of obesity.

We are not alone in this effort. Sharing the results of the NCMP not only encourages evidence-based decision making from partner organisations – such as schools and the CCGs – it ensures we are working from the *same* information and therefore, that we are working together towards shared goals. Most importantly, we can use this data to tell the stories of real people and support real families in Wiltshire. How we are doing this is explored below.

How are our Public Health Team improving this picture?

When children are identified as overweight or obese, we support them to adopt healthier lifestyles; providing advice and information on the small changes that can make a big difference.

Leisure Services

Free swimming for U16s is offered across Wiltshire during school holidays. This has been a popular programme across Wiltshire and as Leisure Services takes root within the Public Health Team, joint initiatives like this will make us more effective at tackling obesity in Wiltshire.

Breastfeeding promotion

Evidence shows breastfeeding lowers the risk of childhood obesity. This simple, natural tool to tackle obesity in Wiltshire is supported by The Wiltshire Breastfeeding Strategy 2011-14, which resulted in the implementation of a range of initiatives:

UNICEF's Baby Friendly Initiative - This comprehensive, evidence based initiative is currently implemented in all hospital settings and in communities in Wiltshire. It ensures appropriate policies, training and practice are in place to support women who choose to breastfeed to do so successfully.

Mum2Mum – is Wiltshire's multi-agency Breastfeeding Peer Support programme, connecting mums who have experienced breastfeeding with those who value support through our children's centres.

The Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme – In 2012 Wiltshire joined this national scheme designed to make it easier for mothers to breastfeed comfortably when they're out and about. In 2013 Wiltshire Council further demonstrated its commitment to the scheme by making all front facing buildings 'Breastfeeding Welcome'.

A comprehensive Breastfeeding data set now enables us to monitor progress and target resources appropriately.

ABC Cook is a targeted programme equipping parents and carers with cooking and healthy eating skills. Delivered as 6 weekly sessions in Children's Centres, we supported around 200 participants (including 117 children) in 2012-13, with 62% of participants drawn from the areas of highest deprivation in Wiltshire.

MEND is a 10 week programme offering exercise, nutrition and psychological support to the families of overweight children. *MEND* is currently running in Trowbridge Castle Place. We are developing our own in-house programme to replace *MEND*, called the *SHINE* programme.

Hey! (Healthy Eating for Young Children) is an Early Years community health improvement project led by Danone. Delivered through Children's Centres, Danone's ambition for *HEY!* is to improve the health outcomes and life-chances of local children aged 1-3, by engaging their parents in healthy eating and Skills for Life learning.

Healthy

Lifestyles

SHINE (Self Help Independence Nutrition and Exercise) was developed at the University of Sheffield and reports promising outcomes. Seeking to encourage those at risk to take positive action to control weight, the *SHINE* approach can be tailored to different age groups and settings and will be adopted in Wiltshire in September 2014.

Change4Life (C4L) is a Public Health England initiative to encourage physical activity and healthy eating. Registration with *C4L* is recommended to parents and schools in their NCMP results letters, enabling them to access to free *change4life* resources including recipes and ideas for easy 'small changes'. Between Jan 2009 and Oct 2013, 11,555 Wiltshire residents registered on the *Change4Life* website. Data analysis shows that the most registrations were received from areas of deprivation in Wiltshire. More than 100 schools in Wiltshire have registered as *change4life supporters*, giving them access to free resources including lesson plans to support students and their families.

School Travel Plans were originally introduced to reduce congestion, but now encourage schools to think more widely about the environmental, health and educational benefits of sustainable travel (walking, cycling, scooting, bus travel, car share and park-and-stride). The funding scheme "Taking Action on School Journeys" supports schools in installing on-site infrastructure or investigating ways to improve walking / cycling journeys. They encourage schools to promote healthy travel choices and improve access to and safety of sustainable school travel options. Across Wiltshire more than 140 schools currently have an approved travel plan.

Healthy School Status is a programme that encourages schools to promote the health and wellbeing of young people, by bringing together good practice on all health related issues and providing consistent messages, encouraging and supporting schools to focus on approaches that are particularly effective. Over recent years, 97% of Wiltshire Schools have achieved *Healthy Schools Status* and benefit from a framework to audit their provision and implement new work.

Healthy Schools

Change4Life Clubs in Primary schools is a government funded initiative to promote more sport and physical activity in schools. *Devizes School* has been given the contract to implement this *C4L* initiative in Wiltshire.

Bike it Plus was launched in 2011 to encourage more cycling, walking and scooting or skating to school. Active travel themed events for pupils, staff and parents are delivered in selected primary schools. There are 15 schools supported at present in Trowbridge, Chippenham, Devizes and Warminster - all areas of high obesity. The initiatives are delivered in partnership with Wiltshire Council staff working on Road Safety, Bikeability training and School Travel Planning. The *Bike It Plus* second year report (December 2013) highlighted significant increases in levels of cycling, walking, scooting and skating to school.

Where next?

Our Public Health team are working closely with the Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to develop a refreshed strategic plan to tackle obesity in Wiltshire. As such, targeting obesity will remain an investment priority in 2014/15.

Reducing obesity levels in Wiltshire is a Public Health action priority, underpinning our service plan and forward work plan.

Service Plan priority areas	Indicator number	Public Health Outcomes Framework Priority Indicators (provisional)
Reducing smoking	2.22	Take up of NHS Health Check Programme by those eligible
Combating risky behaviour		
Enabling people to live healthy lifestyles	2.6	Excess weight in 4-5 and 10-11 year olds
Improving mental health and wellbeing		
Workplace health	2.12	Excess weight in adults
Improving older people's health		
Early diagnosis	2.14	Smoking prevalence - adults
Supporting local businesses through Public Protection activities	2.13	Percentage of physically active and inactive adults
Supporting the best start in life 0-2		
Reducing Antisocial Behaviour and perception of Antisocial Behaviour	4.5	Under 75 mortality rate from cancer
Community involvement in air quality	4.4	Under 75 mortality rate from all cardiovascular diseases
Reducing the impact of infectious and zoonotic diseases		

How can you support our work?

Obesity is not always an easy topic to talk about, but few issues are as important to tackle in safeguarding the future of young people in Wiltshire.

By remaining informed about the wider implications of obesity and the work our Public Health team are undertaking, in conjunction with our partners, you can help us to improve public awareness of, and interest in this important issue.

As elected members, it is also helpful for you to remain aware of inequalities within Wiltshire. The NCMP results report highlights the differences between Community Areas, with Melksham, Westbury, Trowbridge, Warminster, Chippenham, Devizes and Salisbury Community Areas highlighted as having statistically significantly higher than average percentages of obese or overweight children.

Armed with this knowledge, you can support the Public Health Team in signposting your constituents to council services:

The Change for life website - <http://www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/change-for-life.aspx>

The NHS Healthy Choices site - <http://www.nhs.uk/LiveWell/Pages/Livewellhub.aspx>

Our council website resource hub - <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/healthyweight4life>

Contact information:

Report compiled by Lucy James
Public Health Intelligence
National Management Trainee
lucy.james@wiltshire.gov.uk

For further information please contact
Amy Bird
Public Health Consultant
amy.bird@wiltshire.gov.uk

