

October  
2015



## Childhood Obesity in Dorset

Big Numbers

**9.6%** in Reception | Dorset children who are **obese** | **15.2%** in Year 6

Close to...

**One in three**

Overweight/Obese Year 6 children in Dorset Schools

Welcome to this **ourcommunities** bitesize bulletin on childhood obesity. Here we focus on this important issue, comparing Dorset to the national position and looking at why it matters and what can be done about it.



### Box 1: Why is this important?

Public Health England's report, [Sugar reduction: the evidence for action](#) says we eat too much sugar which leads to weight gain with associated health problems and tooth decay. Children and young people consume three times the recommended amount of sugar on average.

Treating obesity and its consequences currently costs the NHS £5.1 billion across England every year. If sugar consumption were to drop to the recommended level within 10 years, over 4,000 early deaths and 200,000 cases of tooth decay would be avoided and the burden of diseases associated with obesity such as diabetes would be reduced saving the NHS around £480 million every year and improving health and quality of life for many.

As well as the impact of obesity on health, there are wider costs to local authorities and society. Obese children are likely to be in poorer health with more lost school days. This impacts not only on the child's education and life chances, but also on families as parents miss days in work thereby increasing financial and health inequalities. Obese adults are more likely to have been obese children and will have stored up health problems that may only become apparent in adulthood resulting in extra costs to the health and social care system and reduced earning potential.

in Dorset



reception aged children who are **overweight** or **obese**

**one in four**

Children with one or more decayed, missing or filled teeth:



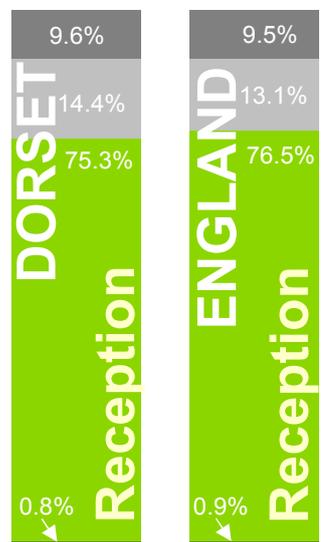
**one in four**

### Box 2: Where is childhood obesity prevalent?

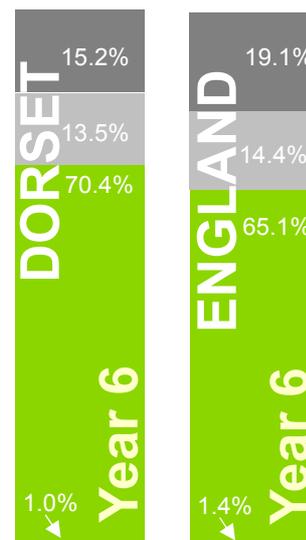
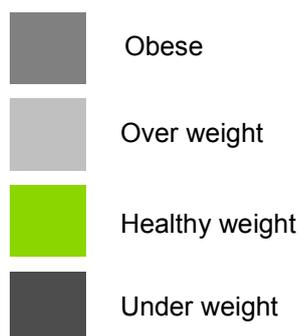
- There is a strong positive relationship between deprivation and childhood obesity with higher prevalence among both reception and year 6 children in more deprived areas.
- There is also a relationship between deprivation and the proportion of children identified as underweight.
- Obesity prevalence is significantly higher in urban areas than in rural areas in both age groups.
- Obesity in school children is higher among boys than girls at both reception and year 6.



### Box 3: What is the local picture?



In Dorset, 14.4% of **reception children** are overweight and 9.6% are obese. Whilst figures suggest an increase over the year, there is substantial year to year variation and in most years Dorset is close to the England average. Although by school location, reception age obesity appears highest in Weymouth & Portland and Christchurch, there is no significant variation between Dorset local authorities.



In Dorset, 13.5% of **year 6 children** are overweight and 15.2% are obese – both below the national average. Year 6 obesity appears highest in Weymouth & Portland and Christchurch but, again, with no significant difference to other Dorset local authorities. Twelve areas in Dorset fall in the 20% most deprived areas nationally for multiple deprivation. Nine are in Weymouth & Portland; two are in Christchurch and one in West Dorset.

### Box 4: What can be done?

Although a national childhood obesity strategy is due out next year, there is no quick fix to childhood obesity. To reduce the levels of obesity in Dorset, a range of measures is required to tackle the individual, cultural, environmental and financial barriers to healthy eating and physical activity. This requires more partnership and cross directorate work within the council and with schools and families to support people to make healthy lifestyle changes and to raise awareness of childhood obesity and its potential health impacts.

Parents wanting help to make a lifestyle change can contact LiveWell Dorset via the Freephone number **0800 8401628** or the web page <http://www.livewelldorset.co.uk/index.html> to find out about the range of services available.

Findings from the government's [National Child Measurement Programme](#) are used nationally to inform policy and at local level to inform the planning and commissioning of services.

Note: the figures are estimates, although participation in the NCMP was 94% and 91% for reception and year 6 children respectively in Dorset.

#### Like more info?

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**Data source:** Health and Social Care Information Centre and Public Health England; National Child Measurement Programme 2013/14; Public Health Profiles, Public Health England