

**LINCOLNSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**

Open Report on behalf of Derek Ward, Director of Public Health

Report to	<b>Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Board</b>
Date:	<b>14 June 2022</b>
Subject:	<b>Childhood Obesity</b>

**Summary:**

- This paper provides an overview of the 2020/21 National Child Measurement Programme data.
- The data show an extremely sharp increase in the prevalence of childhood obesity, particularly amongst the most deprived communities.
- Nationally, the increase in some groups (Year 6 Boys) was around 5 times higher than increases seen in previous years.
- Although these data are based on a smaller sample than in previous years, this strongly suggests that a deterioration in child healthy weight during the pandemic.
- Lincolnshire schools did not participate in the NCMP during this period as it was not required, but the national trend is expected to be reflected in Lincolnshire
- The paper also outlines Lincolnshire’s plans for addressing this issue.

**Actions Required:**

The Board is asked to note the content of this report.

**1. Background**

**1.1 Introduction**

[The latest National Child Measurement Programme \(NCMP\) data](#) shows an unprecedented increase in childhood obesity and severe obesity. The NCMP entails the weighing and measuring of all Reception and Year 6 children. In typical years approximately 95% of eligible children take part; however, due to school closures during the pandemic, this figure dropped to around 75% in 2019/20 and just 25% in 2020/21. The data were therefore weighted to ensure reliability. However, the Office of Health Improvement & Disparities (OHID) warns that they should still be treated with some caution.

## 1.2 National Picture vs Lincolnshire

Since the inception of the NCMP in 2006 the prevalence of childhood obesity and severe obesity has seen only small annual changes that have not exceeded 1.1 and 0.4 percentage points, respectively. Data from 2020/21 shows an increase of 5.6% for Year 6 Boys, an increase over 5 times larger than previously seen in a single year.

Table 1 below shows the overall percentage point increases in obesity and severe obesity:

**Table 1: Percentage Point Increases in Obesity & Severe Obesity, England, 2020/21**

	Obesity	Severe Obesity
Reception: Girls	4.4	1.9
Reception: Boys	4.7	2.5
Year 6: Girls	3.3	1.2
Year 6: Boys	5.6	2.1

Source: OHID (2022), NCMP changes in the prevalence of childhood obesity between 2019/20 and 2020/21

Given the restrictions on social activity and the closure of schools, outdoor play and leisure facilities over the last two years a larger increase in 2020/21 had been anticipated. However, the magnitude of this change is a cause for serious concern if replicated in Lincolnshire. As Lincolnshire has historically had slightly higher levels of childhood obesity than the national average, it is expected that these data are a reliable indicator of a deterioration in child health.

## 1.3 Impact on inequalities

The link between childhood obesity and deprivation, which was already well established, has increased sharply between 2019/20 and 2020/21. Obesity rates grew across virtually all deciles in both age groups; however, the increase of severe obesity amongst the most deprived groups was far greater, and significant inequalities in the prevalence of obesity & severe obesity exist as shown in table 2:

**Table 2: difference in % of obesity & severe obesity between most and least deprived deciles**

	Most deprived decile / deciles*	Least deprived decile	Factor of difference in overall obesity rates between most and least deprived 2020/21 – boys & girls combined	Factor of difference in overall severe obesity rates between most and least deprived 2020/21 – boys & girls combined
Reception: girls	7.3%	1.8%	2.6 X higher	4 X higher
Reception: boys	6.7%	1.9%		
Year 6: girls	10.6%	1.8%	2.4 X higher	5.9 X higher
Year 6: boys	8.0%	2.8%		

\*Reception data refer to the most deprived decile: Year 6 data refer to the two most deprived deciles combined. Source: *ibid.*

Table 2 demonstrates that, across England, rates of severe obesity in deprived areas are now expected to be nearly 6 times higher in the most deprived areas than in the least. This represents a significant, and worsening, inequality in health.

#### **1.4 Analysis of Local Picture** (See Appendix A: 2019/20 local NCMP data summary)

In line with the majority of local authorities, Lincolnshire did not deliver the NCMP in 2020/21, and consequently local data are not included in the national report. However, it is reasonable to assume that increases in obesity and severe obesity would follow a similar pattern to those of England. In fact, given that up until 2019/20, Lincolnshire was one of very few places in which the trend was significantly worsening, it is possible that Lincolnshire's rate of increase may be higher than that of the country as a whole.

#### **1.5 Current and Planned Activities in Lincolnshire**

Lincolnshire County Council's Public Health Division is already planning to help address this issue through developing a new Child & Family Weight Management Service (CFWM), delivered via our Integrated Lifestyle Service. Funding from the public health ringfenced grant, totalling £674,000 over two years, has been agreed to pilot & evaluate this service over two years, to start in summer 2022. This will supplement the support provided by schools and via the 0-19 Children's Health Service and provide a referral route for children identified as overweight from the NCMP.

NICE guidance states that tier-two, multi-component, family-based weight management services should be an integral part of an area's overall children's healthy weight strategy. The content of the service will be broadly in line with NICE guidance however, it will also test out a number of innovative methods, where these have the potential to bring better outcomes for children and families in Lincolnshire.

The CFWM (See APPENDIX B: draft service specification) will take a holistic approach, supporting children's overall wellbeing and families' lifestyles rather than focusing solely on weight. This will ensure that the service is non-stigmatising and is attractive to parents who do not recognise their child as overweight, both of which have traditionally been significant barriers against participation. In order to address growing inequalities, the service will be countywide, but activities will be concentrated in areas with the highest levels of need, in terms of both excess weight and deprivation; and outcomes for different population groups will be closely monitored.

The CFWM providers, One You Lincolnshire, are working closely with LCC's NCMP team to ensure a seamless referral route into the service. As well as the NCMP, the CFWM service will work with a range of referral partners including schools, GPs and paediatric services; this will support the development of a 'whole system' approach to childhood obesity in the county.

In addition to delivering the CFWM LCC provides a number of services, including Family Hubs and Children's Centres, that can play an important role in addressing childhood obesity through family-based support. Lincolnshire has also been selected to pilot a Food Standards Agency scheme, set to start in September 2022, to improve the quality of food in schools.

Over the next three years LCC will be expanding the county's Holidays Activities and Food (HAF) programme for school children up to year 11 who are in receipt of free-school-meals (FSM). Although HAF is not specifically concerned with weight-management, the programme places a very strong emphasis on physical activity and healthy eating. It is therefore working in close alignment with the CFWM, providing mutual referral opportunities that will enhance and reinforce the benefits of both programmes. In addition, from 2022 HAF has been permitted to allocate 15% of its budget to non-FSM children in locally identified priority groups, which in Lincolnshire will include children identified as overweight / obese.

## 2. Conclusion

The national data show an unprecedented increase in childhood obesity, particularly in the most deprived communities, which prior to 2020 already had the highest obesity prevalence: it is expected that this deterioration will also be evident in Lincolnshire. However, Lincolnshire’s prioritisation of healthy weight in children and the support for a comprehensive and innovative CFWM programme that complements other children’s services, particularly the 0-19 Children’s Health Service, Family Hubs, the NCMP and HAF, provides an encouraging prospect for beginning to reverse this trend over coming years.

## 3. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy

The Council and Clinical Commissioning Group must have regard to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Healthy Weight in children & young people has long been identified as a priority for Lincolnshire, including in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy. The Covid pandemic has resulted in a deteriorating picture, which has led to the Chief Medical Officer highlighting children and young people’s healthy weight as a national priority.
--

## 4. Consultation

Not applicable

## 5. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	2019/2020 NCMP Lincolnshire data summary
Appendix B	Draft service specification, Lincolnshire Child and Family Weight Management Service

## 6. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Sarah Chaudhary who can be contacted on [sarah.chaudhary@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.chaudhary@lincolnshire.gov.uk)