

Healthy weight in children is important for development and growth and for good physical and mental health. Childhood obesity is linked to conditions including high blood pressure and cholesterol, pre-diabetes, breathing difficulties and problems with bones and joints, and it can lead to bullying and low self-esteem (OHID). Children who are overweight or living with obesity are more likely to be so as adults with all the associated health risks this brings and the increased risk of premature mortality. Being underweight is also a risk to a child’s growth and development and children need a healthy diet with the correct amount of nutrients to ensure healthy growth.

Why is this important?



Excess weight and obesity in childhood has serious health implications which can continue into adulthood. Being underweight can adversely affect a child’s growth.

What is the local context?



Torbay has higher rates than England of Reception children who are overweight (including obesity). Year 6 children are similar to England.

What should we do?



Encourage children and their families to eat a healthy diet with the right sized portions and to be physically active.

Data comes from the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) which annually measures height and weight of children in primary schools in England in the school years of Reception (4-5 year olds) and Year 6 (10-11 year olds).

Weight definitions are taken from the British 1990 growth reference (UK90) which classifies body mass index (BMI) into centiles. Children are placed in the category of underweight if their BMI is on or below the 2nd centile, overweight if on or above the 85th centile but less than the 95th, and obesity if on or above the 95th centile. These cut offs for population monitoring are slightly lower than clinical cut offs for overweight and obesity so to include children with an unhealthy BMI or at risk of moving to an unhealthy BMI.

Fig 1: Children who are overweight (including obesity), Torbay, 2021/22

Reception:



Around 1 in 4 children (25.7%) in Reception (aged 4-5) are overweight or living with obesity in 2021/22.

Year 6:



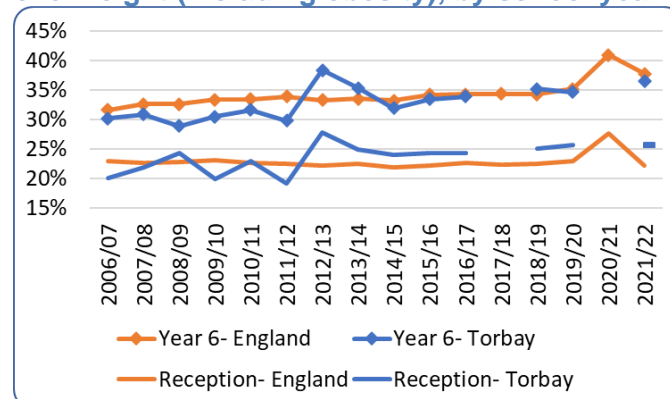
Around 1 in 3 children (36.5%) in Year 6 (aged 10-11) are overweight or living with obesity.

Source: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID)- [Obesity profile Torbay report](#)

Fig 1 shows that a higher proportion of the older

children are overweight or living with obesity than the younger which is the same nationally. There is a general gradual increasing trend over the years in Torbay for both year groups although figures fluctuate (Fig 2). In 2021/22, compared to England, Torbay is significantly higher in Reception children as was the case in the previous years of 2018/19 onwards. In Year 6 children Torbay’s value is similar to England and has been from 2013/14 onwards. In 2020/21 low levels of data collected due to the Covid pandemic meant data was not published at Local Authority level. Torbay data was not published for 2017/18 due to low participation levels.

Fig 2: Percentage of children who are overweight (including obesity), by school year



Source: OHID- [Obesity profile](#)

In relation to obesity (Fig 3), in 2021/22 around 1 in 10 children (10.6%) in Torbay in Reception were in the category of obesity (10.1% in England), and around 1 in 5 children (21.9%) in Year 6 (23.4% in England). These are both similar to the England figures.

Fig 3: Children living with obesity, Torbay, 2021/22

Reception:



Year 6:



Source: OHID- [Obesity profile Torbay report](#)

Torbay NCMP data is combined for 5 years in Figs 4 and 5 (excluding 2017/18 and 2020/21) and split by the deprivation level of the area where the children live- into 5 quintiles. It shows higher percentages of overweight children (including obesity) in the most deprived areas- in both Reception and Year 6 the percentages living in quintile 1 who are overweight (including obesity) are significantly higher than the overall percentage for their respective year groups. In Reception children living in the other areas (quintiles 2-5) the percentages are statistically similar to the overall Reception figure. In Year 6 children this is also the case apart from quintile 4, a lesser deprived quintile, which has a significantly lower percentage who are overweight (including obesity) than the overall Year 6 figure. Quintile 5 is yellow for Year 6 despite being a lower rate because low numbers in this quintile are making the confidence intervals, upon which statistical significance/ similarity is based, wider.

Figs 4 and 5: Percentage of children who are overweight (including obesity), by deprivation quintile, Torbay, 2015/16-2021/22*

Fig 4: Reception:

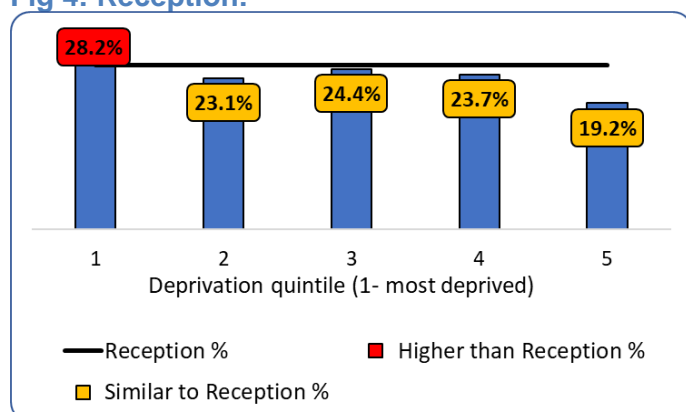
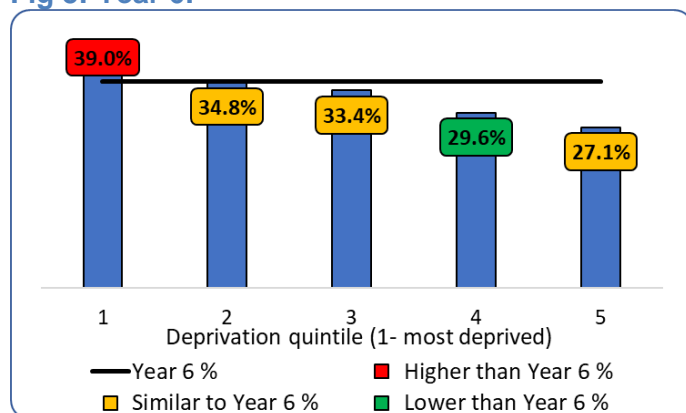


Fig 5: Year 6:

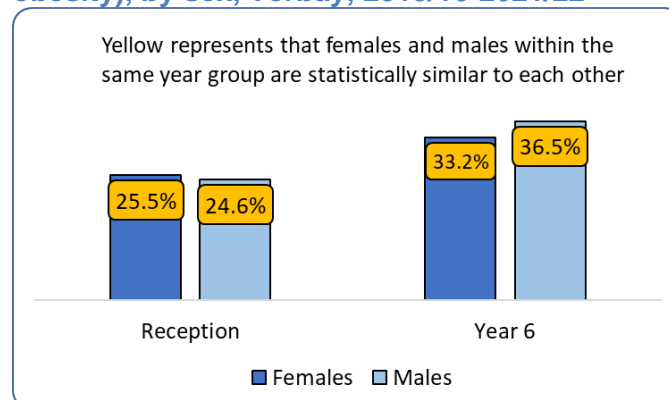


Source for Figs 4 and 5: NCMP, uses Index of Multiple Deprivation, *excludes 2017/18 and 2020/21

Fig 6 uses the same time period as Figs 4 and 5 but splits the data by sex. It shows that within both year groups in Torbay the percentages of girls and boys who are overweight (including

obesity) are similar to each other. This means that in this time period neither sex is more likely to be overweight (including obesity) than the other.

Fig 6: Children who are overweight (including obesity), by sex, Torbay, 2015/16-2021/22*



Source: NCMP, *excludes 2017/18 and 2020/21

Torbay wards: in the time period of Figs 4-6 in all 16 wards the percentages of Reception children who are overweight (including obesity) are statistically similar to the overall Torbay Reception percentage. In Year 6, Ellacombe and Roundham with Hyde wards have significantly higher percentages of children who are overweight (including obesity) than the Torbay percentage for Year 6 whilst Churston with Galmpton is significantly lower. The other wards are statistically similar to Torbay's Year 6 figure.

Underweight: the annual percentages of children who are underweight are very low. Reception: the Torbay figures have been suppressed for the last 3 years (2019/20-2021/22) due to low numbers and/or Covid disruption. Year 6: the percentage of Torbay children who are underweight in 2021/22 is 1.2% (1.5% in England). Torbay is similar to the England figure and has been for all the years published except 2011/12 which was significantly higher. ([OHID](#))

Available in Torbay:

- [Your Health Torbay](#) can offer advice, information and signposting for parents or carers who are concerned about their child's weight. They can be reached on 01803 422422 or yourhealth.torbay@nhs.net
- [Family Hubs](#) bring together support that a family may need, there are 3 across Torbay- in Torquay, Paignton and Brixham.

References:

OHID: [Childhood obesity: applying All Our Health](#) , updated April 2022

OHID: [Patterns and trends in child obesity in Torbay](#) , February 2023

References/links to data used are throughout the profile