



States of Guernsey
Public Health Services

Guernsey Child Measurement Programme 2019

Findings from the seventh round of child measurement

Public Health Intelligence Unit, July 2019

READER INFORMATION	
Title	Guernsey Child Measurement Programme, 2019; findings from the seventh round of child measurement [SUMMARY REPORT]
Document Purpose and key uses	Purpose: to detail the results of measurement in schools in 2019. Uses: Public Health surveillance and monitoring; information for stakeholders and members of the public
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Findings from the seventh round of child measurement

Context

The Guernsey Obesity Strategy was approved by the States of Deliberation in November 2009 (Billet D'État XXX1 2009 vol 2). Recommendation 10 of the Strategy stated that consideration should be given to the adoption of a child measurement programme similar to England's National Child Measurement Programme ("NCMP"). This would enable the assimilation of Guernsey and Alderney-specific data on childhood excess weight and would have significant advantages over the former practice of extrapolating UK statistics to the local population.

In November 2012, the Ethics Committee of the Health and Social Services Department (now the Committee *for* Health and Social Care) considered and gave approval to a longitudinal programme of child measurement in which the heights and weights of pupils in school Years 1 and 5 would be recorded annually during the spring term then analysed to allow population-level surveillance of weight status in children aged 5/6 years and 9/10 years. This report details the results obtained from the seventh measurement year, 2019.

Results Statement

Analysis of results from the seventh round of child measurement in schools has shown that in Guernsey and Alderney:

- Among Year 1s 17.0% (close to one in six) of measured children had unhealthy levels of excess weight; 8.9% with overweight and 8.1% with obesity.
- Among Year 5s 28.9% (more than one in four) of measured children had unhealthy levels of excess weight; 15.0% with overweight and 13.9% with obesity.
- In real terms 280 children were found to have an overweight or obese weight status across the two year groups.
- Participation in the programme remained high at 93%; this implies that the children measured will give a reasonable representation of the year groups including those not measured.
- The levels of primary-aged children that have an overweight or obese weight status have been broadly stable at a high level since 2013, with no notable increases or decreases in prevalence (Figures 1, 2 and 3).

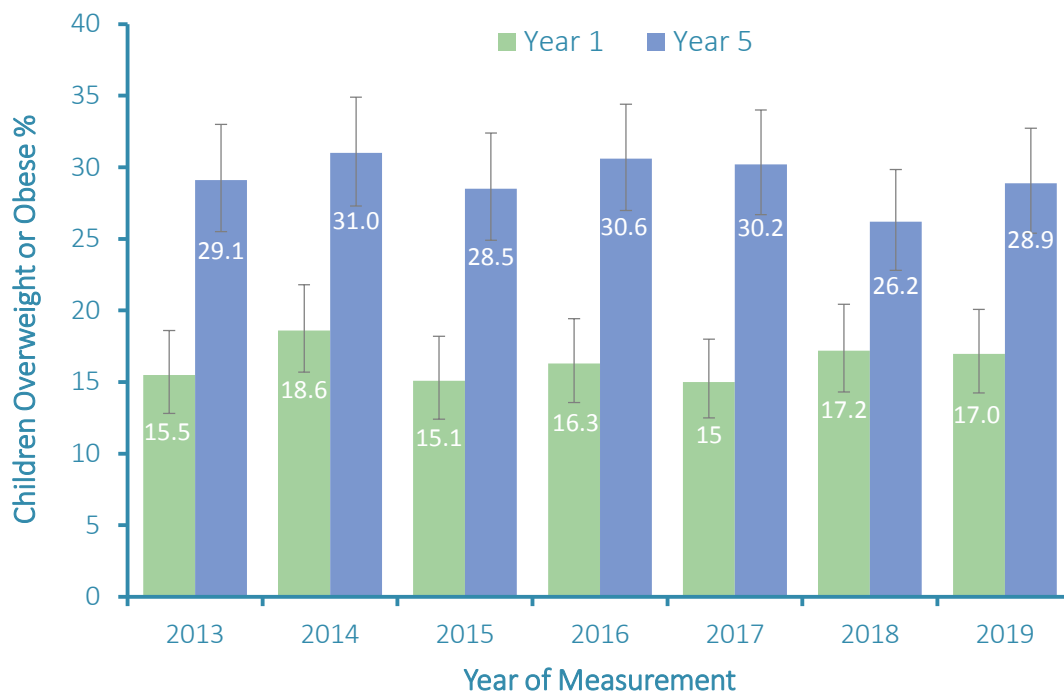


Figure 1. Proportion of children measured with an overweight or obese weight status, by year of measurement.

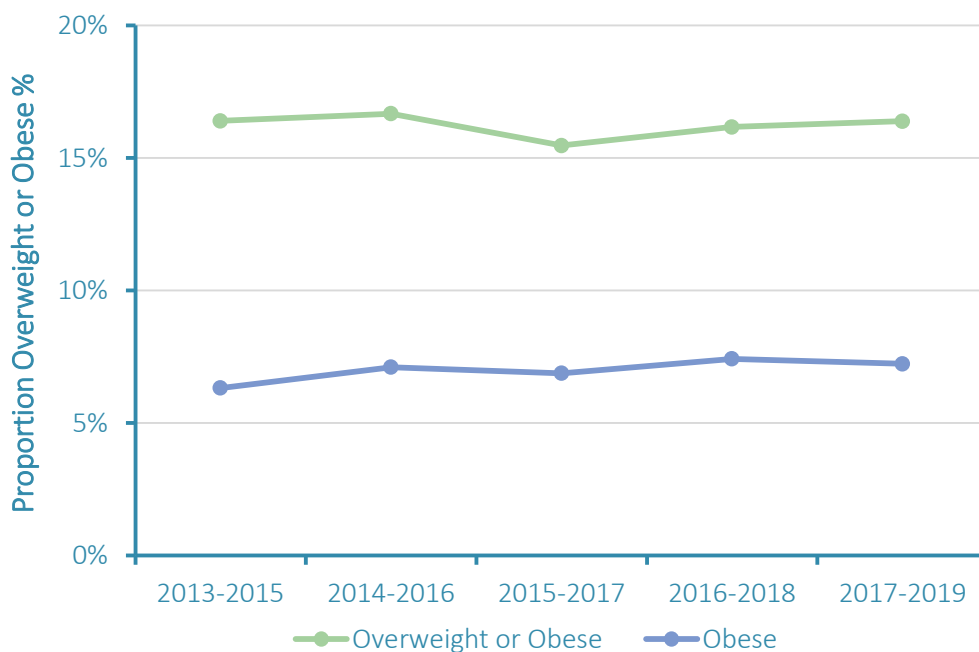


Figure 2. Proportion of Year 1 children measured with an overweight or obese weight status by year of measurement (three-year averages).

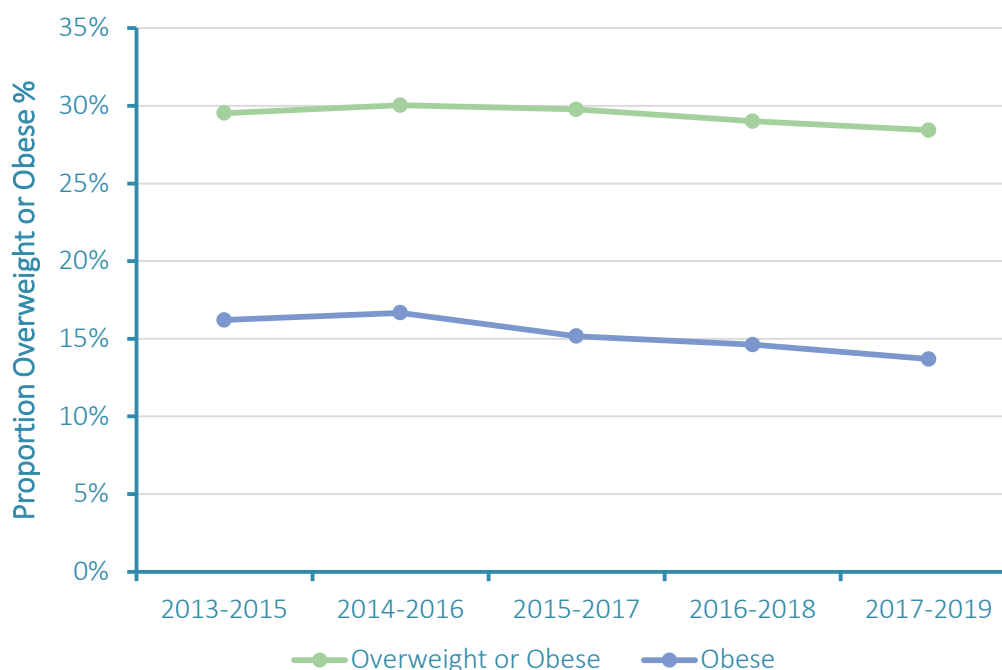


Figure 3. Proportion of Year 5 children measured with an overweight or obese weight status, by year of measurement (three-year averages).

- The apparent reduction over time for Year 5 obesity levels (Figure 3) may be the result of the relatively low overweight plus obesity level for 2018 exerting a downward influence on the last two data points. Monitoring in future years will help to clarify whether this is likely to be a true decrease or random variation.
- Among Year 5s, boys more often had unhealthy levels of excess weight compared to girls.
- Feedback was requested for 24% of eligible children. Among Year 5s, excess weight was under represented in the feedback group, that is, there was a lower proportion of children with unhealthy levels of excess weight in this group.
- Among Year 5s, a lower proportion of unhealthy excess weight was seen in fee paying schools compared to non-fee paying schools.
- Cohort-tracking: The children measured as Year 1s in 2015 were re-measured as Year 5s in 2019. From their first to their second measurements (an interval of four years) the prevalence of overweight and obesity among that cohort has increased from 15.1% to 28.9%. A large increase has been observed for all the cohorts measured twice since the start of the measurement programme.
- Participant-matching: The graph below shows the results of an analysis matching up individual children that have been measured in both Year 1 and Year 5, looking at how their weight statuses have changed (Figure 4). It shows for those in each

weight status at the first measurement in Year 1, the proportion with each weight status at the second measurement in Year 5. For example, it was observed that 27% of those who were assigned an overweight weight status at the first measurement had moved to a healthy weight status by the second measurement.

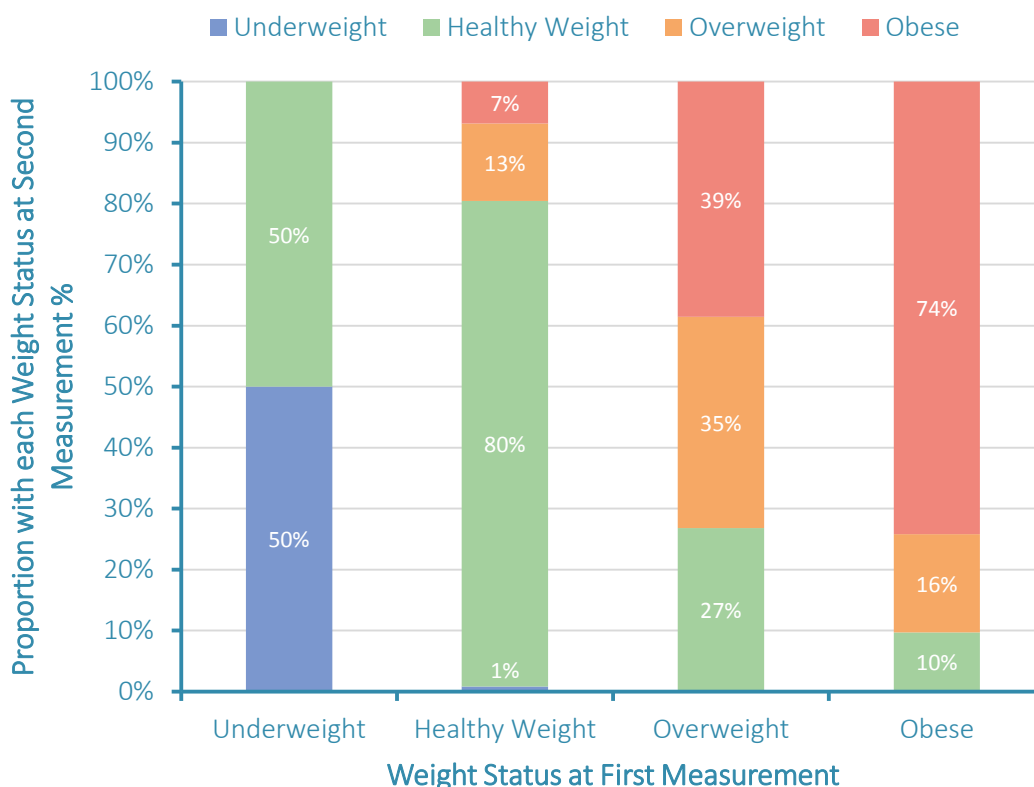


Figure 4. Participant-matching: Change in weight status between first and second measurements for 2013, 2014, 2015 Year 1 cohorts combined (N=1,565).

- The majority (80%) of those with a healthy weight status in Year 1 retained a healthy weight status by Year 5. Similarly, the majority (74%) with an obese weight status in Year 1 retained an obese weight status by Year 5.
- For those with an overweight weight status in Year 1 the outcome by Year 5 was mixed. Although almost three-quarters were likely to remain overweight or progress to having obesity it is positive that around 1 in 4 managed to return to a healthy weight status.
- These findings suggest it is difficult for children to improve their weight status once they have obesity (though improvements are achieved by some) whereas it is easier for children to retain a healthy weight when they already have a healthy weight status.