

NCMP Data 2021/22 Briefing Paper

Source: [National Child Measurement Programme, England, 2021/22 School Year](#).

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5 Key Things You Need to Know

1. Nationally, 3 in 4 (76.5%) of 4/5-year-olds have a BMI of a healthy weight; this decreases to 3 in 5 (60.8%) of 10/11-year-olds. Suffolk mirrors this trend (77.0% at reception, 62.6% at year 6).
2. Nationally, at both reception and year 6 –the percentages of children living with obesity, living with severe obesity, and overweight or living with obesity (combined), have decreased in 2021/22 compared to the previous year. However, the values for each of these measures remain above pre-pandemic levels from 2019/20.
3. In Suffolk, almost 1 in 10 (9.5%) of reception aged children are living with obesity (including severe obesity) – increasing to more than 1 in 5 (21.7%) by year 6. Severe obesity also almost doubles between reception to year 6 for Suffolk children, increasing from 2.5% to 4.9%.
4. 1 in 5 Suffolk reception year children were overweight or living with obesity (22.3%). This was statistically significantly similar to England (also 22.3%). More than 1 in 3 Suffolk year 6 children were overweight or living with obesity (36.0%). This was statistically significantly lower than England (37.8%).
5. Based on the urban/rural classification - percentages of children living with obesity nationally were highest in disadvantaged urban communities (13.3% in reception and 29.9% in year 6). This is lower (8.2% and 17.7%) in countryside, and 7.0% and 16.2% for urban fringe, respectively.

Executive Summary

The data within the NCMP report presents findings for a variety of measures across England for child weight at both Reception (aged 4-5 years), and Year 6 (aged 10-11 years), in state schools. Measures include the percentage of children of a healthy weight, underweight, overweight, prevalence of obesity and severe obesity broken down by multiple demographics and at local authority level.

At both reception and year 6, boys have a higher prevalence of living with obesity than girls, with the largest gap seen in year 6 (26.4% of boys, 20.4% of girls).

Deprivation correlates with childhood excess weight, mirrored in the statistics at local authority level. At a national level, more than twice as many year 6 children in the most deprived indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) decile are living with obesity compared to the least deprived IMD decile (31.3% compared to 13.5%). Nationally, the deprivation gap has continued to widen over time. When comparing the percentage of children living with obesity in the most deprived decile with the least deprived decile between 2013/14- 2021/22, the gap for reception age children has increased from 6.1% to 7.4% and year 6 from 12.8% to 17.7%.

This deprivation difference is also demonstrated in the Suffolk local authority data. Ipswich is the most deprived local authority within Suffolk. Ipswich records the lowest percentage (74.4%) of healthy weight reception-aged children and the highest percentage of both reception and year 6-aged pupils living with severe obesity (3.8% and 5.6%), compared to the other Suffolk local authorities.

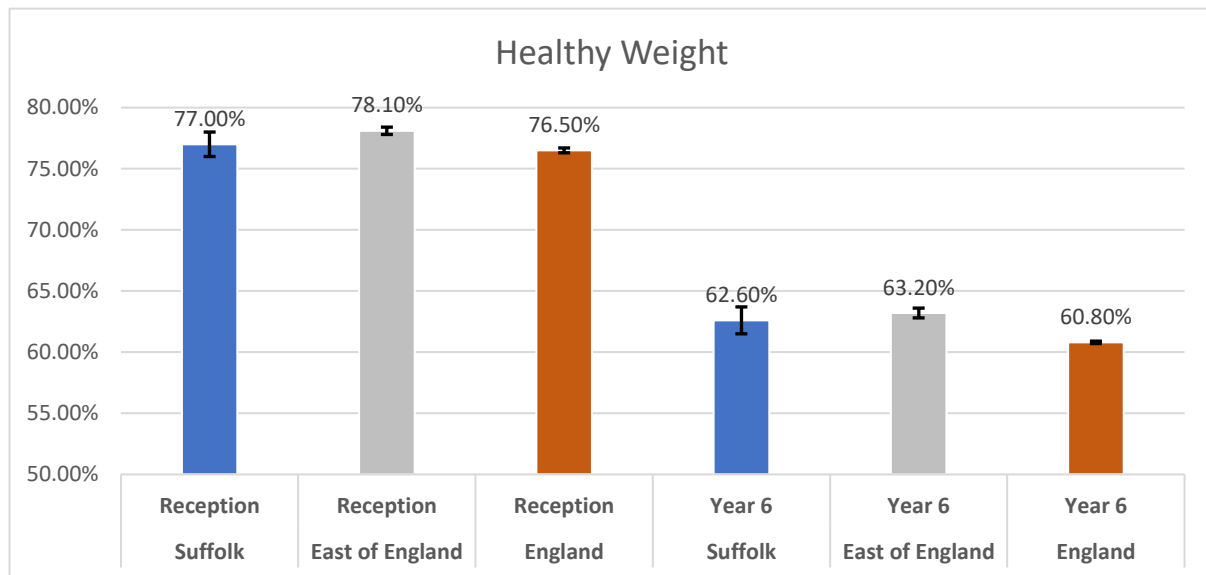
The prevalence of underweight pupils in reception in Suffolk is lower than the East of England and England averages. At 0.7%, Suffolk's reception aged children are less likely to be underweight than the average child in England (1.2%). This trend returns to the England average for children in year 6, with Suffolk's percentage in line with the England average at 1.5%.

What the Data Tells Us

In 2021/22:

- 77.0% of Suffolk children in reception year are a healthy weight, this falls to 62.6% for year 6 children. The percentage of healthy weight reception year children is statistically similar to England (76.5%), and statistically significantly higher than England for year 6 children (60.8%).
- 1 in 5 Suffolk reception year children were overweight or living with obesity (22.3%). This was statistically significantly similar to England (also 22.3%).
- More than 1 in 3 Suffolk year 6 children were overweight or living with obesity (36.0%). This was statistically significantly lower than England (37.8%).
- Based on the child's postcode of residence, out of all Suffolk lower tier local authority areas, Ipswich had the highest proportion of both overweight and obese reception year and year 6 children (24.7% and 39.4% respectively). The proportion of overweight and obese children in reception year in Ipswich was statistically significantly higher compared to England, and statistically similar to England for year 6 children.

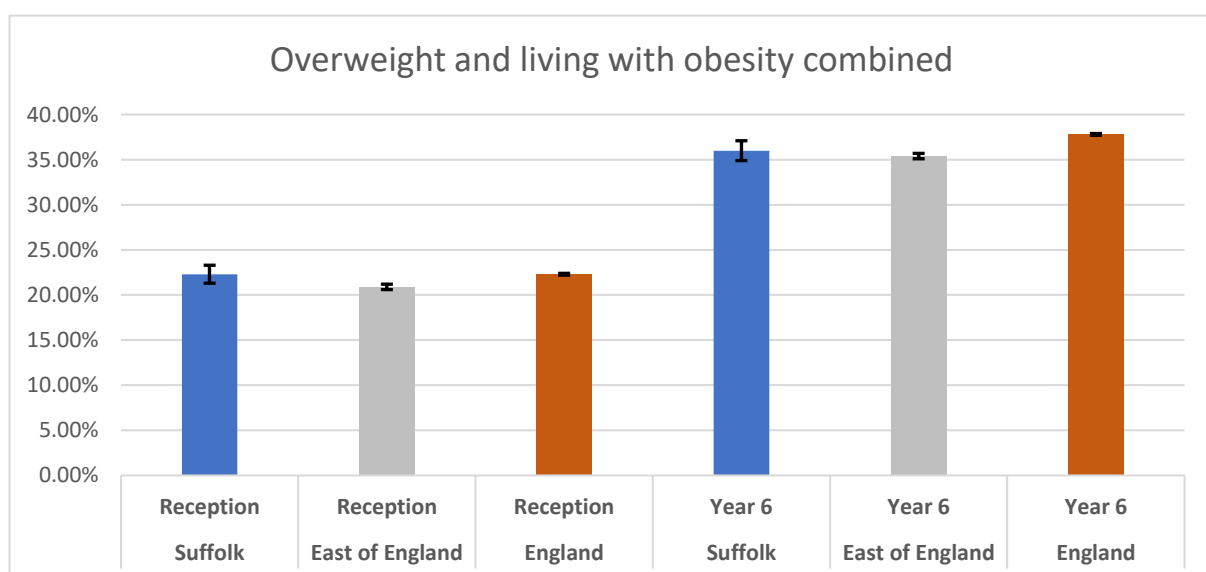
Figure 1: Percentage of children with a healthy weight from reception to year 6 by county, region, and national comparison.



Comparing Suffolk’s data with England, the East of England and by local authority exposes several trends. Firstly, at reception less than 1% (0.7%) of Suffolk reception-aged pupils are underweight, which is statistically significantly lower than 1.2% in England. By year 6, this number for Suffolk is statistically similar to the national average – 1.5%. Mid Suffolk has a statistically significant higher percentage of underweight pupils (2.6%) than the England and East of England averages.

For healthy weight pupils at reception, Suffolk (77.0%) is statistically similar to the 76.5% national average. Within the local authorities, Mid Suffolk recorded the highest percentage of healthy weight pupils at 82.7% - statistically significant above the national average.

Figure 2: Percentage of children classified as overweight and living with obesity combined, from reception to year 6 by county, region, and national comparison.



Suffolk's percentage (2.5%) of reception aged pupils living with severe obesity is not statistically significantly lower than the national average (2.9%). However, Ipswich's 3.8% of pupils living with severe obesity is statistically significantly higher than England, Suffolk and the East of England averages. At year 6, the percentage of Suffolk pupils with severe obesity increases to 4.9%, however this figure is statistically significantly lower than the national average of 5.8%. Mid Suffolk has a statistically significantly lower percentage of year 6 pupils living with severe obesity at 3.2%.

When combining overweight and living with obesity, Suffolk and England are statistically similar, with percentages of reception aged pupils (22.3%) as overweight and living with obesity. The East of England average is statistically significantly lower at 20.9% than both the England and Suffolk values.

At a local authority level, Mid Suffolk has a statistically significant lower percentage of pupils classified as overweight and living with obesity combined at 16.7% than the England and Suffolk averages. Almost 1 in 4 (24.7%) of Ipswich pupils are either categorised as overweight or living with obesity. By year 6, Suffolk has a statistically significant lower percentage (36.0%) of pupils categorised as overweight and living with obesity than the England average of 37.8%, however Ipswich (39.4%) is statistically significantly above the East of England and Suffolk averages. West Suffolk has a statistically significant lower percentage of year 6 pupils classified as either overweight or living with obesity at 31.9%.

Figure 3: Reception year prevalence of overweight and living with obesity (combined) in Suffolk, by child's postcode

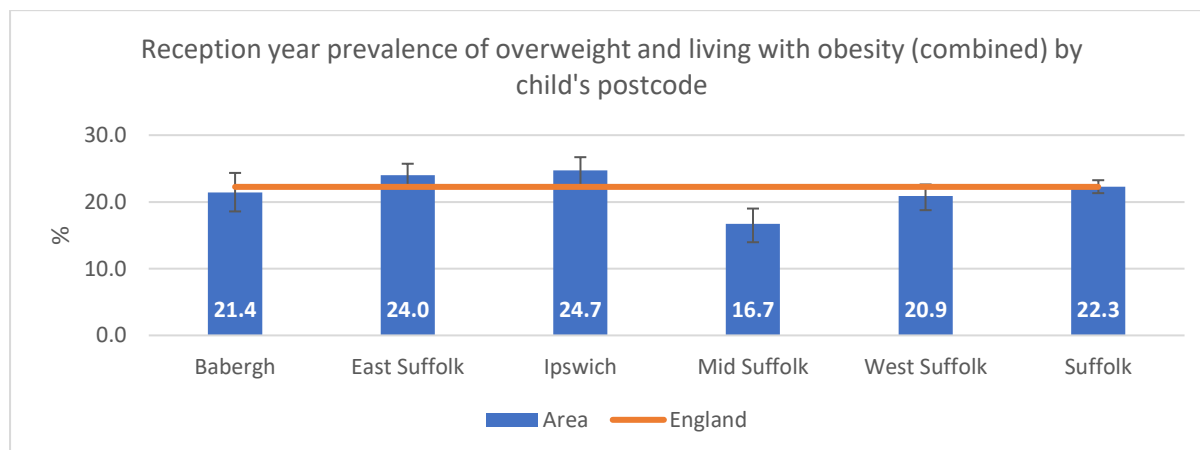
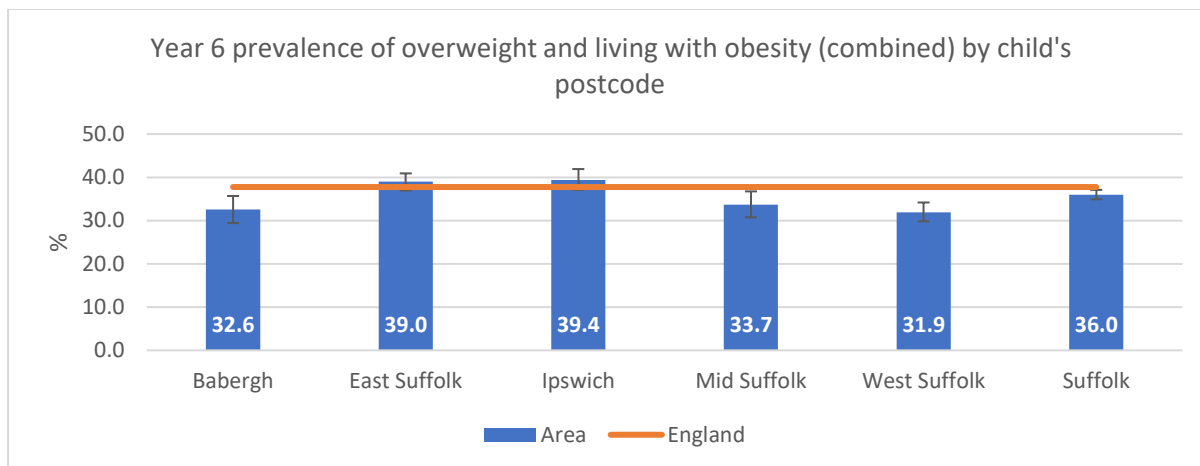


Figure 4: Year 6 prevalence of overweight and living with obesity (combined) in Suffolk, by child's postcode



Demographic Differences

While the published data is reported at local authority level, to look at specific demography, only national data is available. When exploring differences by sex, specifically on obesity - the largest statistically significant gap exists between boys in year 6, with over 1 in 4 (26.4%) living with obesity in comparison to 1 in 5 (20.4%) of girls in year 6. Furthermore, the percentage of children classified as underweight increases from 1.2% in reception to 1.5% in year 6, however there is statistically significant difference by sex – more boys in reception (1.6%) are underweight than girls (0.8%), but this trend changes in year 6, where 1.3% of boys are underweight, compared to 1.6% of girls.

Within the NCMP dataset, there is not a significant amount of data available based on ethnicity – however, nationally, obesity prevalence was statistically significantly highest in reception (16.2%) and year 6 (33.0%) for Black children – Chinese children had the statistically significantly lowest obesity levels (4.5% in reception, 17.7% in year 6).

Deprivation and obesity have a strong relationship – nationally, twice as many children (13.6%) in the most deprived decile are living with obesity in reception year compared to the least deprived decile (6.2%). The deprivation gap (% of children living with obesity in reception in the most deprived areas compared with % of children living with obesity in reception in the least deprived areas) has increased nationally between 2013/14 to 2021/22 from 6.1% to 7.4% – this is attributed to the prevalence in the least deprived areas remaining the same, and an increase in the percentage of children living with obesity in the most deprived areas. This gap was similar for both boys and girls. In addition, nationally – the deprivation gap for year 6 pupils living with obesity increased from 12.8% in 2013/14 (comparison of most deprived % of year 6 pupils living with obesity compared to the least deprived % of year 6 pupils living with obesity) to 17.7% in 2021/22.

Caveats/Limitations

The Office for National Statistics reports deprivation data based on both where the child lives (post code) and the location of the school. Deprivation based on the child's post code is viewed as more accurate due to children sometimes attending schools in areas where relative deprivation differs to where they live. Both sets of data can be used – for instance the data based on school location may be better suited for interventions targeted through schools, whereas facility provision may be better suited to resident-based data.

Measurements were taken at any time during the 2021/22 academic year, meaning some children were almost two years older than others during the same period of measurement.

However, this has no implication to the published data as BMI centiles are adjusted for age. NCMP data has relatively narrow confidence limits due to the large size of the sample and high participation rates at a national level, however confidence intervals increase when analysing the data at local authority level.

Data for 2020/21 was only published at a national and regional level (due to participation rates impacted during the pandemic), as a result no local authority level data was published, and this briefing paper does not contain a comparison to last year's data for each local authority.

In terms of data quality and coverage, participation rate was not collected or published in 2019/20 and 2020/21 due to the pandemic impact on the data collection during those years. In 2021/22, 92% of eligible children took part in the NCMP data collection. Additionally, if participation rates are low in a local authority, then estimates must be treated with caution as the sample may not be entirely representative. Data may also be imprecise due to rounding, where 19 local authorities had over 20% of their heights being whole numbers (expectation would be 10%).

Small area data has not been updated since 2019, where NCMP data was published at Middle Super Output Area (MSOA), ward and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) level.

Appendix

Table 1: Prevalence and number of children underweight, healthy weight, overweight, living with obesity and living with severe obesity in Reception, by region, upper tier local authority and lower tier local authority (based on the postcode of the child).

Area	Underweight		Healthy weight		Overweight		Living with obesity		Living with severe obesity		Overweight and living with obesity combined	
	Number	% (And CIs)	Number	% (And CIs)	Number	% (And CIs)	Number	% (And CIs)	Number	% (And CIs)	Number	% (And CIs)
England	6,835	1.2% [1.2, 1.2]	435,786	76.5% [76.4, 76.7]	69,161	12.1% [12.1, 12.2]	57,540	10.1% [10.0, 10.2]	16,428	2.9% [2.8, 2.9]	126,701	22.3% [22.1, 22.4]
East of England	715	1.2% [1.2, 1.2]	51,735	78.0% [77.7, 78.3]	7,735	11.7% [11.4, 11.9]	6,115	9.2% [9.0, 9.4]	1,620	2.4% [2.3, 2.6]	13,850	20.9% [20.6, 21.2]
Suffolk	50	0.7% [0.5, 0.9]	5,460	77.0% [76.0, 78.0]	905	12.8% [12.0, 13.6]	675	9.5% [8.9, 10.2]	180	2.5% [2.2, 2.9]	1,580	22.3% [21.3, 23.3]
Babergh	*	*	600	77.9% [75.1, 80.9]	100	13.0% [10.7, 15.4]	65	8.4% [6.6, 10.5]	15	1.9% [1.4, 3.5]	165	21.4% [18.5, 24.2]
East Suffolk	10	0.5% [0.2, 0.7]	1,650	75.5% [73.8, 77.4]	290	13.3% [12.0, 14.8]	235	10.8% [9.5, 12.1]	50	2.3% [1.8, 3.1]	525	24.0% [22.3, 25.9]
Ipswich	10	0.6% [0.4, 1.3]	1,175	74.4% [72.3, 76.6]	210	13.3% [11.8, 15.2]	180	11.4% [9.9, 13.0]	60	3.8% [3.0, 4.9]	390	24.7% [22.7, 27.0]
Mid Suffolk	*	*	695	82.7% [79.9, 85.0]	80	9.5% [7.7, 11.7]	60	7.1% [5.7, 9.2]	15	1.8% [1.2, 3.1]	140	16.7% [14.4, 19.4]
West Suffolk	20	1.2% [0.8, 1.8]	1,340	77.9% [75.8, 79.7]	225	13.1% [11.5, 14.6]	140	8.1% [6.9, 9.5]	35	2.0% [1.6, 3.0]	360	20.9% [19.2, 23.0]

Table 2: Prevalence and number of children underweight, healthy weight, overweight, living with obesity and living with severe obesity in Year 6, by region, upper tier local authority and lower tier local authority (based on the postcode of the child).

Area	Underweight		Healthy weight		Overweight		Living with obesity		Living with severe obesity		Overweight and living with obesity combined	
	Number	% (And CIs)	Number	% (And CIs)	Number	% (And CIs)	Number	% (And CIs)	Number	% (And CIs)	Number	% (And CIs)
England	8,774	1.5% [1.4, 1.5]	365,912	60.8% [60.7, 60.9]	86,169	14.3% [14.2, 14.4]	141,145	23.4% [23.3, 23.6]	34,818	5.8% [5.7, 5.8]	227,314	37.8% [37.6, 37.9]
East of England	995	1.4% [1.4, 1.5]	43,385	63.2% [62.8, 63.5]	9,565	13.9% [13.7, 14.2]	14,730	21.4% [21.1, 21.8]	3,315	4.8% [4.7, 5.0]	24,295	35.4% [35.0, 35.7]
Suffolk	110	1.5% [1.2, 1.7]	4,680	62.6% [61.5, 63.6]	1,070	14.3% [13.5, 15.1]	1,625	21.7% [20.8, 22.7]	370	4.9% [4.5, 5.5]	2,695	36.0% [34.9, 37.1]
Babergh	15	1.7% [1.1, 2.9]	565	65.7% [62.5, 68.9]	120	14.0% [11.9, 16.6]	160	18.6% [15.9, 21.1]	40	4.7% [3.2, 6.0]	280	32.6% [29.4, 35.7]
East Suffolk	15	0.6% [0.5, 1.2]	1,410	60.4% [58.4, 62.3]	355	15.2% [13.9, 16.8]	550	23.6% [21.9, 25.4]	130	5.6% [4.7, 6.5]	910	39.0% [37.0, 40.9]
Ipswich	25	1.6% [1.0, 2.2]	935	59.0% [56.6, 61.5]	220	13.9% [12.3, 15.8]	405	25.6% [23.4, 27.7]	85	5.4% [4.4, 6.7]	625	39.4% [37.1, 41.9]
Mid Suffolk	25	2.6% [1.6, 3.6]	605	63.7% [60.8, 66.9]	145	15.3% [13.2, 17.8]	175	18.4% [16.0, 20.9]	30	3.2% [2.0, 4.2]	320	33.7% [30.7, 36.8]
West Suffolk	30	1.7% [1.2, 2.4]	1,165	66.4% [64.1, 68.5]	225	12.8% [11.2, 14.3]	340	19.4% [17.5, 21.2]	90	5.1% [4.2, 6.3]	560	31.9% [29.8, 34.2]