



NCMP Communication Toolkit

September 2016

Public Health

Communication Toolkit

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Overview

The World Health Organization (WHO) regards childhood obesity as one of the most serious global public health challenges for the 21st century.

Children who are overweight or obese are more likely to develop a variety of illnesses in childhood and later life, such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular problems, respiratory illnesses, joint and movement problems, and psychological disorders. Physical health is not the only issue. Overweight children can also be affected by:

- Teasing or bullying
- Behavioural problems
- Avoidance of active play or learning opportunities in school sport and PE.

In contrast, regular physical activity is associated with higher academic achievement, better health in childhood and later life, higher motivation at school and reduced anxiety and depression.

The levels of excess weight in our children are a stark reminder of the extent of the problem. The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) data for 2014/15 show a third of 10-11 year olds and over a fifth of 4-5 year olds were overweight or obese. Yet overweight and obesity, as well as the health conditions they cause are largely preventable. Supportive environments and communities are fundamental in shaping people's choices, making the healthier choice of foods and regular physical activity the easiest choice.

This toolkit sets out one part of the strategy to improve health outcomes for children and enables schools to play a successful role in the implementation of the National Child Measurement Programme, realising meaningful change for children and their families.

NCMP Summary

The NCMP is a statutory national public health programme, delivered by local authorities, which measures the height and weight of school children in reception and year 6. The NCMP provides vital information that enables schools, local authorities and their partners to plan for and invest in key services to tackle obesity and its wider determinants. It also helps to raise parents' awareness of overweight and obesity, its consequences and provides support to make healthy lifestyle choices.

Over 98% of eligible schools participate each year, the information has been used to support funding for local projects like Hearty Lives and allows local authorities to provide services that meet the needs of local communities. It also enables Public Health England to track childhood weight trends at a population level to inform decisions such as the recent sugar tax announcement.

The measurement process is performed by the School Nursing Team during each academic year. However schools are a vital partner in delivery. They support the process by:

- Sending the child health information booklet to parents of year 6 and reception children
- Collating returned opt out forms from parents
- Provide a class list of children in reception and year 6.
- Schedule school nurse team visits
- Support parents following receipt of the letter by signposting them to the school nursing team or the Cornwall Healthy Weight team.

The NCMP year

At the start of the academic year information booklets with an opt out form are sent to schools to distribute to parents. The school nurse team then contacts schools to arrange a suitable time to visit and complete the height and weight measurements. The heights and weights are uploaded to the national system and letters are sent to all parents informing them of only their child's measurements.

The chart below shows the processes and timescales involved.

'Your child's health at school' booklets sent to schools from Public Health Cornwall Council.

There are separate booklets for Reception and Year 6 children.

Booklets contain:

- A tear-off 'opt out' form (which must be returned to opt out of any health checks)
- Information about health checks offered to children in Reception and Year 6 (vision, hearing, height and weight)
- Supporting information about who to contact and health advice.

Booklets are available in other formats and languages upon request

Schools dispatch booklets to parents/carers of children in Reception and Year 6 via satchel post.

Return the opt out form from the booklet:

Child health checks are completed using an opt out process. This means children will receive each health check unless the parent/carer has returned the tear out form and ticked the relevant opt out box.

Parents/carers must be offered the opportunity to opt out of height and weight measurement in BOTH Year 6 and Reception.

Parents/carers can opt their child out at any time by notifying the school in writing

Schools collate returned forms

School retains and collates returned forms by year group, for the school nurse/screening professional to access.

If comments have been received, please allow copying by school nurse so they can be fed back to the NCMP delivery team.

School secretary provides a list of Reception and Year 6 pupil information based on SIMS data for the school nurse.

This includes:

- first and last name of child
- gender
- date of birth
- full address and postcode
- ethnicity

School nurses schedule their visits with schools.

Schools must:

- Identify a private area where weighing and measuring can be carried out.
- Liaise with the attending school nurse if you are concerned a child may not be able to participate in the NCMP for medical reasons (e.g. if unable to stand unaided, limb in plaster, medical condition which affects growth and/or weight).
- Place NCMP posters in visible areas for parents

On the day of weighing and measuring

The school nurse collects:

- Pupil information sheet
- Any returned opt out forms and cross checks with pupil information sheet
- Any forms with comments

Then:

- Children are weighed, measured and data recorded
- Participating children are given a 'Your child has been weighed and measured today' letter

Measurements are entered onto the Health and Social Care Information Centre database.

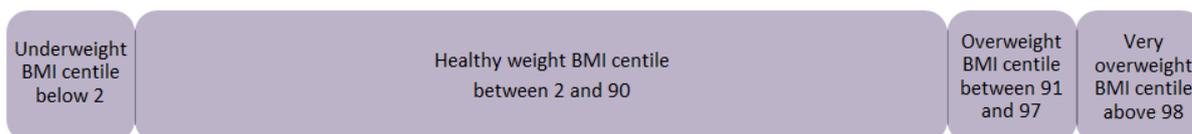
[Information Governance guidance click here](#)

Parents/carers are sent their child's measurements in a confidential letter posted to their home address within 6 weeks of weighing and measuring.

In the event of pupil absence on the day of measuring the School Nurses will plan a return visit.

How Children are measured and what the measurements mean

On the day of measurement children are weighed and have their height measured in a private area at school with their clothes on and shoes off. The measurements are not shared with the child. They are used to calculate an individual BMI centile (different to adult BMI) using height, weight, sex and age. The BMI centile is given in a number format e.g. 75th or 91st this relates to a clinical weight category.



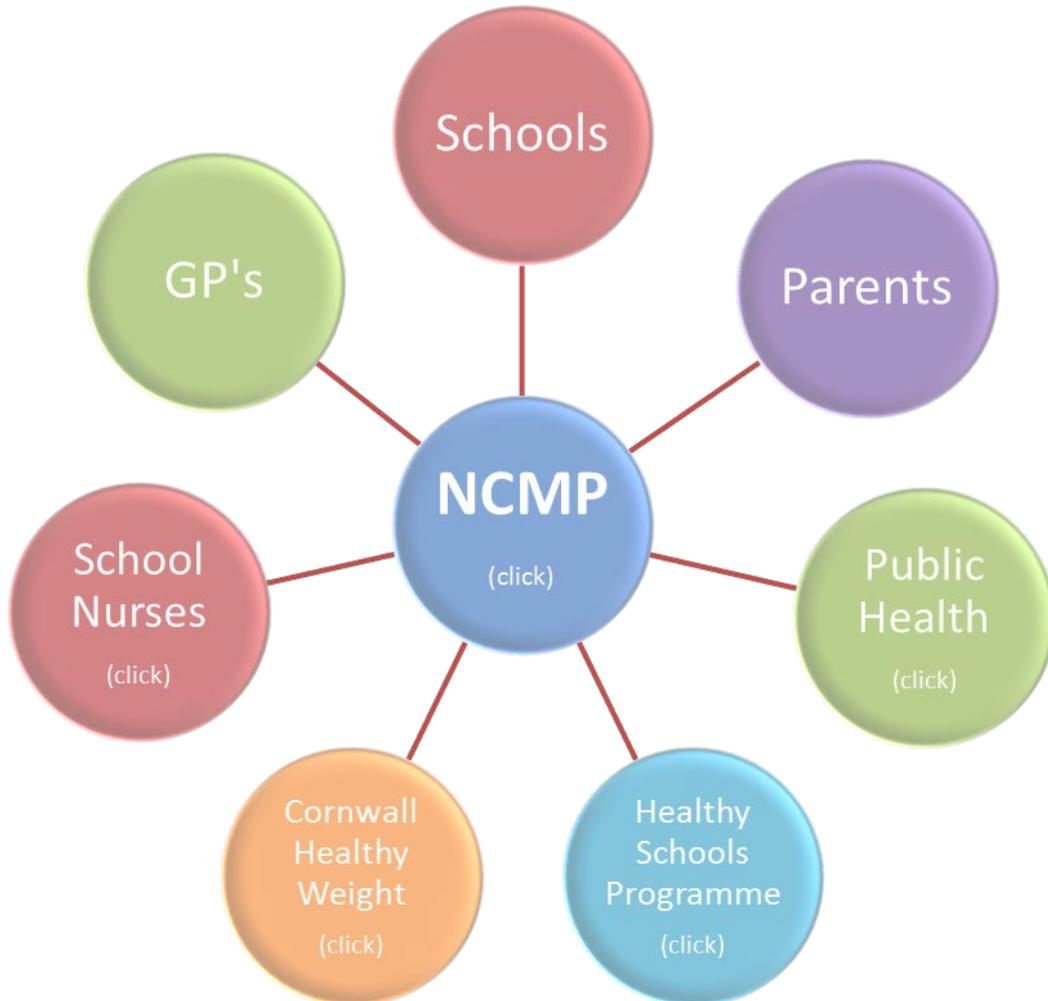
Today, many more of us – adults and children – are above the weight that we would like to be to have the best chance of remaining healthy, and as a society, we are getting larger which means it is getting harder to recognise what healthy weight *looks* like. BMI centile helps parents to assess their child's weight using an objective measure rather than relying on what appears "normal".

The measurements are sent directly to parents at their home address in a confidential envelope. **We do not share the measurements with children** because we recognise that parents are best placed to decide if sharing the measurements with their child would be helpful or not. Support is available to parents if they are unsure what to do with their child's measurements. If measurements suggest a child is underweight or very overweight we will copy their registered GP into the letter to assess if an underlying medical condition is present.

The measurements can't tell if a child is unhealthy or unfit but by knowing their child's measurements, and what this means, parents are in a better position to check if their children are maintaining a healthy lifestyle, make healthy choices or seek support.

Partnerships

Reducing child obesity levels is a complex challenge. It requires working in partnership with a number of organisations to deliver the NCMP and provide the ongoing support for children and parents. Click on the Links to find out more.



Communicating with parents

We encourage all parents to discuss the NCMP with us at each stage of the process and we provide information in the school health booklet, FAQ booklet and on-line resources including videos; there are also trained health professionals available on the phone or via email. Sometimes though, parents really value discussing the programme or their child's measurements with the class teacher or other members of school staff. Most of the time parents want reassurance that the measurements have been completed sensitively and are confidential. If parents choose to talk with school staff the frequently asked questions document at the end of this resource can help staff to answer the most common questions parents have and signpost towards an appropriate team who can offer personalised advice.

Reception and year 6 staff should have the FAQ booklet available to them particularly for the next day and a few weeks after the measurements. This is often the time when parents are most likely to seek information and advice.

Reading through the FAQ booklet with parents is a great way to reassure and address the most common questions, provide up to date information and supports school staff to signpost parents to appropriate services.

Evidence shows that parents really appreciate being kept up to date about the NCMP process.¹ The social media text samples on the next page can be used by your school before, during and after the measuring programme to do this. You can also print the posters from this toolkit to use in areas where reception and year 6 parents will easily see them.

¹ <http://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1471-2458-14-549>

Social media and text suggestions

(Any of the messages below can be adapted for your school texting service. **Please only send to Reception and Year 6 parents.**)

Suggested Twitter posts:

A couple of weeks in advance of measuring date:

The National Child Measurement Programme is taking place in our school soon. If you have any questions please call @Cornwall_HW 01209 313419

On the day of measurements:

If your child is in Reception or Yr 6 and you chose to participate in the NCMP your child has been measured today. A letter is in their book bag.

4 weeks after measuring:

Surprised by your child's NCMP measurements letter and want to discuss it? Please call 01209 313419 or visit <http://goo.gl/5NkQCQ>

Suggested Facebook posts:

A couple of weeks beforehand:

The National Child Measurement Programme is taking place in our school soon. If you have any questions you can email ncmp@cornwall.gov.uk or contact the school nurse on **01872 221400**.

On the day of measurements:

If your child is in Reception or Yr 6 and you chose to participate in the NCMP they would have been measured today. A letter will be in their book bag. You can find out more on the NCMP webpages <http://goo.gl/5NkQCQ> or call the Cornwall Healthy Weight Team on 01209 313419.

4 weeks after measuring:

If you are surprised by your child's NCMP measurements letter and want to discuss it please contact the Cornwall Healthy Weight Team on 01209 313419.

Parent Letter Templates

Parents receive a 2 sided letter which contains their child's measurements, BMI centile and supporting information. A template is used for each of the 4 clinical categories; underweight, healthy weight, overweight and very overweight.

There may be instances where bespoke letters are sent such as a child who chooses not to be measured on the day or if a child keeps their shoes on during the measurements making the measurement invalid.

The standard templates are shown in the next few pages with an example of the second side on the last letter.



04 May 2016

Private and Confidential

Parent/Carer of «FirstName» «LastName»
«Address1»
«Address2»
«Address3»
«Address4»
«Address5»
«Postcode»

NCMP Team
Children Health Improvement
Public Health Cornwall Council
1 East, County Hall
Treyew Road
Truro
Cornwall
TR1 3AY

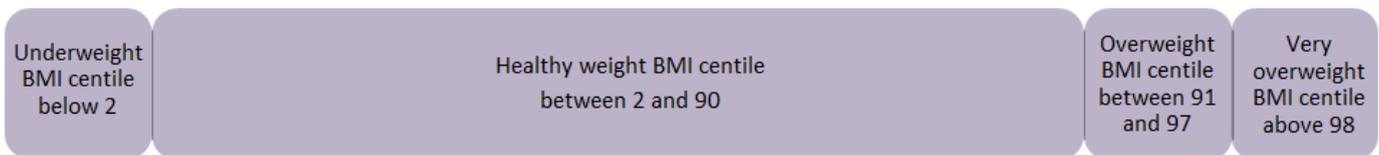
Dear Parent/Carer of «FirstName» «LastName»

Thank you for taking part in the National Child Measurement Programme at «School_Name». The school nurse team measured «FirstName»'s height and weight on «DateOfMeasurement». This letter provides you with the measurements and support around what they mean.

We know children come in all shapes and sizes and it is very difficult to tell what a healthy weight is just by looking at them. The best way to see if children's weight is in a healthy range is to use the BMI centile which is why we calculate this for your child. «FirstName»'s measurements are height «Height»cm, weight «Weight»kg which mean «FirstName»'s BMI centile is «PScore».

What do these measurements mean?

«FirstName»'s BMI centile suggests they are under weight for their age, sex and height. We share this information with your child's GP who may contact you, particularly if this is new information. We also recommend you make an appointment with your GP to discuss these measurements.



Why is BMI centile important to my child's health?

We know how important your child's health is to you and looking after your child's weight as they grow is a really important part of that. Not just because it can have an impact on their health and happiness now but because being a unhealthy weight can lead to health problems in the future. The BMI centile for children is used by all healthcare professionals and, because it relies on more than appearance, is the best way to see if a child is a healthy weight.

What next

We hope you can use this information to add to the full picture that you have of your child's health. Important factors which aren't included in the BMI measure are how much exercise your child gets and how much energy they get from the food they eat.

If, like most parents, this has got you thinking about your child's weight, we recommend having a chat with the Healthy Weight Team to find out more. You can also check the 3 steps on the next page that show what all children need to keep a healthy weight.

Who to contact

Call the **Cornwall Healthy Weight Team** on **01209 31 34 19** or email healthy.weight@nhs.net. They can help answer your questions about this letter, offer bespoke advice and organise fun sessions for the whole family about healthy weight. You can also contact your school nurse on 01872 22 14 00.

04 May 2016

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Parent/Carer of «FirstName» «LastName»
«Address1»
«Address2»
«Address3»
«Address4»
«Address5»
«Postcode»

NCMP Team
Children Health Improvement
Public Health Cornwall Council
1 East, County Hall
Treyew Road
Truro
Cornwall
TR1 3AY

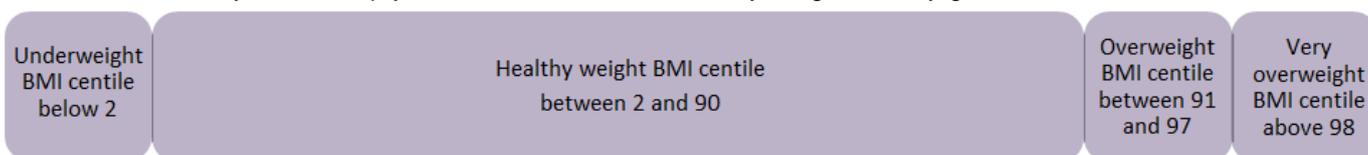
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What do these measurements mean?

«FirstName»'s BMI centile suggests they are a healthy weight for their age, sex and height. This letter provides more information on how you can help your child to maintain a healthy weight as they get older.



Why is BMI centile important to my child's health?

We know how important your child's health is to you and looking after your child's weight as they grow is a really important part of that. Not just because it can have an impact on their health and happiness now but because being a unhealthy weight can lead to health problems in the future. The BMI centile for children is used by all healthcare professionals and, because it relies on more than appearance, is the best way to see if a child is a healthy weight.

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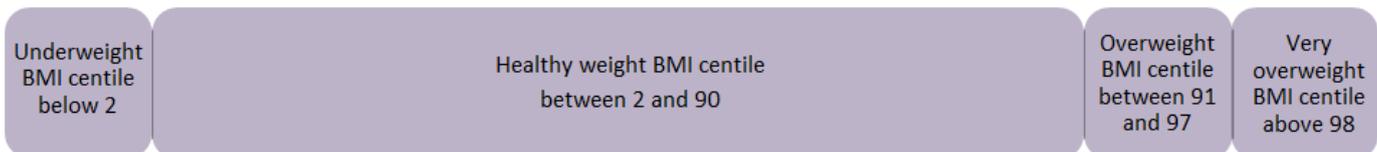
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What do these measurements mean?

«FirstName»'s BMI centile suggests they are overweight for their age, sex and height. This does not mean they are unfit but they are likely to have more body fat than considered healthy.



Why is BMI centile important to my child's health?

We know how important your child's health is to you and looking after your child's weight as they grow is a really important part of that. Not just because it can have an impact on their health and happiness now but because being a unhealthy weight can lead to health problems in the future. The BMI centile for children is used by all healthcare professionals and, because it relies on more than appearance, is the best way to see if a child is a healthy weight.

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NCMP Team
Children Health Improvement
Public Health Cornwall Council
1 East, County Hall
Treyew Road
Truro
Cornwall
TR1 3AY

Dear Parent/Carer of «FirstName» «LastName»

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What do these measurements mean?

«FirstName»'s BMI centile suggests they are very overweight for their age, sex and height. This does not mean your child is unfit, but they are likely to have more body fat than is considered healthy. We share this information with your child's GP who may contact you particularly if this is new information. We also recommend you make an appointment with your GP to discuss these measurements.

Underweight
BMI centile
below 2

Healthy weight BMI centile
between 2 and 90

Overweight
BMI centile
between 91
and 97

Very
overweight
BMI centile
above 98

Why is BMI centile important to my child's health?

We know how important your child's health is to you and looking after your child's weight as they grow is a really important part of that. Not just because it can have an impact on their health and happiness now but because being a unhealthy weight can lead to health problems in the future. The BMI centile for children is used by all healthcare professionals and, because it relies on more than appearance, is the best way to see if a child is a healthy weight.

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1.

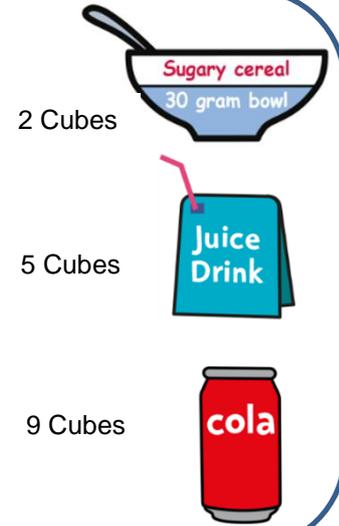
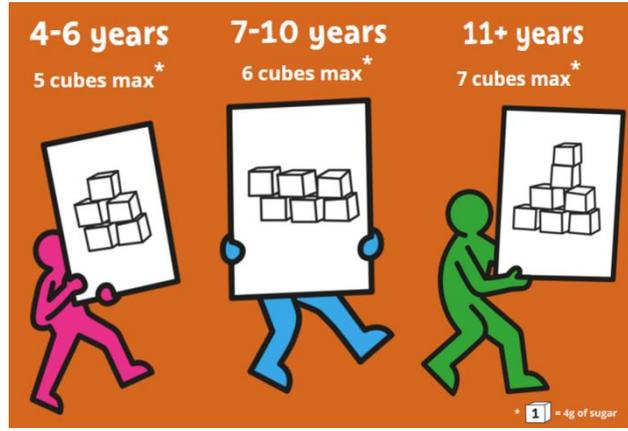
For children aged 5 – 18 years.

Does your child get moderate and vigorous activity for **at least 60 minutes every day**?



2.

Is your child getting the right amount of energy from their food? Things like sugary foods can provide too much energy which turns to fat. Here is a quick guide, for more information search: Change4Life.



3.

Children's height and weight changes really quickly so we recommend you check their BMI centile again in a few months' time, especially if you are making lifestyle changes. You can do this using an online calculator just google 'NHS BMI calculator'.

If you continue to be worried, this may also be a good time for an appointment with:

Your school nurse on 01872 221400

Or Cornwall Healthy Weight on 01209 313 419.

Or contact your GP.



Your child's information

This information has been sent directly to you and has not been shared with «FirstName», other children or school staff. This information is held by Cornwall Councils Public Health Team and is treated confidentially. We don't think you should automatically share your child's measurements with them. You may feel sharing this result could be more negative than positive. If you are unsure about sharing your child's measurements and would like advice please contact the Cornwall Healthy weight Team on 01209 31 34 19.

Thank you for reading this letter - we hope this information is useful to you. Please do call and take advantage of the free support we offer.

Information posters

We have produced two A3 posters that you may find helpful to print off and put in prominent places across your school.

The first is designed to be put up a couple of weeks before the measurements take place, the second can be used after the measurements have taken place.

NCMP will be coming to your school soon

If your child is in
reception or year 6 and
you have any worries or
would just like to ask some
questions in advance then
get in touch

Your biggest supporter



Give us a call via the Health Promotion Service on **01872 327041**

Or, join us online today - cornwallhealthyweight.org.uk

Or, email ncmp@cornwall.gov.uk



ARE YOU READY TO MAKE THE HEALTHY CHOICE?

If your child has had their NCMP results and you'd like to help them make positive changes to their lifestyle, we can support you

Your biggest supporter



Give us a call via the Health Promotion Service on **01872 327041**

Or, join us online today - cornwallhealthyweight.org.uk



Thank you!

Teachers, governors and head teachers already recognise the contribution good health plays in academic achievement but continuing this hard work in an environment of increasing financial and time pressures will be challenging.

As you continue to develop areas such as school food, PE, Healthy Schools Programmes and active travel we encourage the use of NCMP data to support planning and monitoring of projects. We want the information to be accessible and useful so please contact us with any questions, requests for data or assistance interpreting it.

Thank you for supporting the National Child Measurement Programme. We hope this resource provides you and your school with the information needed; helping to deliver a programme which aims to inform and improve the health and wellbeing of our County's children.

Useful contacts

Cornwall NCMP	- www.cornwall.gov.uk
Cornwall Healthy Weight	- www.cornwallhealthyweight.org.uk
Cornwall Healthy Schools	- www.cornwallhealthyschools.org
Get Active Cornwall	- www.getactivecornwall.co.uk
Cornwall Sports Partnership	- www.cornwallsportspartnership.co.uk
NHS Choices	- www.NHS.uk
School Nurse Team	- 01872 221400
Change4life	- www.nhs.uk/change4life