

National Child Measurement Programme: 2015/16 Public Health Briefing

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Public Health and Social Research Unit

West Sussex County Council

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Overview

The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) for England is an annual record of height and weight measurements of children in state-maintained schools in reception (aged 4-5 years) and year 6 (aged 10-11 years). The programme was launched in 2005/06, and now holds a decade of reliable data from the 2006/07 to 2015/16 school year. NHS Digital published the most recent [release](#) in November 2016.

The NCMP provides robust data for the child excess weight indicators in the Public Health Outcomes Framework, and is a key element of the Government's approach to tackling child obesity.

The NCMP uses the British 1990 (UK90) growth reference to assign each child a body mass index (BMI) centile whilst taking into account weight, height, age and gender. They are grouped using the following thresholds:

- **Underweight:** up to the 2nd BMI centile;
- **Healthy weight:** between the 2nd and 85th BMI centile;
- **Overweight:** between the 85th and 95th BMI centile;
- **Obese:** at or above the 95th BMI centile;
- **Overweight and obese combined:** combined data of children measured overweight or obese.

The weight status for each child is also made available to parents, and for this purpose clinical definitions of weight status are used which differ to those presented above. The population thresholds used in this report are lower than the clinical thresholds because the population surveillance function of the NCMP aims to capture both those children with a current weight problem and those at risk of developing a weight problem.

Local authorities are mandated to collect data from mainstream state-maintained schools and the collation and analysis of the data is coordinated by NHS Digital (formerly HSCIC).

This briefing summarises the recent child weight figures that were released by NHS Digital in November 2016. Data are available at national, regional, and local authority level and are derived from the postcode of the school (unless stated otherwise). Tables include prevalence rates and the number of children measured.

Headline Figures

- In 2015/16, over a fifth of children in reception (22.1%) and over a third of children in year 6 (34.2%) were classified as either overweight or obese in England. Nationally, the prevalence of children who are obese has increased since 2014/15 in both reception and year 6.
- In West Sussex, these figures were lower than national, but not regional levels; with 19.9% of reception age children (4-5 years old) and 30.4% of year 6 children (10-11 years old) measured as overweight or obese (Table 1 and Table 2).
- In 2015/16, the South East has the lowest prevalence of obesity for children in reception (8.1%), and second to lowest prevalence of obesity for children in year 6 (17.1%, second to the South West: 16.3%) when compared to the regions in England. The North East has the highest prevalence of obesity for children in reception (10.7%), whilst London has the highest prevalence for children in year 6 (23.2%).
- **Comparison of reception with Year 6 measurements:** In West Sussex, the prevalence of children measured as overweight or obese in year 6 consistently exceeds that of children in reception (Table 1 and Table 2). This pattern is also observed regionally and nationally.
- **Participation:** The participation rate for West Sussex County Council exceeded the data quality threshold of 85%; the participation rate was 88.7% for children in reception, and 90.5% for children in Year 6.

Table 1: Prevalence of underweight, healthy weight, overweight and obese children in reception (4 – 5 years old): England, the South East and West Sussex, 2015/16 (derived from the postcode of the school)

2015/16 NCMP	Number of children in Year R measured	Reception														
		Underweight			Healthy weight			Overweight			Obese			Overweight and Obese combined		
		%	LCI	UCI	%	LCI	UCI	%	LCI	UCI	%	LCI	UCI	%	LCI	UCI
Adur	658	*	*	*	*	*	*	14.0%	11.5%	16.8%	7.6%	5.8%	9.9%	21.6%	18.6%	24.9%
Arun	1,460	*	*	*	*	*	*	14.3%	12.6%	16.2%	8.8%	7.5%	10.4%	23.2%	21.1%	25.4%
Chichester	964	*	*	*	*	*	*	11.5%	9.7%	13.7%	7.5%	6.0%	9.3%	19.0%	16.6%	21.6%
Crawley	1,484	1.3%	0.8%	2.0%	77.1%	74.9%	79.2%	12.4%	10.8%	14.2%	9.2%	7.9%	10.8%	21.6%	19.6%	23.8%
Horsham	1,214	0.7%	0.3%	1.3%	84.0%	81.9%	86.0%	9.7%	8.2%	11.5%	5.6%	4.4%	7.0%	15.3%	13.4%	17.5%
Mid Sussex	1,601	*	*	*	*	*	*	11.7%	10.3%	13.4%	6.4%	5.3%	7.7%	18.1%	16.3%	20.1%
Worthing	1,046	*	*	*	*	*	*	13.3%	11.4%	15.5%	7.8%	6.4%	9.6%	21.1%	18.8%	23.7%
West Sussex	8,427	0.6%	0.4%	0.8%	79.5%	78.6%	80.3%	12.4%	11.7%	13.1%	7.6%	7.0%	8.2%	19.9%	19.1%	20.8%
South East region	99,596	0.8%	0.7%	0.8%	78.4%	78.1%	78.6%	12.8%	12.6%	13.0%	8.1%	7.9%	8.2%	20.9%	20.6%	21.1%
England	625,326	1.0%	0.9%	1.0%	76.9%	76.8%	77.0%	12.8%	12.7%	12.9%	9.3%	9.2%	9.4%	22.1%	22.0%	22.2%

Note. * values are suppressed for disclosure control due to small counts, or to avoid disclosure by differencing. LCI: 95% lower confidence interval; UCI: 95% upper confidence interval

Source: NHS Digital: National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) 2015/16 school year

Table 2: Prevalence of underweight, healthy weight, overweight and obese children in Year 6 (10 – 11 years old): England, the South East and West Sussex, 2015/16 (derived from the postcode of the school)

2015/16 NCMP	Number of children in Year 6 measured	Year 6														
		Underweight			Healthy weight			Overweight			Obese			Overweight and Obese combined		
		%	LCI	UCI	%	LCI	UCI	%	LCI	UCI	%	LCI	UCI	%	LCI	UCI
Adur	530	*	*	*	*	*	*	15.3%	12.5%	18.6%	19.6%	16.5%	23.2%	34.9%	31.0%	39.1%
Arun	1,293	1.0%	0.6%	1.7%	64.5%	61.9%	67.1%	15.9%	14.0%	17.9%	18.6%	16.6%	20.9%	34.5%	32.0%	37.1%
Chichester	912	0.8%	0.4%	1.6%	69.5%	66.5%	72.4%	13.6%	11.5%	16.0%	16.1%	13.9%	18.6%	29.7%	26.8%	32.8%
Crawley	1,175	1.4%	0.8%	2.2%	63.1%	60.4%	65.9%	13.8%	11.9%	15.9%	21.7%	19.4%	24.1%	35.5%	32.8%	38.3%
Horsham	1,355	1.6%	1.1%	2.4%	73.7%	71.2%	75.9%	13.1%	11.4%	15.0%	11.7%	10.1%	13.5%	24.7%	22.5%	27.1%
Mid Sussex	1,349	1.0%	0.6%	1.6%	73.7%	71.3%	76.0%	13.5%	11.8%	15.4%	11.9%	10.2%	13.7%	25.4%	23.1%	27.7%
Worthing	981	*	*	*	*	*	*	14.5%	12.4%	16.8%	17.7%	15.5%	20.3%	32.2%	29.4%	35.2%
West Sussex	7,595	1.1%	0.9%	1.3%	68.5%	67.4%	69.5%	14.1%	13.4%	14.9%	16.3%	15.5%	17.2%	30.4%	29.4%	31.5%
South East region	84,883	1.2%	1.1%	1.3%	68.0%	67.7%	68.3%	13.7%	13.5%	13.9%	17.1%	16.9%	17.4%	30.8%	30.5%	31.1%
England	544,615	1.3%	1.3%	1.4%	64.5%	64.4%	64.6%	14.3%	14.2%	14.4%	19.8%	19.7%	19.9%	34.2%	34.0%	34.3%

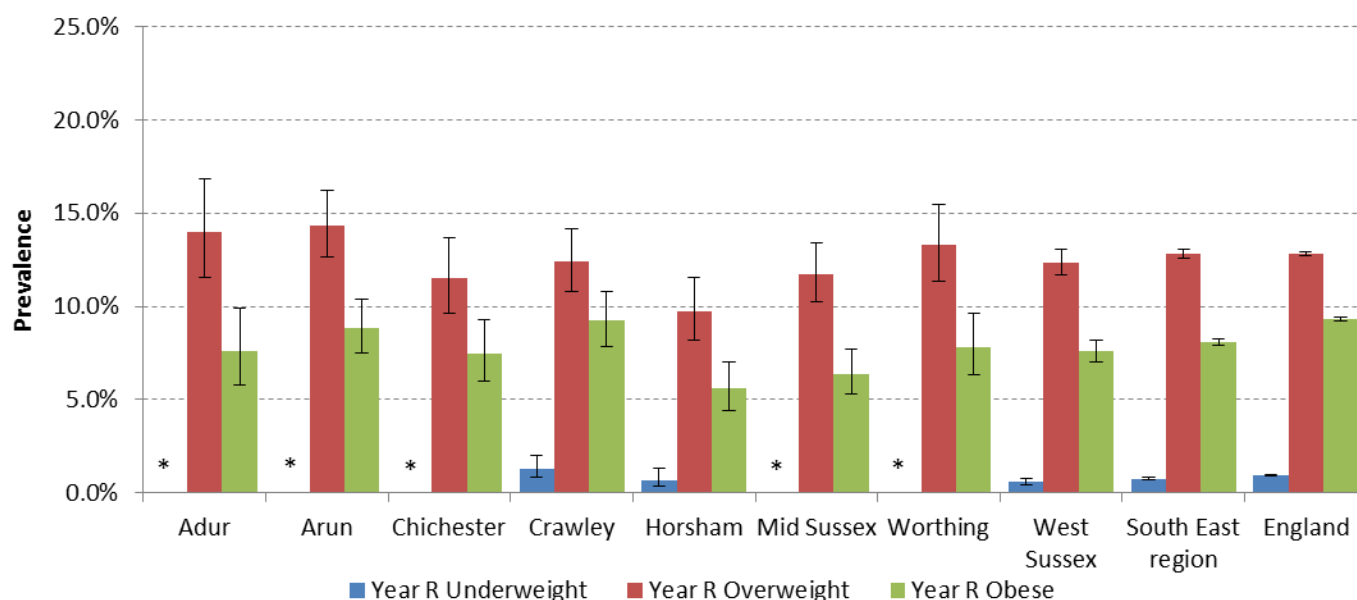
Note. * values are suppressed for disclosure control due to small counts, or to avoid disclosure by differencing. LCI: 95% lower confidence interval; UCI: 95% upper confidence interval

Source: NHS Digital: National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) 2015/16 school year

Reception

- Since 2006/07, the prevalence of overweight and obese reception children in West Sussex has been generally below that of England.
- In 2015/16, the prevalence of overweight and obesity did not differ between West Sussex (19.9%) and the South East (20.9%) for reception children. This figure has not fallen significantly below the South East since 2009/10.
- There has been little change in the prevalence of overweight and obese reception children over time in West Sussex. The lowest prevalence of overweight and obesity occurred in 2014/15 at 19.7%. The highest prevalence occurred in 2013/14 (21.8%); the only year that did not fall significantly below England.
- In 2015/16, the percentage of reception children who were a healthy weight in West Sussex (79.5%) was greater than England (76.9%).
- In addition, fewer reception children in West Sussex were underweight (0.6%) than in England (1.0%).

Figure 1: The prevalence of underweight, overweight and obese children in Reception; 2015/16 school year; West Sussex, the South East and England.



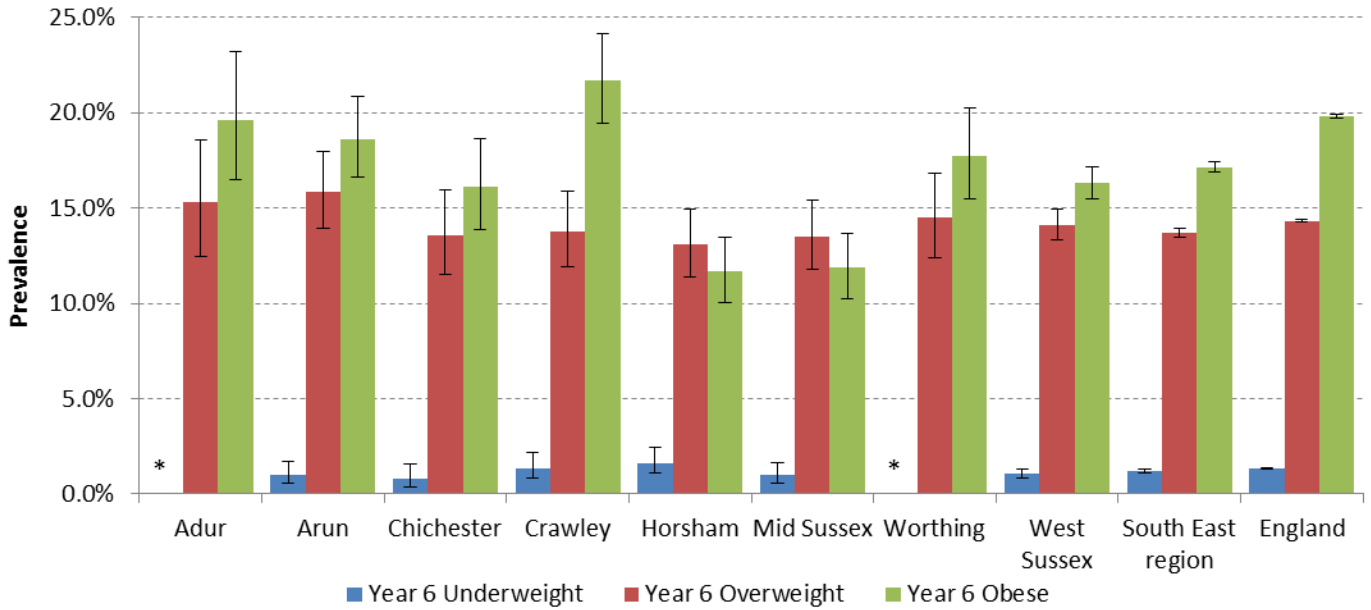
Note. * Values are suppressed for disclosure control due to small counts.

Year 6

- The prevalence of overweight and obese year 6 children in West Sussex has been consistently lower than that reported for England since 2006/07, and this remains the case for the measurements taken in the 2015/16 school year. The prevalence of overweight and obese year 6 children was 30.4% in West Sussex, and 34.2% in England.
- This appears to be due to a higher proportion of obesity among year 6 children nationally (19.8%) than locally (16.3%); with no significant difference in the proportion who are overweight (West Sussex: 14.1%; England: 14.3%).
- Prevalence rates of overweight and obese year 6 children are similar for West Sussex (30.4%) and the South East (30.8%) in 2015/16.
- As with previous years, in 2015/16 the percentage of children with a healthy weight is higher in West Sussex than England; the respective prevalence rates were 68.5% and 64.5%.

- There is no difference between prevalence of underweight year 6 children in West Sussex (1.1%) and England (1.3%).

Figure 2: The prevalence of underweight, overweight and obese children in Year 6; 2015/16 school year; West Sussex, the South East and England.

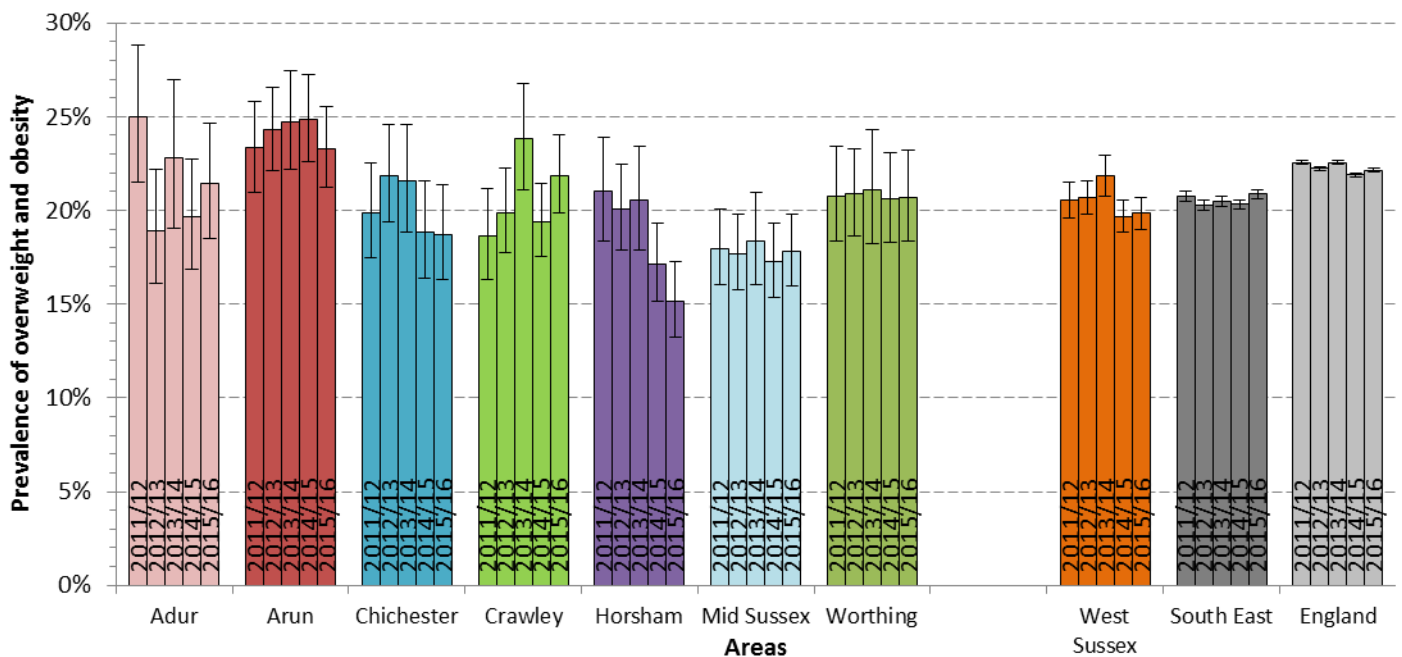


Note. * Values are suppressed for disclosure control due to small counts.

Local Authorities

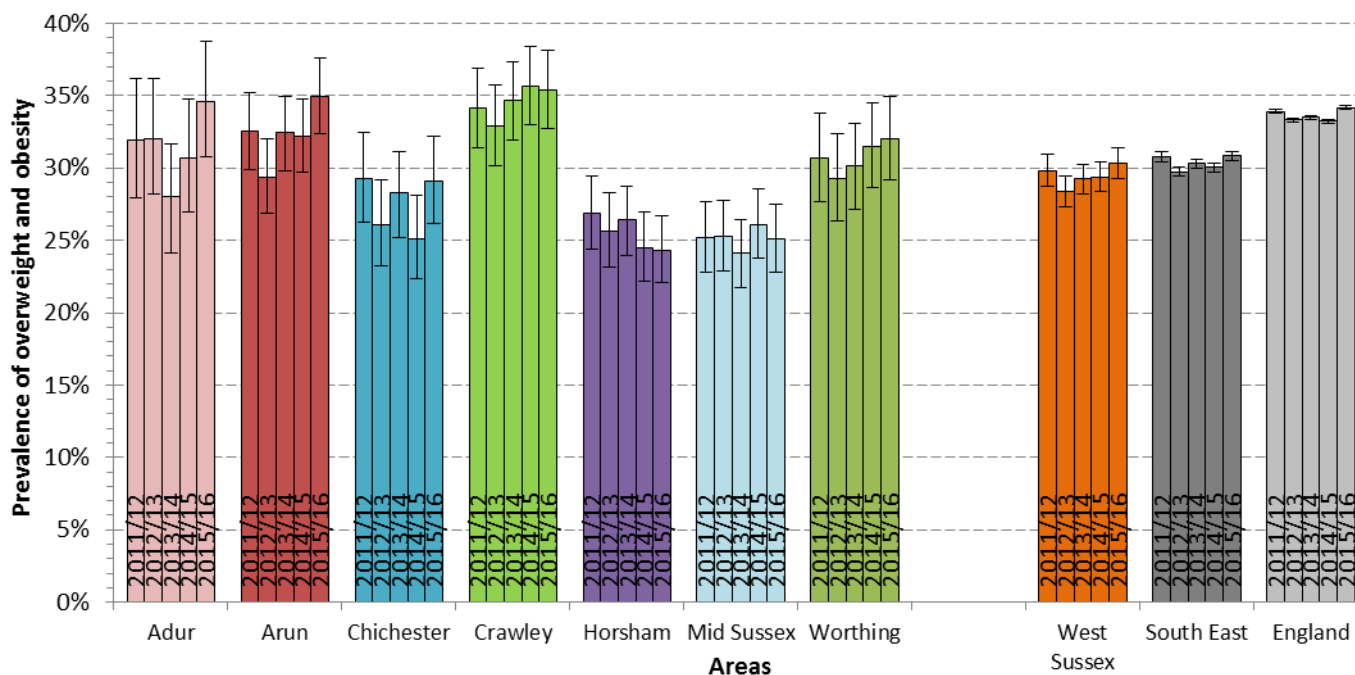
- Prevalence rates within local authorities in West Sussex are varied (Figure 3 and Figure 4). For both school years, there was no significant change in the percentage of overweight/obese children for any one local authority within the county compared to the previous year.

Figure 3: The prevalence of overweight and obese children in Reception (derived from the postcode of the child); 2011/12 to 2015/16 school years; local authorities in West Sussex



Source: NHS Digital: National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) 2011/12 to 2015/16

Figure 4: The prevalence of overweight and obese children in Year 6 (derived from the postcode of the school); 2011/12 to 2015/16 school years; local authorities in West Sussex



Source: NHS Digital: National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) 2011/12 to 2015/16

- Horsham has a significantly lower prevalence of overweight and obese reception children in 2015/16 when compared to 2011/12; decreasing from 21.0% to 15.1%. No other local authorities have seen a significant change in prevalence since 2011/12 for either school year.
- In 2015/16, the prevalence of obese reception children was significantly lower in Horsham (5.6%) than in Arun (8.8%) or Crawley (9.2%). For children in year 6, the prevalence of obesity was significantly lower in Horsham (11.7%) and Mid Sussex (11.9%) than all other local authorities in West Sussex.
- The prevalence of obesity is greatest in Crawley for children in reception (9.2%) and in year 6 (21.7%).

Nationally

Gender differences

- Prevalence of obesity is significantly higher among boys than girls in both school years. In reception, 22.7% of boys and 21.5% of girls were overweight or obese. In year 6, the percentage of boys and girls who were overweight or obese were 36.0% and 32.3% respectively.
- In both school years, a greater percentage of girls were a healthy weight than boys. 77.8% of girls and 76.1% of boys were a healthy weight in reception. These percentages are lower in year 6, with 66.2% of girls and 62.9% of boys a healthy weight.

Deprivation

- Prevalence of obesity is strongly related to deprivation. Deprivation is based on the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)¹ which classifies children into a deprivation decile based on the location of their school (1 = most deprived, 10 = least deprived).

¹ The 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranks areas from least to most deprived based on seven different dimensions of deprivation (such as income and crime deprivation).

- The deprivation gap, as measured by the differences in obesity prevalence between the most and least deprived areas has increased over time.
- In reception, 12.4% of children who attend a school in the most deprived decile were obese compared to 6.2% of those attending schools in the least deprived decile; these differ significantly from the national average (9.3%).
- Similarly in year 6, more than a quarter of children (25.7%) attending a school in the most deprived decile were obese compared to 13.3% of children attending a school in the least deprived decile; again, these percentages differ significantly from the national average (19.8%).

Ethnicity

- In England, children in the ethnic groups 'Black or Black British', 'mixed ethnicity' and 'any other ethnic group' were above the national average for both school years. In addition, children in the 'Asian or Asian British' ethnic group were above the national average for year 6, but not reception.
- Prevalence of obesity in children from 'White' (8.8% and 18.1%) and 'Chinese' (7.3% and 17.2%) ethnic groups were significantly lower than the national average in both school years.

West Sussex County Council Response

Although obesity in both age groups is lower than the England prevalence the local figures continue to demonstrate that there is a need for both prevention and weight management within West Sussex's child and young people's population. These include:

1. Ensure greater reported participation within NCMP.
2. A children and young people's healthy weight care pathway has been developed with stakeholders. This covers birth to 19 years. The pathway aims to offer guidance on the identification and assessment of unhealthy weight and weight management intervention. NCMP forms part of the pathway as a way of identifying children with an unhealthy weight and providing an opportunity to proactively engage with parents. The pathway does need to be updated in 2017 to reflect changes to services.
3. The pathway has a number of different approaches to prevent and tackle childhood and young person's obesity based on i) increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary behaviours, ii) improving eating behaviour and iii) adopting a healthy diet, iv) family (or parent/child) focussed programmes and services.
4. Maintaining a competent workforce able to deliver high quality preventative and management interventions to West Sussex families. Make Every Contact Count training to practitioners working with this age group helps professionals identify families at risk of unhealthy weight. The new Healthy Child programme also expects the public health nurses within the programme to deliver interventions to those identified as being overweight or obese. Weight management services available across West Sussex include:
 - a. HENRY (Healthy Exercise and Nutrition for the Really Young) - prevention and weight management intervention provided by health visitors and children and families centre staff to families at risk of obesity. Additional staff from health and children and family centres are being trained to deliver some programmes in early 2017, following a loss of skills as a consequence of service reorganisation.
 - b. AliveNKicking - a weight management service for children above a healthy weight. This provision is targeted in areas of deprivation and areas with the highest obesity prevalence; the contract for this service is ending March 2017. The Healthy Child Programme will be delivering interventions as well as identification from April 2017.

- c. Junior Weight Management - local district provision for families in need of support. This service offers additional access to weight management provision to families in need of intense one-to-one support, however the numbers are small.
- 5. School based healthy lifestyle events across the county which reinforce healthy eating and physical activity messages as well as school bag based advertising and publicity. Both mechanisms offer referral into the weight management services. From January 2017 the school meal provider, Chartwells, will be delivering the Eat Right Stay Bright programme to schools as part of their contract with West Sussex.
- 6. Public health specialist staff continuing to support the Healthy Children and Family Centre development and monitor the food and physical activity policy for early years.
- 7. Public health specialist staff work with County Catering to ensure school meals and meals in residential settings (e.g. Children Looked After) meet Food Standards. Over the last 2 years the amount of sugar in school meals has been reduced by 1.52kg per pupil per school year . A local five-pronged sugar reduction programme supporting the national PHE approach includes development of sugar reduction champions, school debates and community events.