



Press Statement

For immediate release
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New local authority data confirms 64 per cent of adults in England are overweight or obese

New local authority excess weight [data](#) published today by Public Health England confirms that 64 per cent of adults are overweight or obese. This has been the estimated position for some years and now, for the first time, local data on excess weight is available.

The new data also shows for the first time the considerable variation in the numbers of people who are overweight or obese in different parts of England, as well as the extent of the challenge many local authorities and the local NHS face.

On the positive side, as shown in previously published data from the Health Survey for England, the rate of increase in overweight and obese adults has slowed in recent years and in children, levels are stabilising. However, welcome though this is, given the health problems associated with being overweight or obese there are no grounds for complacency.

Professor Kevin Fenton, Director of Health and Wellbeing at PHE said:

“Local authorities are ideally placed to develop co-ordinated action across their departments, services and partner organisations to tackle overweight and obesity in the local population. Many local authorities are already working hard to reduce obesity levels and these new data will help all local areas monitor their progress in tackling these longstanding problems. Public Health England is committed to supporting local government and the local NHS.

“People who are overweight or obese have an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers. Excess weight can also affect self-esteem and mental health. Overall health problems associated with being overweight or obese cost the NHS over £5 billion each year.

“There is no silver bullet to reducing obesity; it is a complex issue that requires action at individual, family, local and national levels. We can all play our part in this by eating a healthy balanced diet and being more active.”

Case study: Lose Weight Feel Great in Wigan Borough

Wigan Council is determined to reduce the overweight and obesity levels of their local population. ‘Lose Weight Feel Great’ is a comprehensive weight management programme for adults across Wigan Borough. It incorporates a number of services to support the particular needs of people who are overweight or obese. These include a specialist weight

management service, group sessions in local communities and the 'Trim Down Shape Up' service designed specifically for men.

Professor Kate Ardern, Director of Public Health for Wigan Council, said:

"Since the launch of Lose Weight Feel Great in 2009, over 16,700 people have taken up the community weight management group sessions, losing a combined total of over 72,000kg. Over 60% of people who complete the programme lose at least 5% of their starting weight, which brings significant clinical benefits, and 12 months after finishing the programme, over 25% of these people maintain or lose more weight which is very encouraging."

Catherine Hankin, 27 from Wigan, said:

"I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis at 16 and really struggled with my weight after this. My rheumatologist told me about the 'Lose Weight Feel Great' service so I joined up by calling their telephone line."

"My whole experience of 'Lose Weight Feel Great' has been life changing. I have gone from being unhappy, having zero confidence in myself, doing no exercise and eating too many ready meals to a much happier, healthier fitter person who is loving exercise. I managed to lose 16% of my body weight, which was 24.5 lbs, and it has made a real difference to my arthritis symptoms."

Cllr Keith Cunliffe, Cabinet Member for Adult Health, Well-being and Social Care at Wigan Council, said:

"I am delighted that PHE is releasing this new adult excess weight data. We know that being overweight or obese can significantly increase your risk of long term conditions such as heart disease and it also carries a burgeoning cost to the NHS. Members of the public like Catherine deserve the best support possible to help them lose weight. The data will help us monitor our progress towards achieving a downward trend in excess weight by 2020."

Professor Martyn Regan, Director of PHE Greater Manchester Centre, said:

"The new data will help local authorities to understand the extent of the problem in their area and support their on-going efforts to tackle overweight and obesity and improve the health of their local population."

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Notes to editors

1. Public Health England's mission is to protect and improve the nation's health and to address inequalities through working with national and local government, the NHS, industry and the voluntary and community sector. PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health.
2. Excess weight is a term used for overweight including obesity; it is defined in adults as a body mass index (BMI) $\geq 25\text{kg/m}^2$. Body mass index (BMI) is a summary measure of an individual's weight which accounts for their height. It is calculated by dividing a person's weight in kilograms by the square of their height in metres.

3. The data is a new indicator that forms part of the Public Health Outcomes [Framework](#)
4. The data is based on adjusted, self-reported height and weight measurements which have been collected via questions in the Active People Survey by Sport England since January 2012. This provides data to monitor excess weight in adults (aged 16 years and over) at local authority level for the Public Health Outcomes Framework. PHE has undertaken extensive analysis of the data to ensure it provides a high quality and robust indicator of the prevalence of excess weight among the adult population.
5. Excess weight data is available for all local authorities in England - Unitary Authorities, London Boroughs, Metropolitan Boroughs, County Councils and District Councils. To view a spreadsheet containing the excess weight data only, see the [PHE obesity website](#).
6. PHE continues to provide data, tools and support to local authorities working to tackle excess weight and obesity, see the [PHE obesity website](#). The recently launched national Change4Life Smart Swaps campaign encourages the public to make some manageable like-for-like swaps to their diet to remove excess calories, fat and sugar. For example instead of drinking a sugary fizzy drink, replace it with the diet version of the drink or even better, low fat milk or water. A healthy lifestyle, which includes eating a balanced diet that is low in sugar and fat and being physically active, will help to prevent becoming overweight or obese.

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