

# Spotlight Public Health

Evidence and policy briefings

Healthy Weight

November 2024

## Purpose

Spotlight briefings summarise the key information that decision makers need to keep up to speed on important health issues. Each briefing puts the science, national policy and guidance into a local context to support local decisions.

Briefings are shared with a wide range of partners including South Gloucestershire Health & Wellbeing Board, Elected Members, Council staff, and members of the Locality Partnership. Please share with others who would find it helpful.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list for these briefings please email:

[publichealthsouthgloucestershire@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:publichealthsouthgloucestershire@southglos.gov.uk)

# Healthy Weight Commitments

## Integrated Care Strategy (ICS) 2024-2029

- To develop a whole-system programme for healthy weight with commitment from all system partners.

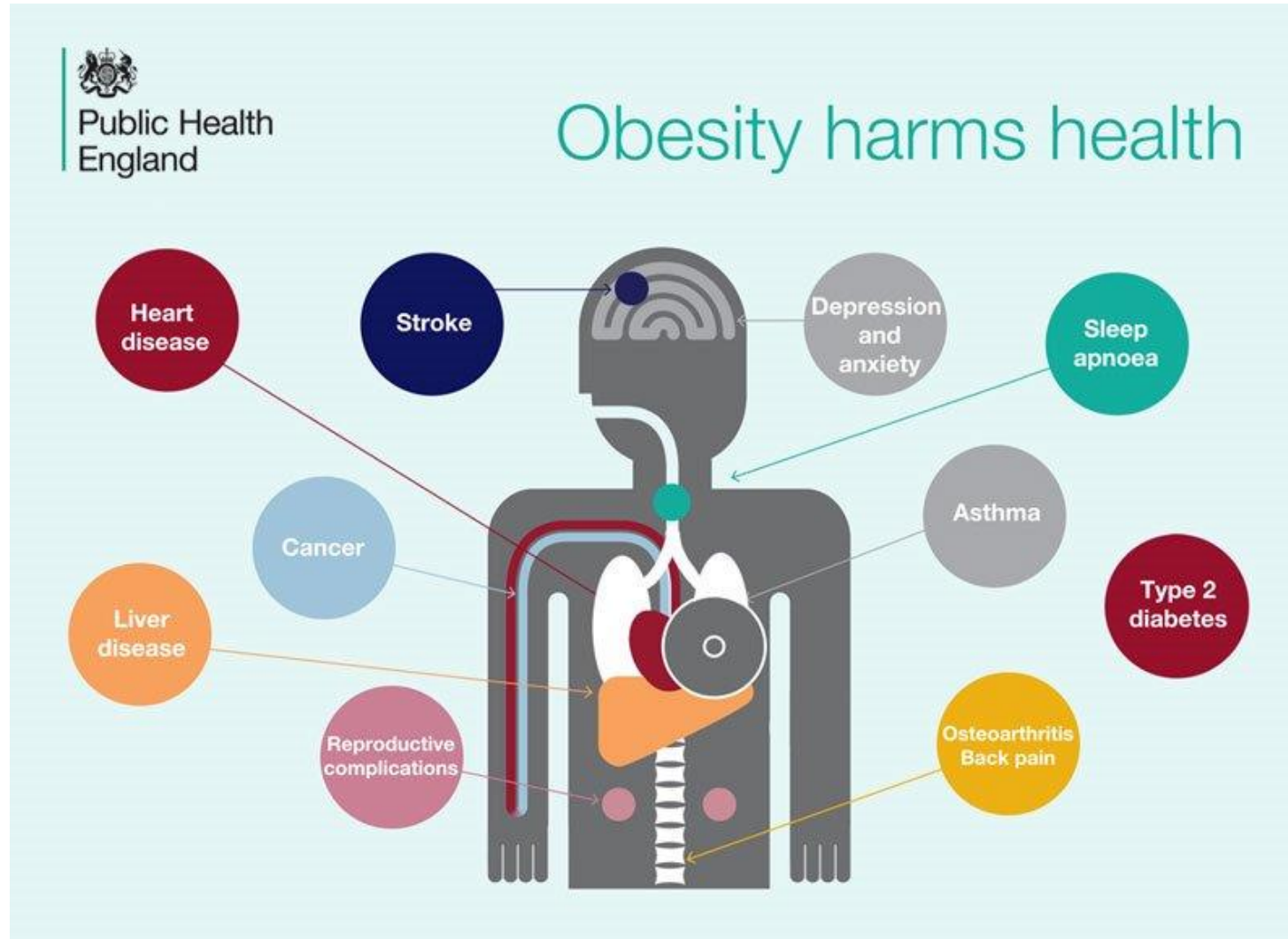
## Council Plan 2024-2028

- To deliver a healthy weight declaration in South Gloucestershire.



Source: [ICS Strategy, 2024-2029](#) & [South Gloucestershire Council Plan, 2024-2028](#)

# Why does it matter?

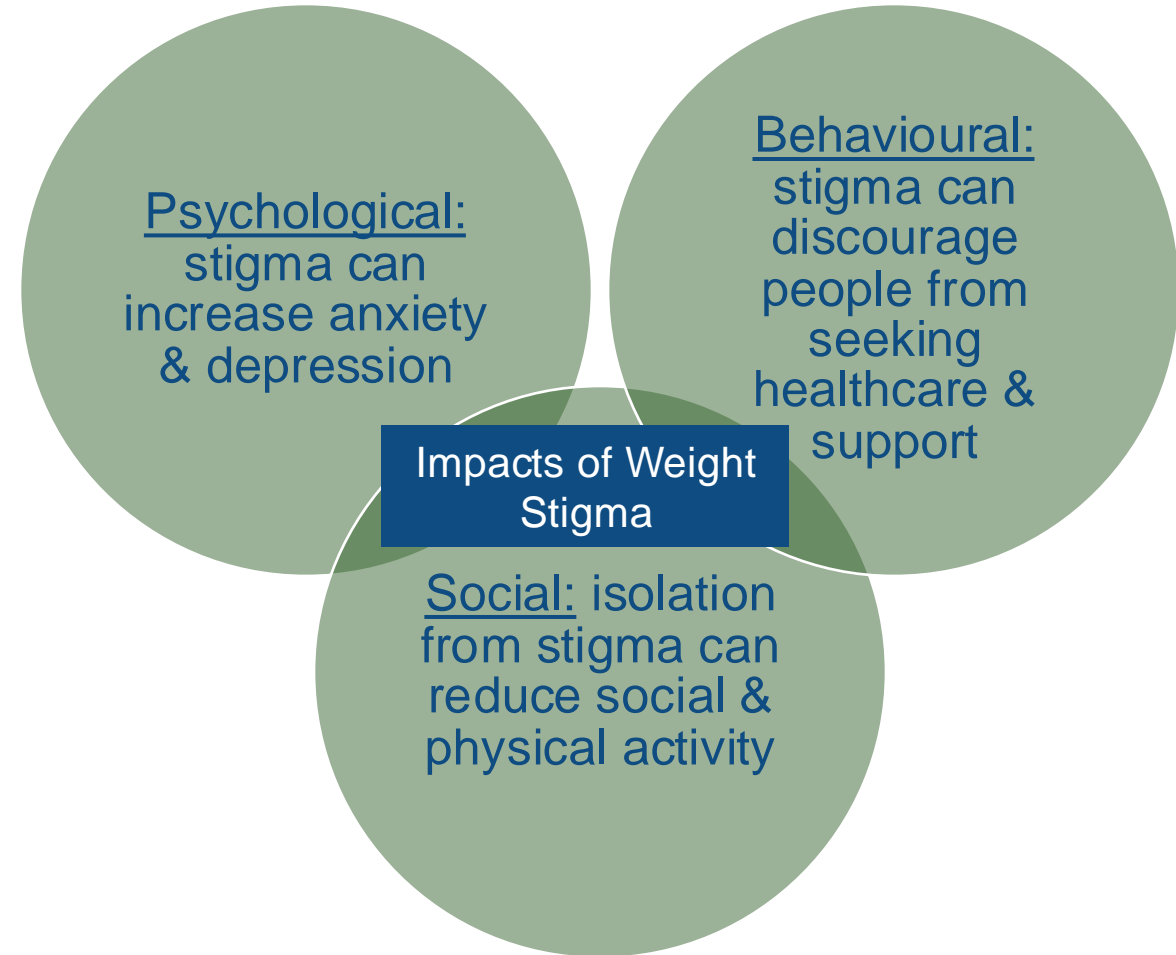


# Why does it matter?

Weight related challenges can result in stigma, bias and discrimination which has profound and harmful impacts, particularly for people living with overweight and obesity.

Many individuals who experience weight stigma may have experienced trauma, which can lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as disordered eating.

Trauma-informed practice may help break this cycle by addressing the underlying trauma that often leads to unhealthy behaviours.



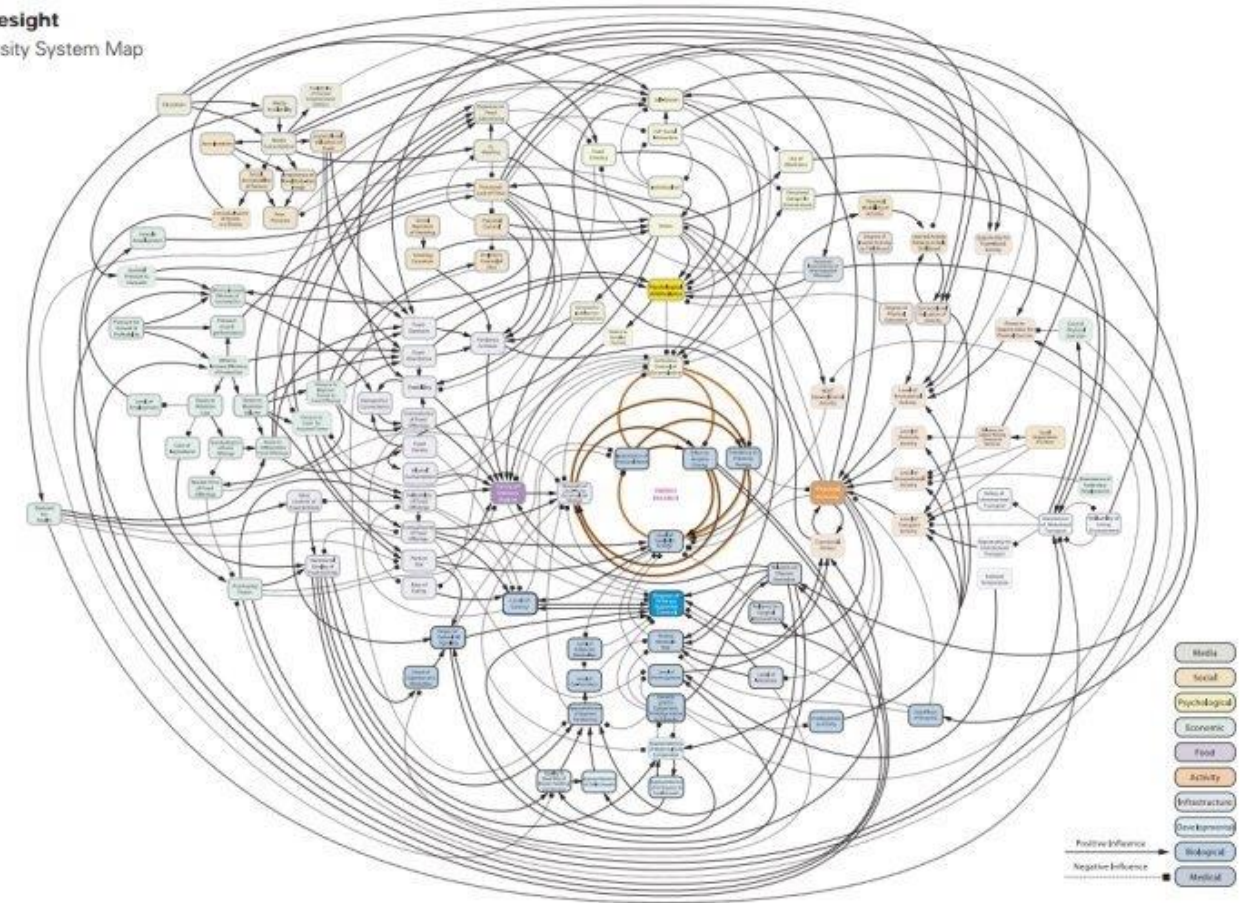
Source: [Food Active – Weight Stigma Resource Hub, 2024](#)



# Evidence

“The cause of obesity goes way beyond what an individual chooses to eat and can be influenced by a wide range of other factors including environmental, biological, genetic, economic and social factors”

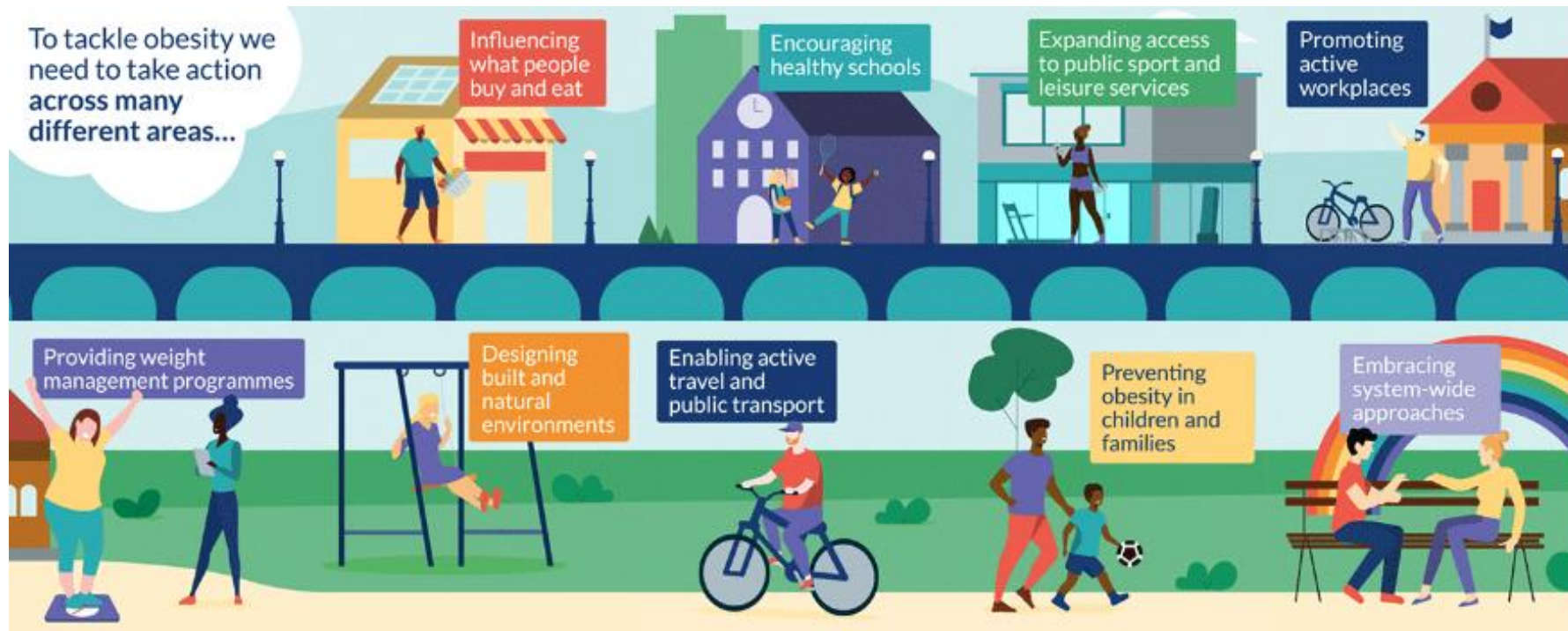
Foresight  
Obesity System Map



Source: [Foresight's Tackling Obesities: Future Choices, 2007](#)

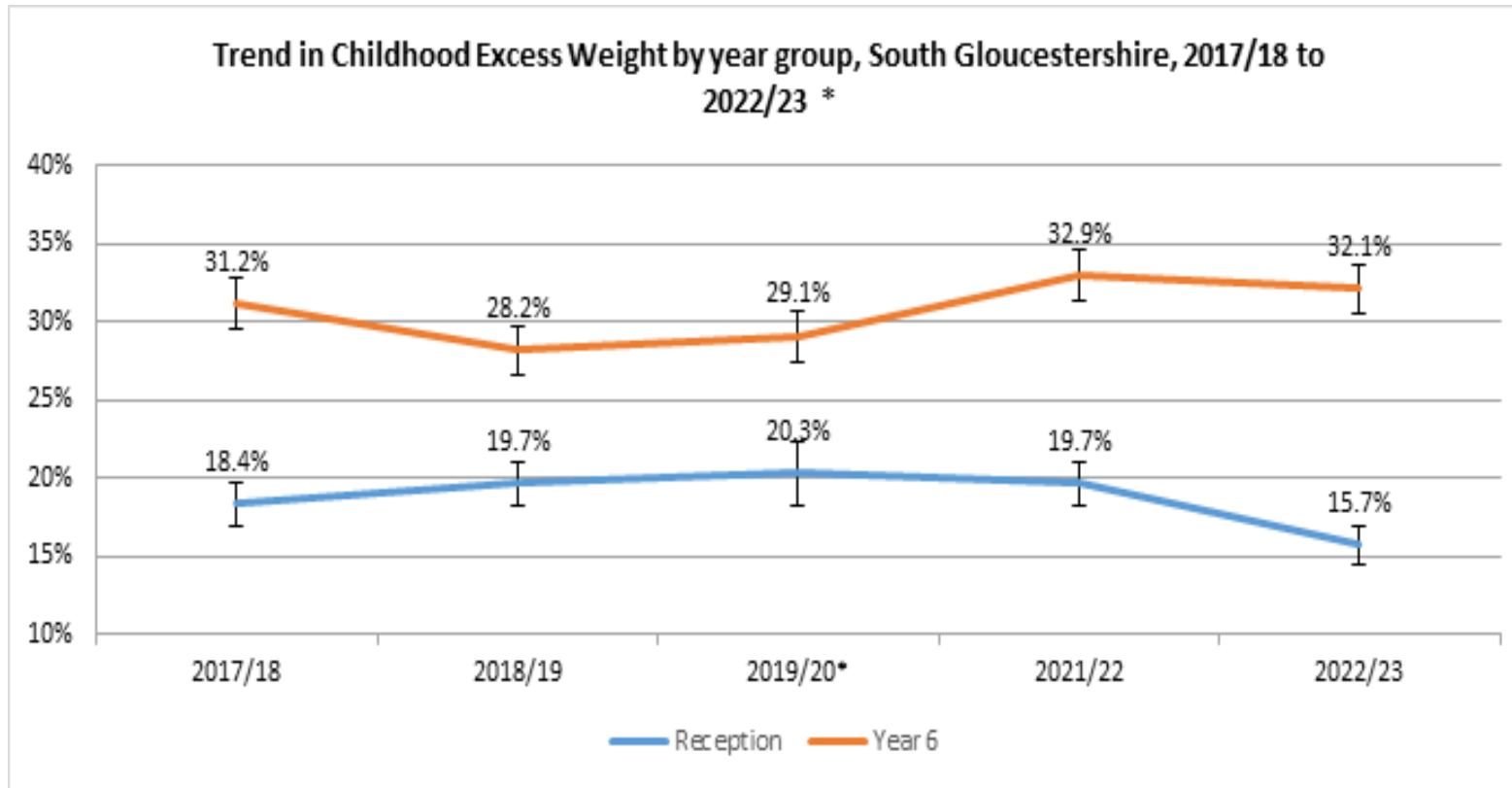
# Evidence

Population-level interventions that take steps to address social, environmental, economic and legislative factors.



– Source: National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). *How Local Authorities Can Reduce Obesity: Embracing System-Wide Approaches to Support Healthy Weight*. November 2021.

# South Gloucestershire context - children



The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) is a mandatory function of Local Authorities and has collected robust and reliable data for many years. In South Gloucestershire, School Nursing Services are commissioned to measure the height and weight of children in reception and year 6 in all state funded infant, primary and junior schools.

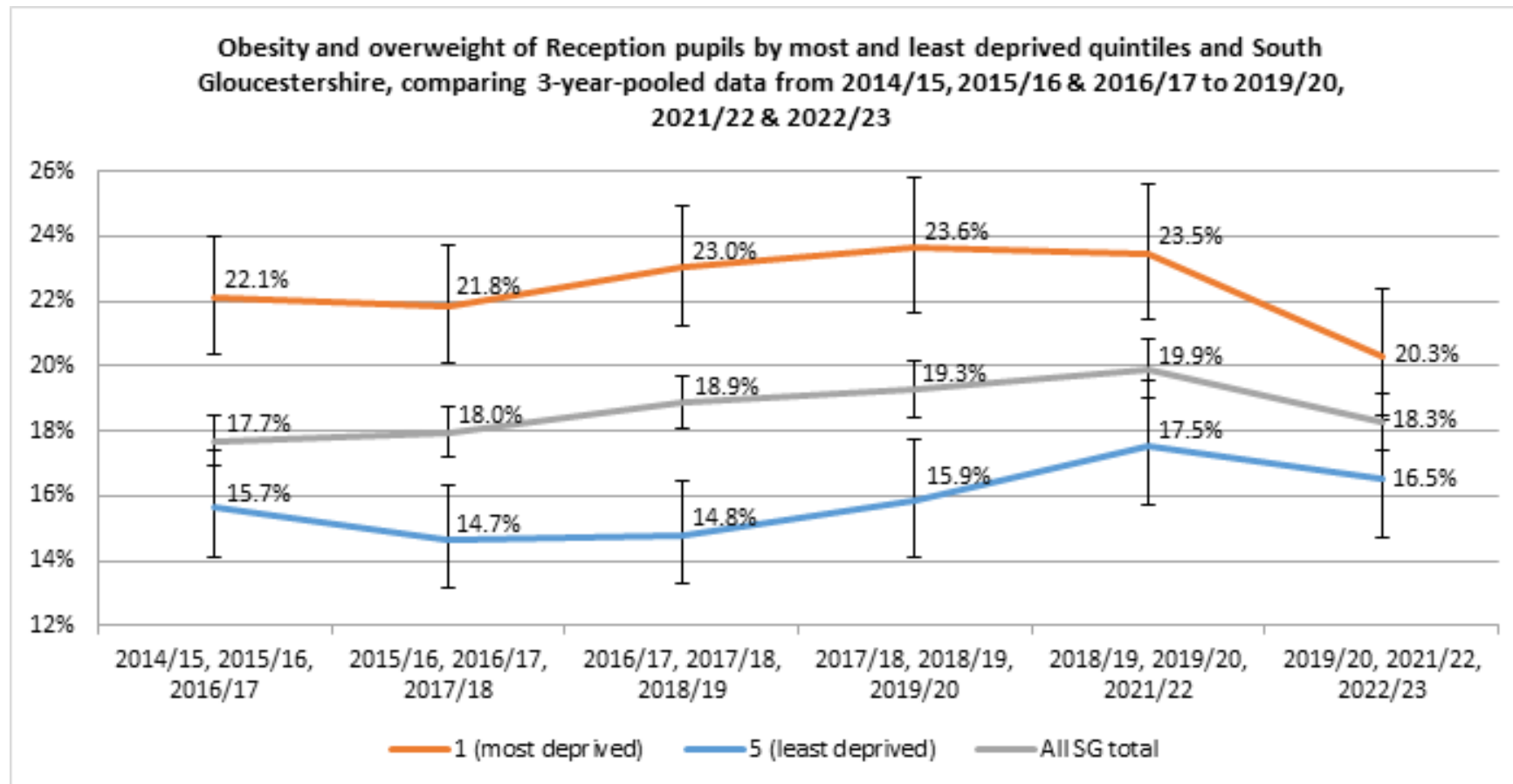
In reception, the trend in excess weight increased steadily between 2017/18 (18.4%) to 2021/22 (19.7%), however in 2022/23 there was a significant decrease to 15.7%.

In year 6, there is an increase between 2018/19 and 2021/22 of 4.7%, with strong evidence that these years are statistically different. The prevalence of 32.1% in 2022/23 is amongst the highest ever recorded in South Gloucestershire.



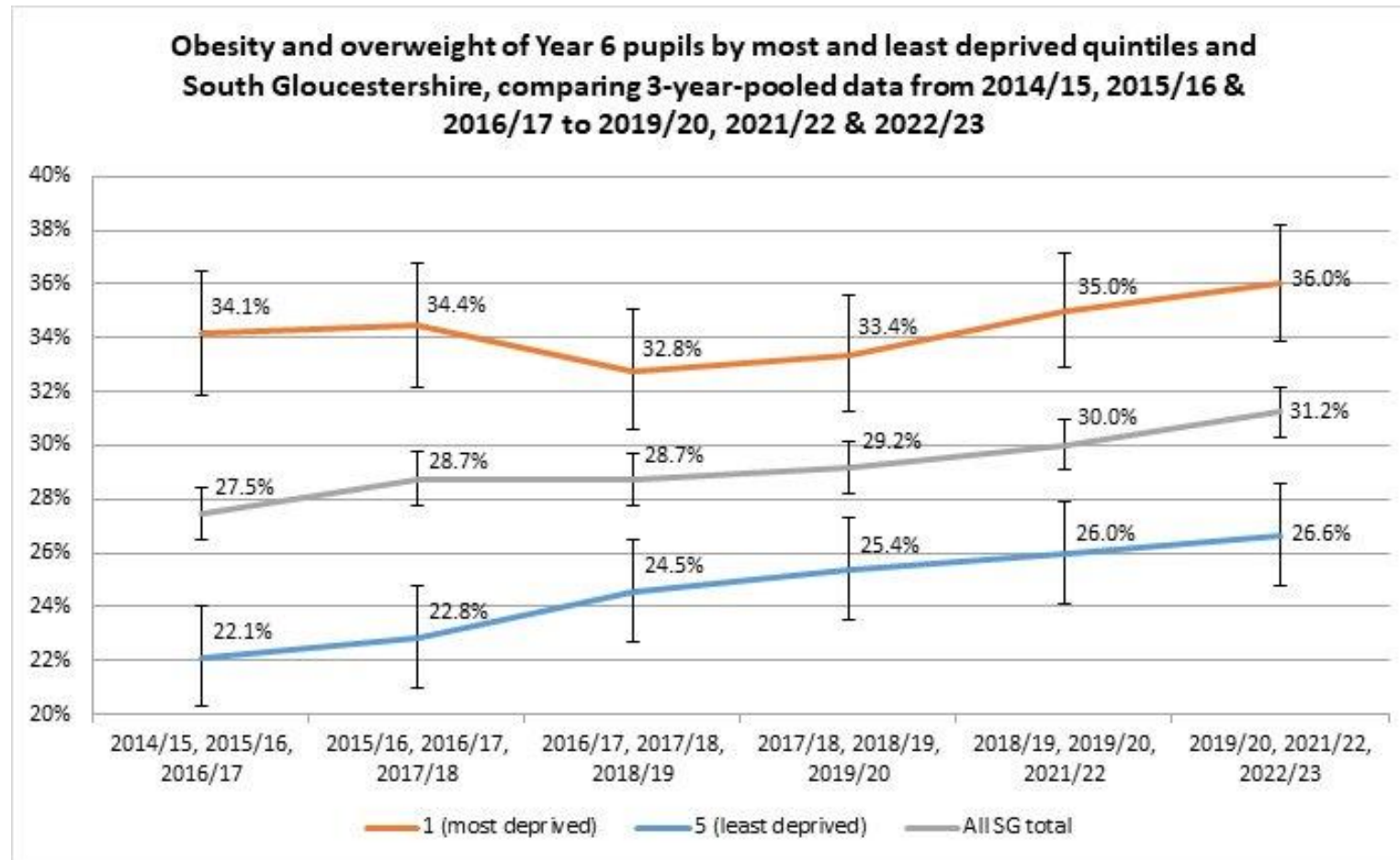
# South Gloucestershire context - children

The prevalence of excess weight in the most deprived areas among reception children has been statistically higher than both the least deprived areas in total. However, in the most recent years the inequality gap between the most deprived and least deprived areas has decreased.



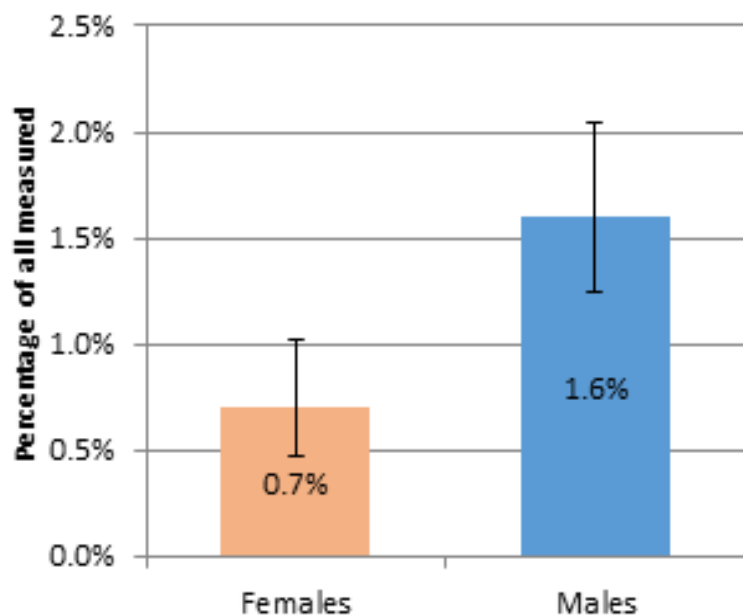
# South Gloucestershire context - children

The gap in prevalence between the most deprived areas and the least deprived areas remains statistically different, for year 6 aged children. The prevalence in the most deprived areas is statistically higher.

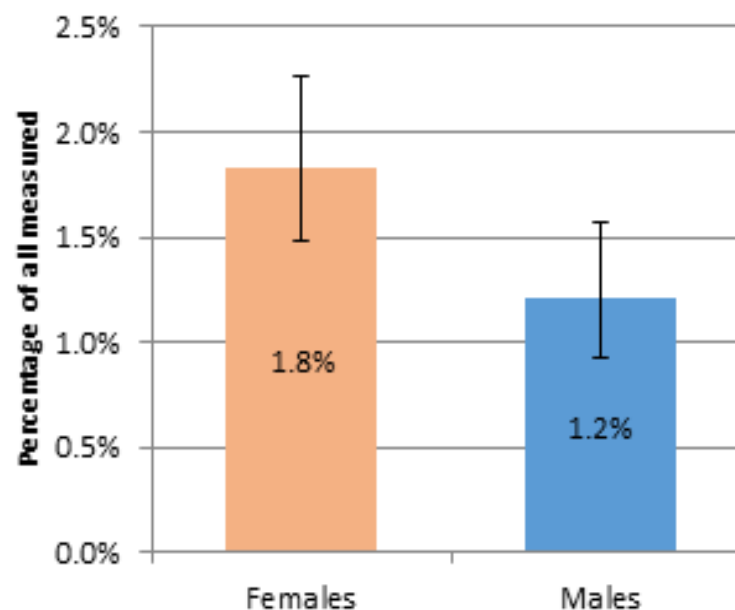


# South Gloucestershire context - children

**Underweight amongst Reception Year pupils by sex and year of measurement, South Gloucestershire, 2019/20, 2021/22 & 2022/23 pooled**



**Underweight amongst Year 6 pupils by sex and year of measurement, South Gloucestershire, 2019/20, 2021/22 & 2022/23 pooled**



Overall prevalence of underweight in South Gloucestershire is low at around 1.1% for reception and 1.8% for year 6 (22/23).

Pooled data over 3 years, shows that at ages 4-5 the prevalence of underweight is statistically higher among males than it is among females. However, by age 10-11 the prevalence of underweight among females is higher.

The health impacts of being underweight for a sustained period can include poor emotional well-being, impaired growth, a weakened immune system, bone health issues, and nutritional deficiencies.

# South Gloucestershire context - adults

## Adults (2022/23):

- **63%** of adults living with overweight and obesity
- **22%** of adults living with obesity in early pregnancy
- **24%** of adults reported as physically inactive



## Obesity does not affect all groups equally

Obesity is more common among:



People from more deprived areas

Older age groups

Some black and minority ethnic groups

People with disabilities

Source: [OHID Fingertips, 2022/23](#)

# Local action – Healthy Weight Service



The Healthy Weight Service supports individuals with a BMI of  $\geq 30$  or  $\geq 91$ st centile through a 14-week group programme, which includes support sessions and access to leisure facilities. The programme is delivered in a compassionate way that avoids dismissing concerns, shaming, or blaming individuals, and it is tailored to meet individual needs.

Individuals can self-refer or be referred by a professional via the [One You South Glos website](#).

Additionally, the One You service signposts other support options, such as self-help NHS apps or more specialist programmes for those with specific health conditions. We have also piloted extended brief interventions as part of the NCMP (National Child Measurement Programme).

## Programme aims:

- To provide a healthy weight service for families with children aged  $\geq 5$  years and for adults  $\geq 18$  years that have been identified as above a healthy weight
- To support the reduction health inequalities and reduce the risk of poor health outcomes
- To deliver a flexible and service user led service that is individualised, trauma-informed and culturally competent
- To provide holistic support and signposting to other relevant services to those that may require it



## Local action - whole system approach to healthy weight

### Our vision is to deliver a BNSSG system-wide, population-level approach to healthy weight that:

- Is focused on prevention
- Takes a life course perspective
- Is a sustainable and adaptable system approach that can respond to changing contexts, emerging evidence, and community needs, and can be integrated into existing systems and structures
- Engages with and supports communities
- Works in partnership across stakeholders and sectors to create a shared vision and a coordinated approach to promoting a healthy weight
- Focuses on the impacts on health & wellbeing rather than size or appearance

## Next steps – Healthy Weight Declaration (HWD)

To support a whole system approach, we are developing a bespoke Intergrated Care System Declaration based on the Local Authority and NHS Healthy Weight Declaration that have been designed by Food Active.

The previous Local Authority declarations have included 16 commitments divided into five sections:

- strategic/system leadership;
- commercial determinants;
- health promoting infrastructures;
- organisational change/cultural shift;
- monitoring and evaluation.



Source: [Food Active – Local Authority Healthy Weight Declaration, 2024](#)

# How to support: what you can do to help

## Promote local services:

- Actively signpost to local services that support healthy weight and wellbeing.

## Engage with local communities:

- Engage with residents to better understand barriers to achieving a healthier weight & feedback to inform decision-making and community-led solutions.

## Champion healthier environments:

- Advocate for healthier environments, such as promoting safe walking and cycling routes, supporting green space development, and ensuring accessibility to fresh and nutritious food.

## Call to Action:

- Advocate and support a system wide prevention approach, such as the Healthy Weight Declaration and multi-agency collaboration across BNSSG to address complex causes of weight related issues.

## Help to reduce weight stigma:

- Encourage the use of non-stigmatising, person-first language when discussing weight, focus on creating healthier weight environments, actively challenge misconceptions that weight is a personal choice.

## Further information

- [Food Active: Weight Stigma Resource Hub](#)
- [Local Government Association: Empowering Healthy Places](#)
- [OHID: Adult Obesity, Applying All Our Health](#)
- [OHID: Childhood Obesity, Applying All Our Health](#)
- [GOV.UK: Healthy Weight Environments, using the planning system to create healthy weight environments](#)
- [South Gloucestershire Healthy Weight Services](#)

# Thank you

For any feedback or spotlight topic requests please contact:  
[publichealthsouthgloucestershire@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:publichealthsouthgloucestershire@southglos.gov.uk)