

# Is excess weight an inequalities issue for children in Lambeth?: Comparing prevalence of overweight & obese 5-year-olds in the LEAP area with the rest of Lambeth

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## INTRODUCTION

Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP) is a programme to better the lives of children in four wards of Lambeth (Stockwell, Coldharbour, Vassall and Tulse Hill). LEAP aims to support the diet and nutrition of children in the area, as well as their social and emotional and communication and language development. Child weight at 5 is an outcome we can measure to provide some indication of the diet and nutrition needs of our community.

Prevalence of excess weight (overweight and obese) for reception children in Lambeth had shown some decrease in recent years, and sits at 24% for 2016/17. However, children living in the LEAP wards have higher excess weight prevalence than children from other Lambeth wards.

↔ The four wards were selected for A Better Start because they showed greatest need in priority outcome areas.

📈 Child obesity is said to be a visual marker of inequality in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

💗 LEAP aims to effect positive change in these areas.

## AIM

💡 Understand more about the differences in weight between reception-age children who live in the LEAP area and those who do not, and the inequalities that underpin this.

❓ Consider what this means for the LEAP programme and wider early years strategy.

## METHODS

- Validation of submitted NCMP data for multi-year analysis 2012/13 – 2015/16 (4 years).
- Geographical comparison based of child residence (LEAP Vs Non-LEAP). Non-Lambeth residents excluded.
- Analysis of NCMP data for reception:

📖 Descriptive – Residence, sex, ethnicity, locally derived deprivation centiles.

⚙️ Analytical – Linear regression by residence, sex, ethnic groups and locally derived deprivation centiles / multiple regression analysis.

## WHAT THE DATA TOLD US?

### Descriptive

There is a higher prevalence of children classified as overweight (2%) and obese (3%) in the LEAP wards compared to non-LEAP. Wards with higher prevalence of excess weight tend to also be wards with higher levels of deprivation. The most deprived pupils are more likely to live in a LEAP ward than a non-LEAP ward\* (\*p <0.0001).



LEAP:  
More than 1 in 4 children are overweight or obese at school entry

### Multiple regression

LEAP resident pupils are more likely to be overweight or obese compared to non-LEAP (Lambeth) residents (p<0.0001).

All ethnic sub-groups are more likely to be overweight or obese compared to White British pupils across Lambeth (p<0.0001 for African, Any Other Black, Other White and Caribbean groups). Black African pupils are twice as likely to have excess weight than White British pupils (p<0.0001). Differences in ethnic groups are not significant when analysis includes only children living in more deprived areas.

Child poverty is significantly associated with obesity across Lambeth, ~1.4 times higher for children in more deprived quintiles (p<0.0001).

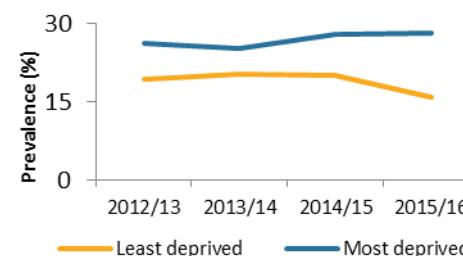
	Category	Odds ratio	95% conf. limit	
			LCI	UCI
Residence	Non-LEAP		Reference	
	LEAP	1.26	1.14	1.40
Ethnic sub-groups	White British		Reference	
	African	2.01	1.67	2.39
	Other Black	1.40	1.16	1.70
	Other White	1.72	1.45	2.03
	Caribbean	1.66	1.38	2.10
	Asian	1.19	0.92	1.55
Local deprivation quintiles	Mixed	1.29	1.05	1.58
	Least /1 <sup>st</sup> quintile		Reference	
	Most/5 <sup>th</sup> quintile	1.38	1.19	1.61
	4 <sup>th</sup> quintile	1.43	1.23	1.66
	3 <sup>rd</sup> quintile	1.18	1.01	1.38
	2 <sup>nd</sup> quintile	1.11	0.96	1.30

### Linear regression

Although descriptive analysis shows some divergence in excess weight trends between LEAP wards and non-LEAP wards in Lambeth, linear regression analysis found no difference in the change over time between these geographies.

However, the gap in excess weight prevalence appears to be widening between the most deprived and least deprived children in Lambeth. The LEAP wards are among some of the most deprived areas in Lambeth, and therefore any worsening in excess weight prevalence in the LEAP wards is potentially associated with the deprivation gap across the borough.

Proportion of children classified as overweight or obese at reception		
Year	Least deprived	Most deprived
2012/13	19.24	26.31
2013/14	20.35	25.35
2014/15	19.96	27.97
2015/16	15.93	28.17



## KEY MESSAGES

Children from Lambeth are significantly more likely to be overweight or obese at school entry if they live in areas of higher deprivation or if they are from BAME groups. The relationship with ethnicity is likely to be mediated by deprivation.

The four wards that form LEAP have significantly higher levels of deprivation than other wards in Lambeth. Reception children living in the LEAP area are therefore more likely to have higher levels of excess weight. Comparison of LEAP wards with non-LEAP wards found this to be significant.

There are multiple, complex causes of excess weight. International (WHO, 2016) and national (PHE, 2017) evidence suggests that the wider environment is part of the picture. These wider environmental factors include density of fast food outlets and the availability of appropriate space for physical activity. Further analysis of local data would increase understanding of the impact the wider environment has on the weight of 5-year olds in Lambeth. Geo-spatial analysis of NCMP data and deprivation scores with data about green space and fast food outlets would enable us to explore further the relationship between where a child lives in Lambeth and their weight.

If a child is overweight or obese at an early age they are more likely to be obese later in life, which associates with multiple health conditions (WHO). The higher prevalence of excess weight in year 6 NCMP data (NHS Digital) suggests that child obesity becomes a growing problem as children age. It is vital to tackle unhealthy weight as early as possible to support healthy outcomes and reduce inequality for children in the LEAP area and beyond.

## WHAT ARE WE DOING?

LEAP	Across Lambeth
<p>There is a comprehensive healthy nutrition pathway in development for the LEAP area. The pathway starts before a child is born and continues throughout the early years via a network of interventions, child, parental and family support, workforce development and community action, creating a healthier environment and enhanced existing provisions.</p> <p>Find out more about our diet and nutrition programme of work here: <a href="http://www.leaplambeth.org.uk">http://www.leaplambeth.org.uk</a></p>	<p>A healthy weight care pathway programme is in place across the borough to promote healthy weight for children aged 0-12. The programme integrates early years prevention (including promotion of breastfeeding), school initiatives and specialist services.</p> <p>The wider environment and food system in Lambeth are also being addressed by promoting walking and cycling, restricting the establishment of fast food outlets near schools and improving access to fruit and vegetables.</p>