

Obesity in North Tyneside

Obesity is a common, serious, and costly chronic disease. Having obesity puts people at risk for many other serious chronic diseases and increases the risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Almost two-thirds of adults in England are living with excess weight for their height (BMI $\geq 25\text{kg/m}^2$), with similar figures in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Excess weight affects all population groups but is higher for those people aged between 55-74 years, people living in deprived areas and in some Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups compared with the general population. It is established that the health risk of excess weight for some BAME groups occur at a lower BMI than for White populations.

Living with excess weight is a risk factor for a range of chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, many cancers, liver, and respiratory disease. Obesity is also associated with reduced life expectancy, and lower quality of life.

Evidence ⁽¹⁾ on the links between weight status and COVID-19 outcomes are drawn primarily from three sources: retrospective cohort studies, clinical audits of patients with COVID-19 in hospital and routine primary care records with data linkage to outcomes. This evidence suggests excess weight is associated with an increased risk of the following for COVID-19: a positive test, hospitalisation, advanced levels of treatment (including mechanical ventilation or admission to intensive or critical care) and death.

The risks seem to increase progressively with increasing BMI above the healthy weight range, even after adjustment for potential confounding factors, including demographic and socio-economic factors. There is also some evidence to suggest that disparities in excess weight may explain some of the observed differences in outcomes linked to COVID-19 for older adults and some BAME groups.

66.2% of all adults (18 years +) in North Tyneside are reported to be either overweight or obese and this figure is above the England average of 62.3% and that of the North East (64.9%) ⁽²⁾. The relationship between deprivation and obesity is less pronounced in adults as it is in children. Comparing the most deprived and least deprived quintiles in England there is a 13% increase in the proportion of adults that are overweight compared to their more affluent counterparts. The published Health Survey for England data highlighted that almost 7 out of 10 men are overweight or obese (66.9%) and almost 6 out of 10 women are overweight or obese (59.7%) ⁽³⁾. North Tyneside has similar rates to the England average; however, the challenge still remains that almost 2/3 of adults in England and North Tyneside are either overweight or obese.

Being overweight or obese is the main modifiable risk factor for type 2 diabetes. In England, obese adults are five times more likely to be diagnosed with type 2

diabetes than adults of a healthy weight. Currently 90% of adults with type 2 diabetes are overweight or obese ⁽⁴⁾.

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015, which measure and rank local levels of deprivation, are calculated by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The indices are based on 37 indicators, across seven domains (income deprivation; employment deprivation; health deprivation and disability; education, skills, and training deprivation; crime; barriers to housing and services; and living environment). The Index of Multiple Deprivation measures the overall deprivation experienced by those living in an area. Women and men living in the most deprived areas are more likely to be obese than those living in the least deprived areas.

Although the borough of North Tyneside is now one of the least deprived in the North East, stark inequalities persist within the borough. We know that in North Tyneside there are more reported domestic abuse incidents in wards with higher levels of deprivation. For North Tyneside any proposal for a weight management programme focusing on areas of deprivation must consider the following areas (please see ward profiles as separate attachments):

- Riverside
- Chirton
- Wallsend
- Howdon
- Longbenton
- Valley
- Collingwood

The root causes of obesity are complex and addressing this requires a set of equally complex solutions that involves reducing excess daily calorie consumption and increasing daily physical activity. Other contributory factors are known to affect healthy weight.

Physical activity has an important role to play in obesity prevention for both children and adults. Physical activity also has other health benefits which include preventing cardio-vascular disease and treating depression and anxiety. The Chief Medical Officers of the UK recommend that children aged 5-18 should be engaged in 60 minutes of physical activity each day and for adults the recommended level is 150 minutes per week.

Percentage of Adults Active (aged 16+):

England	67.2%
North East	64.9%
North Tyneside	67.1%

⁽⁵⁾

North Tyneside has similar rates to the England average but remains above the North East average in terms of the percentage of physically active adults.

Factors such as fast-food outlets in deprived areas also impacts on obesity. There is consistent evidence which links the number and density of hot food outlets and deprivation. The Foresight report found that obesity levels and density of hot food outlets tend to be higher in deprived areas than in wealthy areas ⁽⁶⁾.

The North East and North Tyneside have a higher concentration of fast-food outlets compared to England. It is important to note that the data is based upon a snap-shot taken in 2014 and this was prior to the introduction of the adoption of local planning supplementary document (policy DM3.717) which prevents the development of A5 use within a 400m radius of any middle and secondary school in North Tyneside. The Covid-19 pandemic has also seen a relaxation of rules around planning rules so pubs and restaurants for example can operate as hot food takeaways during the coronavirus outbreak.

References:

- (1) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907966/PHE_insight_Excess_weight_and_COVID-19_FINAL.pdf
- (2) <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/obesity#page/3/gid/1/pat/6/par/E12000001/ati/102/are/E06000047/iid/93088/age/168/sex/4/cid/4/tbm/1>
- (3) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-obesity-patterns-and-trends/patterns-and-trends-in-adult-obesity-national-data>
- (4) Public Health England (based on Active Lives survey, Sport England) available at <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/obesity#page/4/gid/1/pat/6/par/E12000001/ati/102/are/E08000022/iid/93088/age/168/sex/4>
- (5) <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/physical-activity/data#page/3/gid/1938132899/pat/6/par/E12000001/ati/102/are/E08000022/iid/93014/age/298/sex/4>
- (6) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/287937/07-1184x-tackling-obesities-future-choices-report.pdf