



CHILDHOOD OBESITY FACTSHEET



LBHF
BI Service

Childhood obesity is a public health issue that has long-term physical and mental health consequences and a substantial economic cost. Obesity is a complex problem with many drivers, but the root cause is an energy imbalance: intake of more energy through food and drink than energy used through activity. Younger generations are becoming obese at earlier ages and staying obese for longer. Obesity rates are highest for children from the most deprived areas, suggesting a socioeconomic inequality exists.¹

The London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham has 38,801 residents aged under 18 years, representing 18.2% of the borough's population (2022).² This factsheet highlights key indicators of childhood obesity including obesity prevalence and trends, physical activity & related health indicators.

KEY INDICATORS

Obesity prevalence in Reception children (age 4-5) classified as overweight or obese (2023/24)³

8.5% ●

Obesity prevalence in Year 6 children (age 10-11) classified as overweight or obese (2023/24)³

24% ↑

Proportion of physically active children and young people (2022/23)

43.5%

BACKGROUND



According to the World Health Organisation, childhood obesity is one of the most serious global public challenges in this century.⁵ For children, **body mass index (BMI)** is used to classify overweight and obesity, accounting for age and gender:

Classification	BMI centile range (for population monitoring)
Healthy weight	Between 2 nd and 84 th centile
Overweight	Between 85 th and 94 th centile
Obese	At or above 95 th centile

CHILDHOOD OBESITY IN LONDON

In 2023–2024, 37.8% of children aged 10 and 11 in London were classified as overweight or obese. The second highest rate of all English regions, after the Northeast (38.6%) – compared to 35.8 per cent on average across England.

At the borough level, the percentage of children children classed as overweight or obese are highest in Barking and Dagenham, and Newham.

PREVALENCE



~ 2 in 10 children
(22.4%) aged 4-5 are overweight or living with obesity in H&F.
*Compared to 20.90% in London & 22.10% in England.³



~ 4 in 10 children
(35.7%) aged 10-11 are overweight or living with obesity in H&F.
*Compared to 37.80% in London & 35.80% in England.³

- The percentage of children (age 15) with a **mean daily sedentary time more than 7 hours** in the last week (2014/15):
64.6% in H&F⁴
Compared to 70.1% in England.
- The percentage of children (age 15) that were **physically active for 1 or more hours** per day (2014/2015):
9.2% in H&F.⁴
Compared to 13.9% in England.

WIDER DETERMINANTS



Many wider determinants of health act as risk factors for developing childhood obesity. These are likely to have increased due to COVID-19.

Deprivation

- Children in the most deprived areas of England are more than twice as likely to be obese.
- H&F ranks 19th most deprived out of 33 London Boroughs, with a deprivation score of **22.3**, based on the **Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2019)**.¹⁰
- In H&F, **9.9%** of children (under 16) live in **absolute low-income families(2022/23)**.¹⁰
- Eligible for **free school meals is 28.8%** amongst children¹⁰

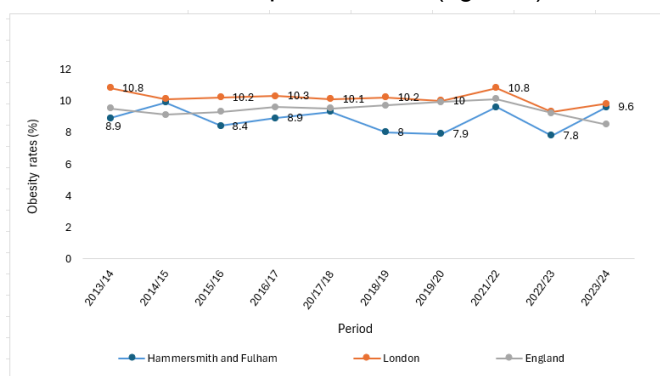
Oral health

- Oral health is associated with childhood obesity and can result in more cavities.
- H&F ranks 18th out of 33 London Boroughs for percentage of 5-year olds with experience of dental decay (**27.9%**).¹⁰

TREND

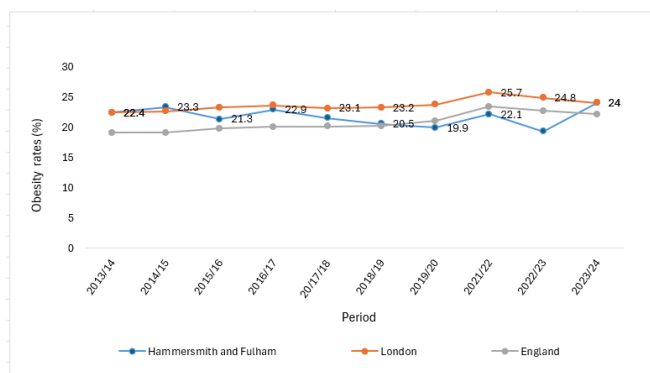
For the period, 2013/14 to 2023/24, the obesity rates for reception children in H&F is lower than England and London. Furthermore, the percentage of obese children in reception in H&F shows fluctuations with no clear upward or downward trends but a pattern of significant rises and falls. Over the period, the obesity rate for London has been consistently higher and the most stable. In England, the rate dropped sharply for the last 2 years.

Trend for Reception children (age 4-5):³



The obesity rate for year 6 children in H&F were generally on a downward trend from 2014/15 to 2022/23, but 2023/24 showed a sharp increase. London and England have shown a gradual increase during the period. Overall London has the highest obesity rates for Year 6, particularly after 2020.

Trend for year 6 children (age 10-11):³



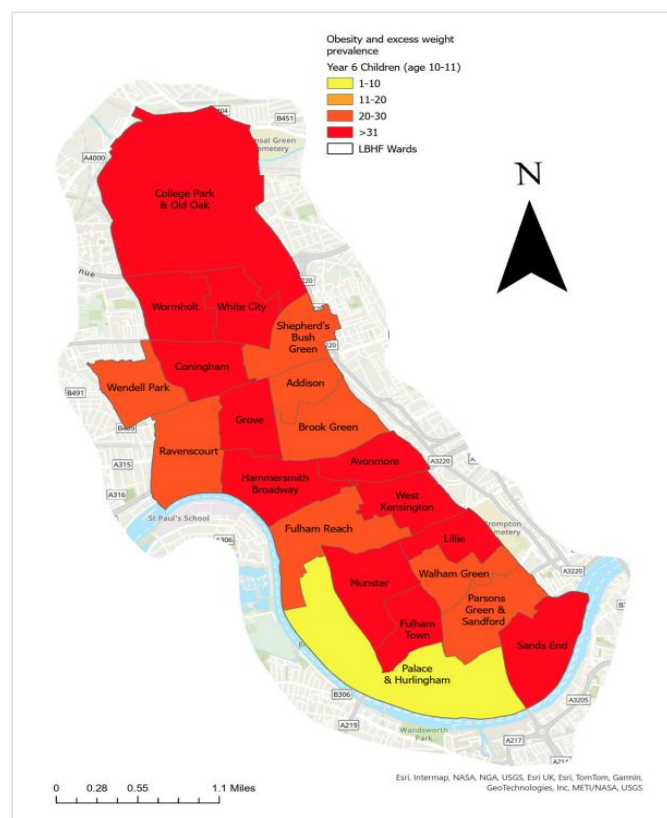
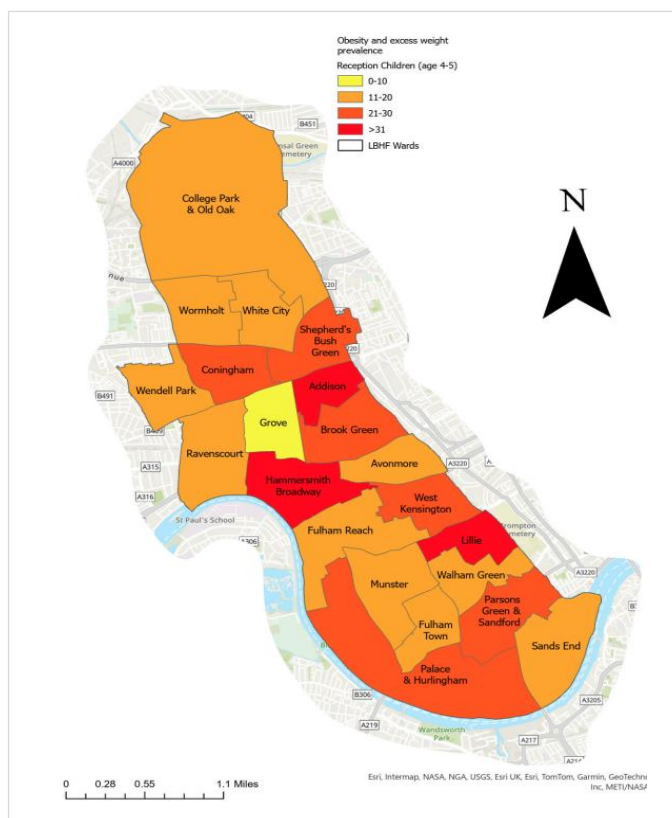
CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVALENCE IN H&F⁹ (2022-23)



Childhood obesity and overweight rates varies across the wards in the LBHF.

For reception children (aged 4-5), Hammersmith Broadway, Lillie, Addison and Shepherd's Bush Green have obesity rates over 29%. On the other hand, Ravenscourt and Grove have the lowest rates.

For Year 6 children (aged 10-11), the situation is a bit different. White City, Lillie, and Fulham Town have obesity prevalence rate over 45%, while Palace & Hurlingham and Fulham Reach have the lowest rates.



Data sources: **1.** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childhood-obesity-a-plan-for-action/childhood-obesity-a-plan-for-action>;

Data trends shown by: Increase/ negative: ↑

Decrease, positive: ↓

No significant change: ●



CHILDHOOD OBESITY FACTSHEET



2. Population estimates - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk); **3.** Obesity Profile - Data - PHE; **4.** Physical Activity - Data - PHE; **5.** Noncommunicable diseases: Childhood overweight and obesity (who.int); **6.** The-Great-Weight-Debate-report.pdf (healthyLondon.org); **7.** ITEM 6.0 LBHF HWB Childhood Obesity JSNA.pdf; **8.** London Datastore – Greater London Authority; **10.** Public Health Outcomes Framework - Data - PHE.