

Gateway Ref: 14777

To:

All Directors of Public Health in Primary Care Trusts in England
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Dear Colleagues

NATIONAL CHILD MEASUREMENT PROGRAMME 2010/11

Tackling obesity is a priority for the Coalition Government. We know from data collected through the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) that in England more than one in five children are overweight or obese by the age of five, and that this increases to one in every three children by the age of 11. The high numbers of overweight and obese children is of concern because of the risk it poses to their health, now and in later life.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work of all PCTs in delivering the NCMP, and to thank you all for your continued efforts to achieve high participation rates and to engage and increase awareness among parents and carers by sharing their child's results with them.

The high quality of the data collected through the NCMP has meant that the programme now has National Statistic status. The data provided by the NCMP is not only invaluable nationally, but I'm pleased to say is being used by many areas to inform commissioning and to target services to promote healthy weight to where they are needed most.

The NCMP, including the provision of results to parents, is important because research shows that many parents and health professionals cannot tell if a child is overweight just by looking at them. Because so many children today are overweight, such children may not stand out from other children around them.

Although we know that receiving the results can come as a surprise to some parents, sharing this information is helping to raise awareness of the importance of a healthy weight during childhood, and provides parents with information to make positive changes to their families' lifestyles. We know the way in which the results are communicated is crucially important, so the national template letter for sharing results with parents has been revised for 2010/11, taking on board feedback from PCTs, parents and child health experts.

*From the Chief Medical Officer (Interim)
Professor Dame Sally C Davies*



In addition to the revised template results letter, the Department has produced guidance for the 2010/11 programme, and has worked with the NHS Information Centre to ensure that the software systems for producing results letters and submitting data to the centre is improved to save PCTs' time. We have also developed an NCMP Communications Pack, which provides information and ideas on responding to parents' and media queries about the programme, and on how to secure positive media stories about some of the excellent work you are doing to promote healthy weight in your areas.

As I'm sure you know, the Department will be publishing a Public Health White Paper later in 2010, setting out future arrangements to support families in changing their lifestyle and making a difference to their health.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sally C Davies', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**PROFESSOR DAME SALLY C DAVIES
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER (INTERIM)**