



Transitioning Health Information to Young People

It is well reported that the level of childhood obesity in the UK is alarming (Public Health England, 2017; WHO, 2015). Childhood obesity is complex and can relate to lifestyle (nutrition, diet and exercise) as well as demographic characteristics, such as socioeconomic grouping (Smith, 2011).



University of
Salford

1967 - 2017 50 YEARS

In the UK, the marked rise in obesity prevalence in children and young people is linked with a sedentary lifestyle. Children whose weight denotes them as obese are more likely to be ill, be absent from school due to illness, require more medical care than normal weight children (Public Health England, 2017a) and experience psychological effects such as poor self-esteem and negative body image.

Interpreting children's weight and growth is complex and must take into account gender and age. Growth in children is routinely measured using Body Mass Index (BMI); this is a measure of body fat based on weight in relation to height.

For children and young people, BMI centile is the best assessment of growth and serial BMI centiles over time should be collated and used collectively by those involved in a child's care. Indeed, BMI for age with national centile limits have been deemed to be the simplest, and most appropriate, methodology for determining overweight and obesity in children (Cole et al., 2000).

The Manchester context

Figures taken from the NCMP for 2016/2017 show that in Manchester (Public Health England, 2017b):

24.8% reception aged pupils are an excess weight (overweight or obese)

40.3% year 6 pupils are an excess weight (overweight or obese)

Obesity prevalence is strongly correlated with deprivation and is highest in the most deprived areas

Inequalities in obesity prevalence exist for both girls and boys, and across different age groups

The CHAMP Consultation

The study, delivered by Social Sense in partnership with the University of Salford was commissioned by Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust and supported by Health Education England (North West) as part of a pioneering new consultation to determine the preferred approaches to growth measurement during teenage and adolescent years.

Alongside young people, the research also sought the views of parents, health practitioners, education professionals and organisational leadership, gathering both quantitative and qualitative information on the subject.

Currently the standard practice in the UK is measuring children's height and weight only at the mandatory age points of 4 years and 11 years of age, which many feel is not sufficient to identify potential health risk.

This evaluation used a mixed-methods approach involving three main workstreams:

-  **Young people:** survey and focus groups;
-  **Parents:** survey and focus groups;
-  **Practitioners:** survey and one-to-one consultations

Working along the CHAMP team, a steering group comprising the CHAMP team, Social Sense and the University of Salford.

The CHAMP team identified some core questions to be considered in the consultation:

1. Parents: with the vast majority of parents failing to recognise that their children are overweight, how can we work better with parents to engage with the programme?
2. What are the ages or characteristics making it acceptable/preferable to begin a dialogue with the young person directly about their growth?
3. In relation to the above, what are the best means of engagement and where issues are present, how is it best to present information back to you people?
4. How do we ensure a consistent message and join up the current efforts of health and education professionals in Manchester?

Findings

Knowing BMI would influence **lifestyle change in 9 out of 10** Young People (87%)

Almost half (49%) of young people clearly indicated that they considered that **having information** about their growth measurements, and tracking these changes over time, would **positively affect their confidence**.

Approximately **3 out of 4** young people said that they would be interested in knowing how their height (78%) and weight (71%) **changes over time**.

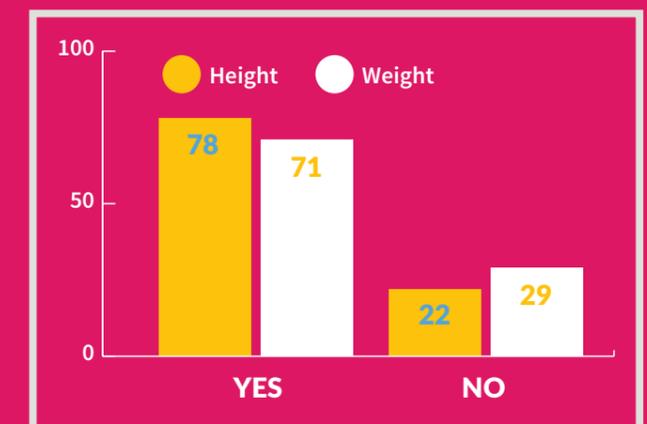


Figure 3.10 indicates that the majority of young people would like to know how their weight (71%) and height (78%) has increased over time.

Dr Rogers, M. (2018) A robust consultation with parents, young people and professionals regarding NHS CHAMP led by Social Sense.

"I think there is a culture of wanting more data developing with apps like FitBit, so I think using [the CHAMP] model may be good."

Parent

	2017			2018		
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
 Young People	Survey	Focus Group	Survey			
 Parents	Survey				Survey Focus Group	
 Practitioners	Survey				Survey	One-to-one consultations

The **survey** was completed by **1,080 students** across years 7, 8, and 9.

Three **focus groups** were held with young people from three different schools during November 2017, A total of **36 young people** took part.

The **survey** was completed by **46 parents**.

Three **focus groups** were undertaken by Social Sense and these were held in primary schools across Manchester, a total of **15 parents** took part.

The **survey** was completed by **89 practitioners** (frontline practitioners, service managers and senior managers/leads).

9 individual interviews were conducted over the telephone and participants represented both health and education sector.



“A child’s growth pattern is a fundamental indicator of health and well-being and therefore it is important that we give young people the tools to understand their own growth and the support to make positive choices.

This consultation illustrates the great knowledge that young people have around what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and just how engaged they would like to be in their personal health.”

Sarah Vince Cain
Clinical Programme Manager
CHAMP, MFT

“This consultation clearly indicates that young people want more control and autonomy and feel that having personal information about their growth would enable them to make informed choices about lifestyle or eating.”

Dr Michaela Rogers
University of Salford

“As parents, we need to work together and have more positive activities for our children to take part in.”

Parent

“Growth feedback would change with age, especially over teenage years. This could be an opportunity for all parties to develop together.”

Practitioner

‘Weight and height are both important to check you are growing well.’

L, Year 9

Recommendations

1. A review of the CHAMP website to be undertaken led by a working group, in a process of **co-production** by including parents and young people, in order to ensure that it is accessible and inclusive.
2. The CHAMP website to include more ‘top tips’ and **case studies for parents** to illustrate the successful ways in which families have embedded change in response to growth measurements data.
3. The CHAMP website to include a **webpage for young people** with accessible information (using the existing colour Zones as well as other visual information).
4. The development of a means to audit what happens after a young person logs on for the first time (and so collecting monitoring information from the start of their engagement).
5. The development of a model for the transferral of ownership of growth pattern data to young people to be based on a **collaborative approach** as a way to introduce young people to their growth measurements information involving parents/carers and school nurses (or other health professional where appropriate) and managed within the school environment.
6. The model should include **face-to-face consultations for parents** who need support to make changes to the family lifestyle following the interpretation of the child’s growth measurements information for children outside of the healthy range.
7. **Training in engagement and communication** with young people and **knowledge development for practitioners** to improve direct work with young people and their families.
8. The introduction of **workshops for parents** in order to help them understand growth measurement information and utilise the CHAMP website focussing on supporting parents to make informed choices and lifestyle changes if necessary.
9. **Awareness raising for young people** to ensure their understanding of growth measurements information and their relation to health (all within the context of health in the longer-term).
10. The development of a strategy to **target young people**.