Body Mass Index of Primary 1 Children in Scotland
School Year 2017/18
A National Statistics publication for Scotland

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About this release
This release by Information Services Division provides annual statistics on high, low and healthy body mass index (BMI) for Primary 1 school children, and includes data for school years 2001/02 to 2017/18. Statistics in this release are derived from height and weight measurements collected at health reviews in Primary 1.

Main Points
• In school year 2017/18, 76.5% of children measured in Primary 1 had a healthy weight, 22.4% were at risk of overweight or obesity and 1.1% were at risk of underweight.
• Since 2001/02, the overall proportion of Primary 1 children who are at risk of overweight or obesity has remained fairly constant.
• Since 2001/02, the proportion of Primary 1 children at risk of overweight or obesity has increased in the most deprived areas but decreased in the least deprived areas. There are now substantial inequalities in child unhealthy weight across Scotland.

Percentage of P1 children at risk of overweight or obesity by deprivation,
All Participating Boards 2001/02-2017/18

• Boys in Primary 1 are less likely than girls to have a healthy weight.
Background

In school year 2017/18 a total of 52,534 children had valid height and weight measurements recorded in Primary 1. This is approximately 87.6% of all children in Primary 1.

A child’s BMI is calculated by dividing their weight (in kilograms) by their height (in metres) squared. Children are then allocated to a healthy or unhealthy weight category by comparing their BMI to the range of BMIs seen among a reference group of children of the same age and sex.

This summary provides information on the proportion of children found to be at risk of having an unhealthy weight based on the thresholds used for monitoring the health of the child population (‘epidemiological thresholds’). The full report also provides information on the proportion of children found to have an unhealthy weight based on the stricter clinical thresholds used by health professionals caring for individual children.

There is continued concern over the levels of overweight and obesity among children in Scotland. Obesity during childhood is a health concern in itself, and it can also lead to physical and mental health problems throughout adulthood. Being underweight in childhood can also be a cause for concern, indicating poor nutritional intake and/or underlying medical problems.

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Further Information

Find out more in the Primary 1 BMI Statistics School Year 2017/18 report, and in the accompanying interactive data visualisation. Background information can be found in the technical report. Summary data tables and detailed open data tables are also available.

ISD Scotland publishes a wide range of information on Child Health including infant feeding, immunisations, and 27-30 month review. Further information can be found in the Child Health section on the ISD website.

The next release of this publication will be in December 2019.

ISD and Official Statistics

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of ‘Official Statistics’. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Further information about our statistics.