

# National Child Measurement Programme 2024/25

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# Executive summary

## Introduction

This report presents the findings from the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) for the 2024/25 academic year for Kent resident children attending mainstream state schools in Kent. Children are measured in reception year (age 4-5) and year six (age 10-11).

The source of the data for the analysis in this report comes from the pupil level NCMP dataset. This enables analysis to be produced which is not available in the national report.

Where England data is quoted, this is from NHS Digital, National Child Measurement Programme: <https://digital.nhs.uk/services/national-child-measurement-programme>

## Key findings

Indicator	Reception	Year Six
Kent: excess weight	More than 1 in 5 children. Increased from 22.7% to 24.1% in the latest year	More than 1 in 3 children (35.2%). Similar to previous year
Kent: obesity	10.6%. Similar to the previous year	20.8%. Similar to previous year
Kent: severe obesity	2.8%. Similar to the previous year	5.1%. Similar to previous year
Deprivation: obesity	Almost twice as high for children in the most deprived 10% of areas than children in the least deprived 10% of areas	More than twice as high for children in the most deprived 10% of areas than children in the least deprived 10% of areas
Ethnicity: obesity	Black children (13.5%) had a higher prevalence than white children (10.3%)	Black children (32.4%) had a higher prevalence than white children (19.9%)
Sex: obesity	Similar. Boys had a slightly higher prevalence than girls (11.3% compared to 9.9%)	Boys had a higher prevalence than girls (23% compared to 18.6%)
Districts: excess weight	Folkestone and Hythe (29%), Dover (26.7%) and Ashford (25.8%) had a higher prevalence compared to Kent (24%). Increase in Folkestone and Hythe compared to the previous year, from 26.6% to 29%	Gravesham (40%), Dartford (39.4%) Thanet (38.6%), Swale (38.5%), Dover (38.1%) and Canterbury (36.6%) had a higher prevalence than the Kent average (35.2%)
Districts: obesity	Higher in Folkestone and Hythe (14.2%) than the Kent average	Thanet (25.1%), Gravesham (24.8%), Dover (24.4%), Swale

Indicator	Reception	Year Six
	(10.6%)	(24.0%), Dartford (23.2%) and Canterbury (21.9%) had a higher prevalence than the Kent average (20.8%). Trend increasing and getting worse in Thanet and Canterbury
Districts: severe obesity	Dartford (3.8%), Folkestone and Hythe (3.6%), Dover (3.3%), Gravesham (3.3%), Thanet (3.3%) and Swale (3.2%) were higher than the Kent average (2.8%)	Thanet (7.5%), Swale (6.9%), Dover (6.2%), Gravesham (6.2%) and Ashford (6%) had a higher prevalence compared to Kent (5.0%). Trend increasing and getting worse in Thanet, Swale, Ashford and Sevenoaks
Participation rate	95.2%	94.2%
Ethnicity recording: proportion 'not stated' or missing	10% compared to 9.8% in the previous year	14.5%. Higher than the previous year 9.6%

## Call to action

- To promote and share awareness of responsive feeding with infants and in early childhood to help prevent excess weight.
- To continue to support early years settings to implement the voluntary food and drink guidance.
- To procure a relationship with food programme for families and post-natal women.
- To maximise the earlier recording of ethnicity.

# Profile of the 2024/25 Year R and Year 6 data

The participation rate in Kent was 95.2% for Year R and 94.2% for Year 6 in 2024/25.

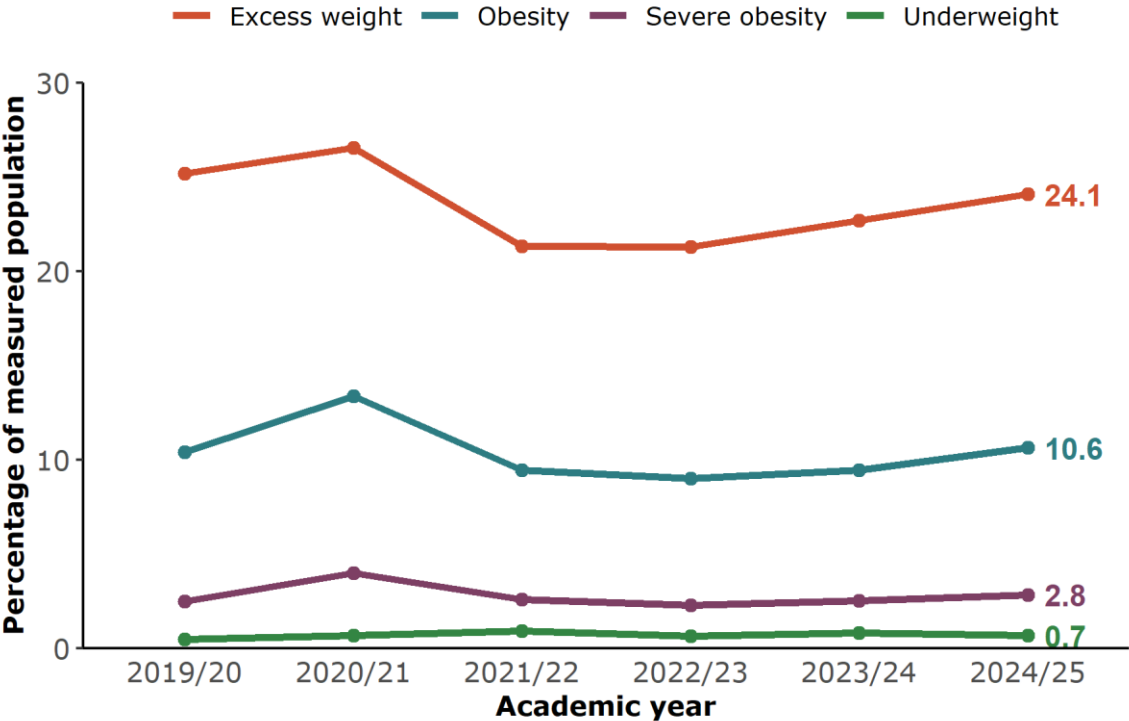
The deprivation profile of the measured children was similar to previous years for Year R and Year 6.

The proportion of 'not stated' or missing ethnicity in Year R was 10.0%, similar to the previous year. In Year 6 the proportion of 'not stated' or missing ethnicity was 14.5%, compared to 9.6% in the previous year.

## Year R analysis at Kent level

### Weight category trends

Figure 1: Year R, weight category trends in Kent, 2019/20 - 2024/25



Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

**Table 1: Year R, weight category trends in Kent, 2019/20 - 2024/25**

<b>Weight category %</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
Excess weight	25.2	26.5	21.3	21.3	22.7	24.1
Obese	10.4	13.4	9.4	9.0	9.4	10.6
Severe obesity	2.5	4.0	2.6	2.3	2.5	2.8
Under weight	0.5	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.7

Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

Excess weight is defined as being obese or overweight.

The prevalence of excess weight among reception year children increased from 22.7% in 2023/24 to 24.1% in the latest year in Kent. Obesity prevalence increased from 9.4% to 10.6%.

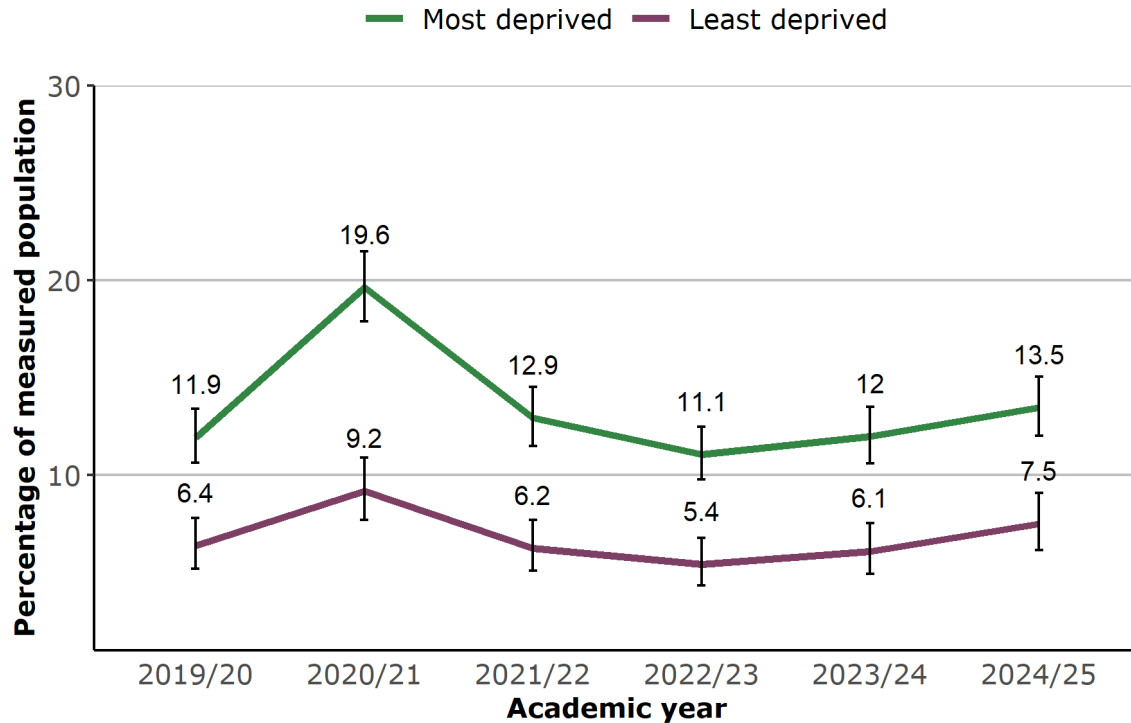
Severe obesity was 2.8% and underweight 0.7% in the latest year. The healthy weight category is not presented in the chart, but this was 75.2%, similar to England.

In England the prevalence of excess weight in reception children increased from 22.1% to 23.5%. Obesity and severe obesity levels in England were similar to the Kent average.

## Inequalities analysis

### Obesity by deprivation

**Figure 2: Year R, prevalence of obesity by deprivation in Kent, 2019/20 - 2024/25**



Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

The most and least deprived areas are defined as the parts of Kent ranked among the most and least deprived tenth of the population. These are also referred to as 'deprivation deciles'.

Year R children living in the most deprived areas are more likely to be living with obesity than children living in the least deprived areas in Kent (13.5% compared to 7.5%) in 2024/25.

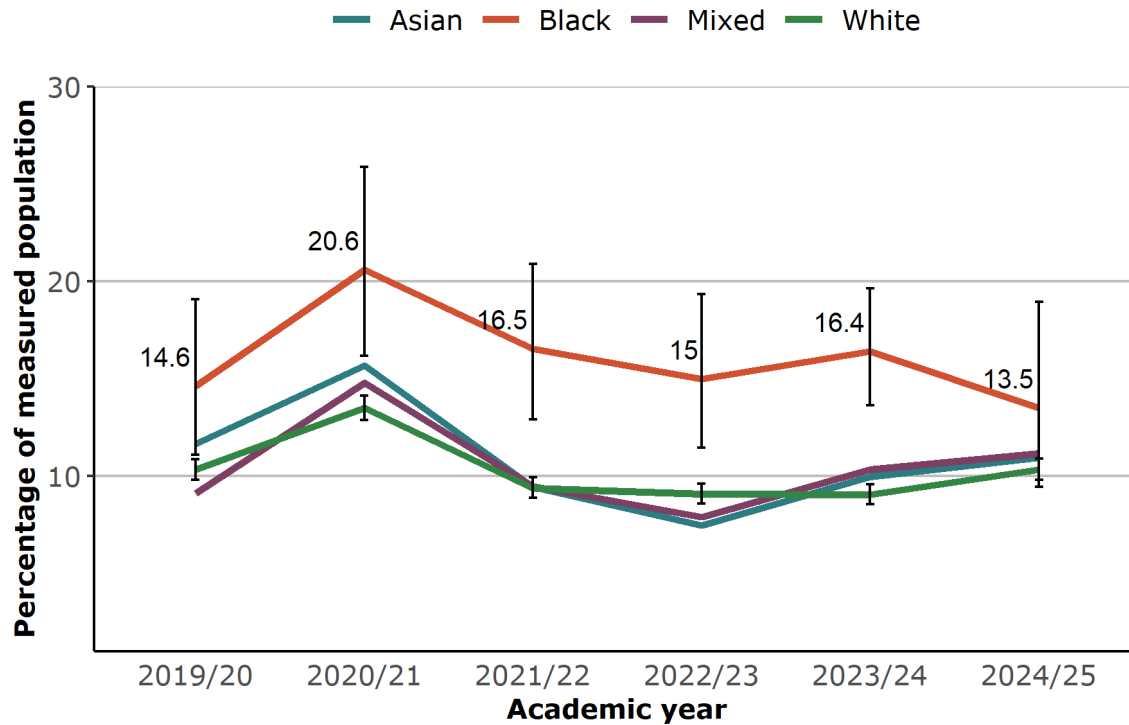
In England 14.0% of reception year children in the most deprived group were living with obesity compared to 6.9% in the least deprived group.

Year R children living in the most deprived areas are more likely to be living with excess weight than children living in the least deprived areas in Kent (27.5% compared to 19.1%) in 2024/25.

In England 28% of reception year children in the most deprived group were living with excess weight compared to 18.9% in the least deprived group.

## Obesity by ethnicity

**Figure 3: Year R, prevalence of obesity by ethnicity in Kent, 2019/20 - 2024/25**



Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

The prevalence of obesity for black children (13.5%) in reception year was higher than for white children (10.3%), and this has been the trend over several years. Asian and mixed ethnicity children had similar levels of obesity to white children.

In England the prevalence of obesity for black children in Year R was 14.5% in the latest year.

According to analysis by OHID, ethnicity has an independent effect on obesity prevalence in both Year 6 and Reception boys and girls after other factors are taken into account. Ethnic disparities in obesity prevalence are in general greater in Year 6 than in Reception, and there are smaller disparities between the sexes in Reception than in Year 6.<sup>1</sup>

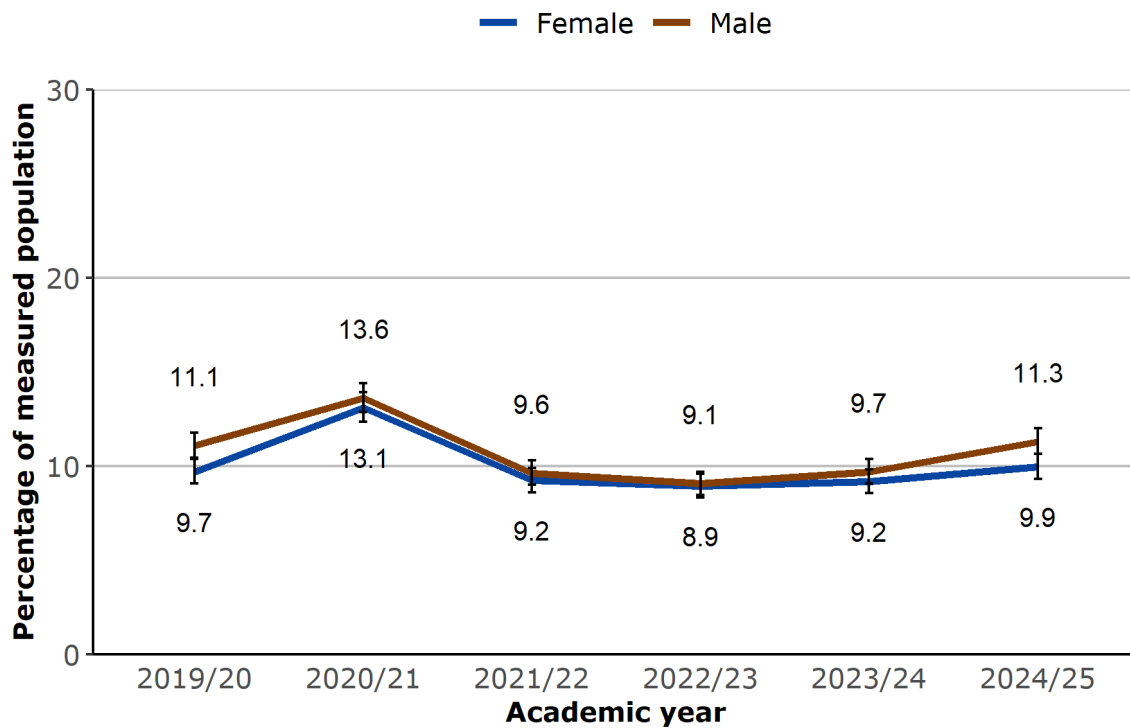
**Table 2: Year R: obesity by ethnicity in Kent, 2019/20 - 2024/25**

Obese %	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Asian	11.6	15.7	9.5	7.5	10.0	11.0
Black	14.6	20.6	16.5	15.0	16.4	13.5
Mixed	9.1	14.8	9.5	7.9	10.3	11.1
White	10.3	13.5	9.4	9.1	9.0	10.3

Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

### Obesity by gender

**Figure 4: Year R, prevalence of obesity by gender in Kent, 2019/20 - 2024/25**



Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

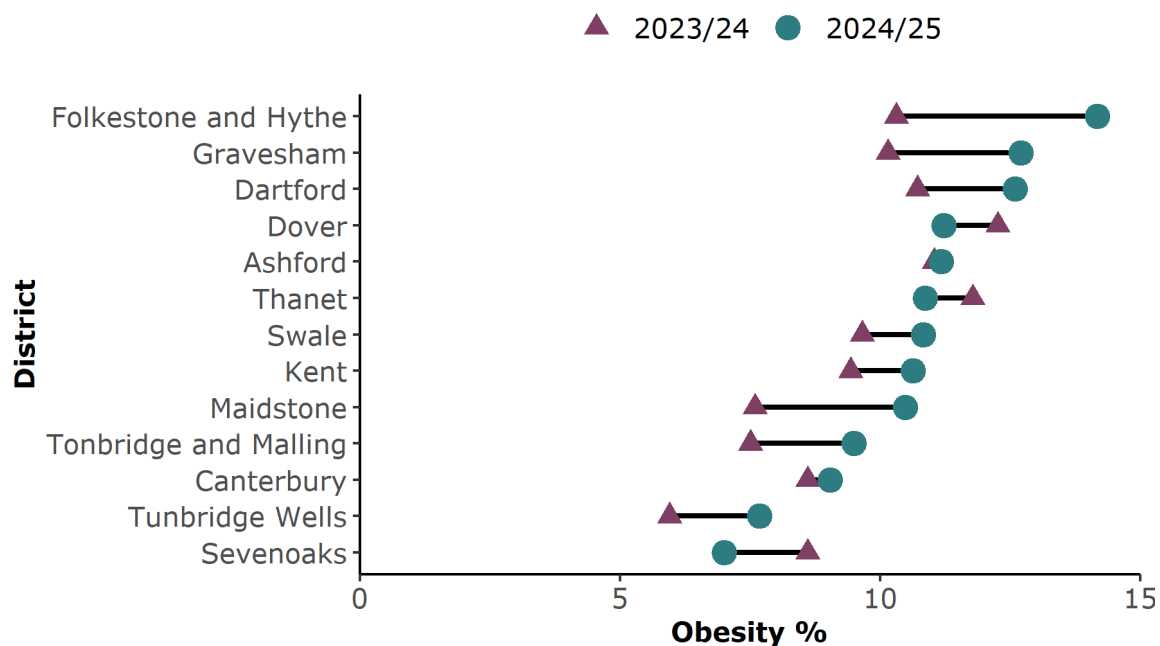
The prevalence of obesity is becoming increasingly different between Year R girls and boys in Kent in 2024/25 (9.9% and 11.3% respectively) over the last 2 years. This difference is seen to fluctuate over the years.

In England there was also a significant difference between obesity prevalence in boys (10.7%) and in girls (10.3%) in year R in the latest year (NCMP, 2024/25).

## Year R analysis at district level

### Obesity prevalence

**Figure 5: Year R, prevalence of obesity by district in Kent, 2024/25**



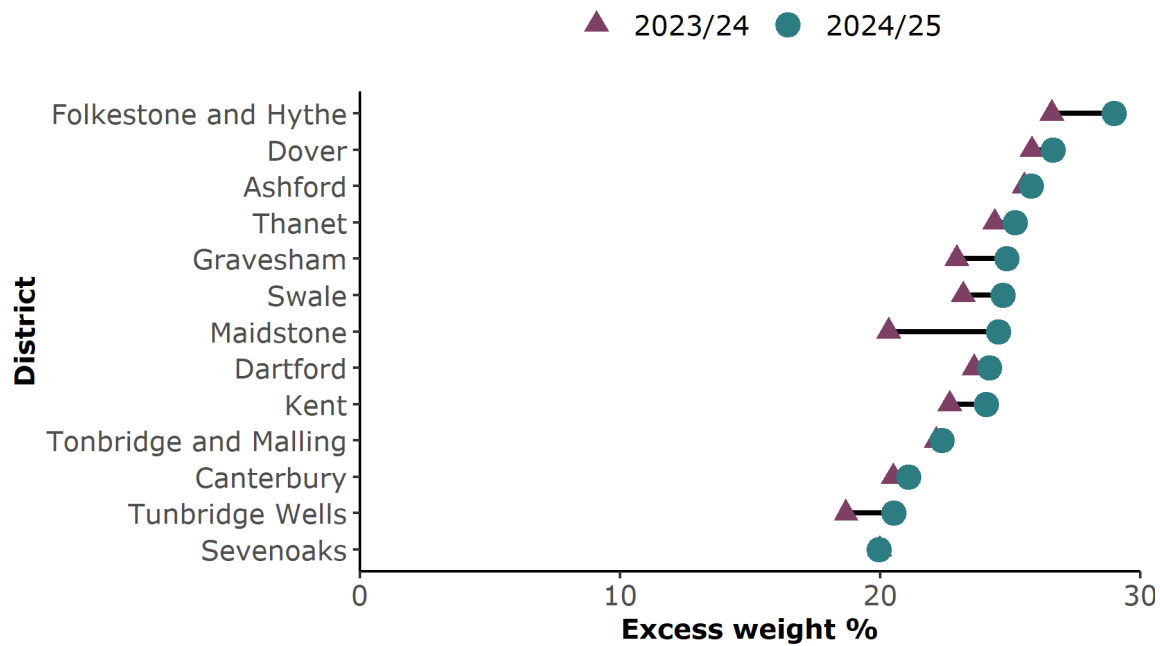
Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

In the latest year, Year R obesity prevalence was higher than the Kent average of 10.6% in Folkestone & Hythe (14.2%). It was lower in Sevenoaks (7.0%) and Tunbridge Wells (7.9%).

There were no significant changes in obesity prevalence by district comparing 2024/25 with the previous year.

## Excess weight prevalence

Figure 6: Year R, prevalence of excess weight by district in Kent, 2024/25



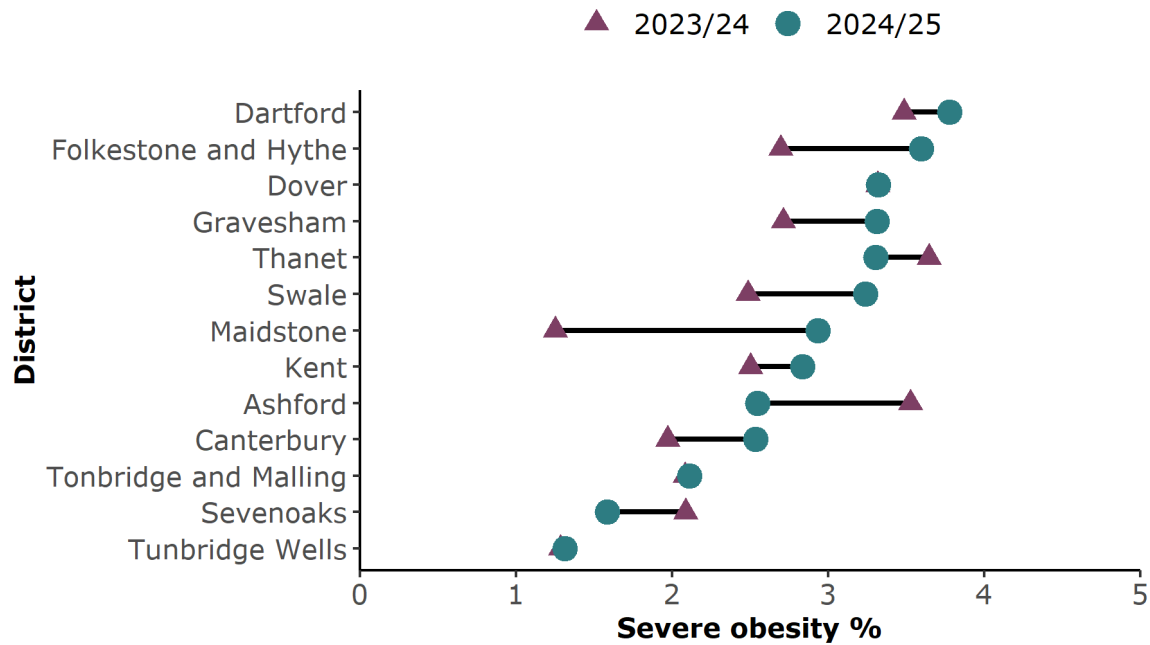
Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

Excess weight increased in Folkestone and Hythe over the latest year from 26.6% to 29% for Year R.

Folkestone and Hythe (29%), Dover (26.7%) and Ashford (25.8%) districts had a higher prevalence of excess weight than the Kent average (24%). Canterbury (21%), Tunbridge Wells (20.5%) and Sevenoaks (20.0%) had a lower prevalence.

## Severe obesity prevalence

Figure 7: Year R, prevalence of severe obesity by district in Kent, 2024/25



Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

Dartford (3.8%), Folkestone and Hythe (3.6%), Dover (3.3%), Gravesham (3.3%), Thanet (3.3%) and Swale (3.2%) had a higher prevalence of severe obesity in Year R compared to the Kent average (2.8%). Canterbury (2.5%), Tonbridge and Malling (2.1%), Sevenoaks (1.6%) and Tunbridge Wells (1.3%) had a lower prevalence.

There was no significant differences in severe obesity levels for districts compared to the previous year.

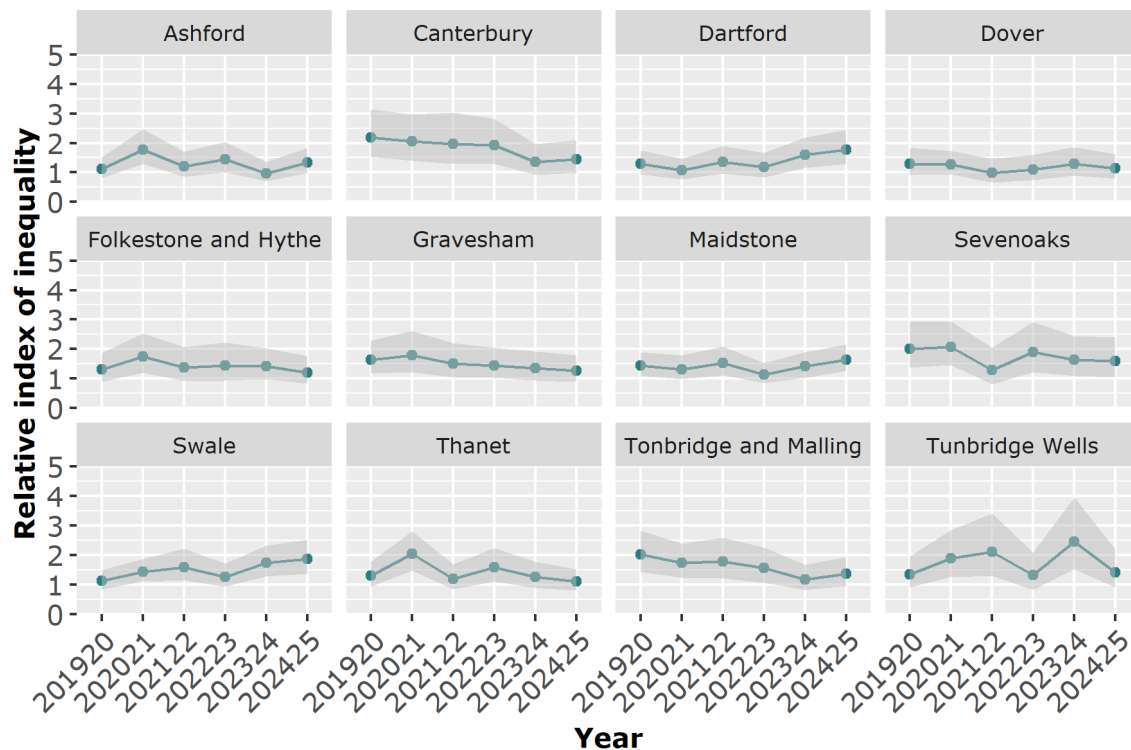
## Inequalities by district

The RII is a ratio measure of the difference in outcomes between the extremes of the social scale, usually based on socio-economic deprivation.

It is derived from the Slope Index of Inequality (SII) which is an absolute measure of the gap using the same units as the indicator (for example, years, rate per 100,000 or percentage). The SII takes into account the outcomes across the entire range to produce a 'line of best fit'. The SII gap is measured as the difference between the theoretical outcome values at the absolute minimum and maximum of this social scale. Note it is not simply the difference between the most and least deprived quantile values. Therefore, there is an underlying assumption of a linear relationship between the outcome of interest and the social scale.

The RII is the ratio of the fitted value of the most deprived extreme and the fitted value of the least deprived extreme. The advantage compared to the SII is that it is insensitive to changes in the mean level of the outcome indicator over time. For example, if the overall rate has reduced over time, it is likely that the absolute gap in rate will have reduced also while the relative difference across the deprivation scale could have remained unchanged or widened.

**Figure 8: Year R, relative index of inequality by district in Kent, with 95% confidence intervals, 2019/20 - 2024/25**



Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

The Relative Index of Inequality (RII) shows how much difference there is in excess weight between children living in the most and least deprived areas.

An RII of 1 means there is no difference.

An RII greater than 1 means excess weight is more common among children in the most deprived areas.

For example, an RII of 2 means children in the most deprived areas are twice as likely to have excess weight as those in the least deprived areas.

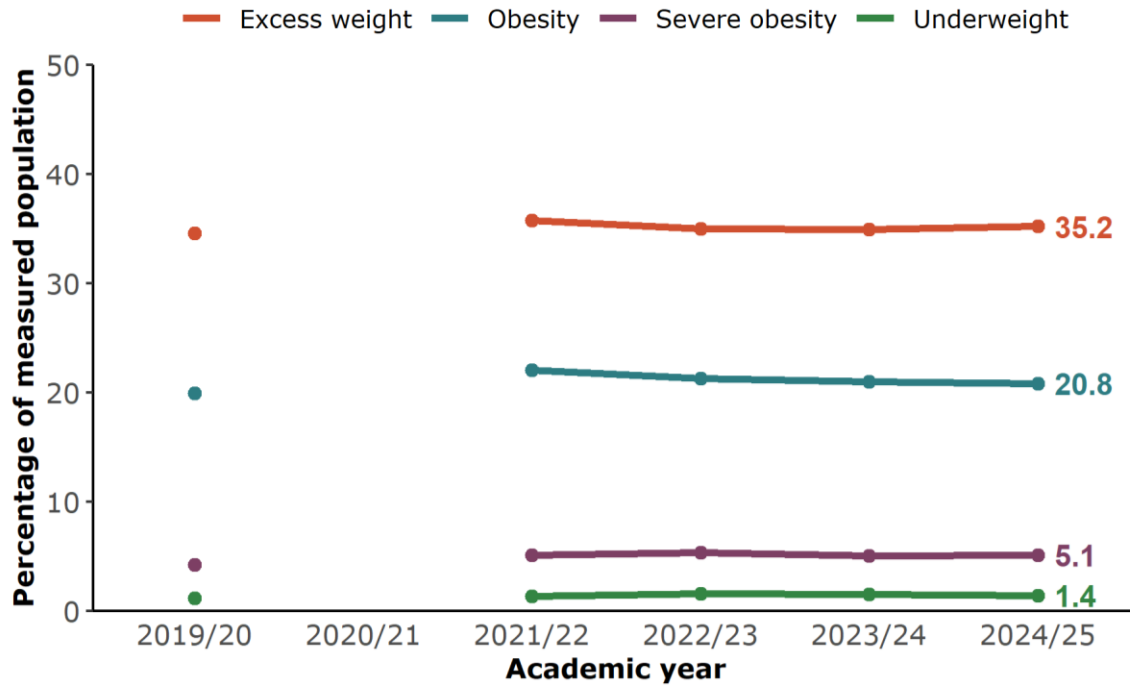
For children in Reception (Year R), all districts have an RII greater than 1. This shows that inequalities in excess weight are already present by school entry, with higher levels seen among children living in more deprived neighborhoods.

The confidence intervals (CIs) show how much the rates vary across different levels of deprivation. Wider CIs indicate greater variation between deprivation groups, helping to illustrate how consistently this inequality appears across the population.

# Year 6 analysis at Kent level

## Weight category trends

Figure 9: Year 6, weight category trends in Kent, 2019/20 - 2024/25



Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

Table 3: Year 6, weight category trends in Kent, 2019/20 - 2024/25

Weight category %	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Excess weight	34.6		35.8	35.0	35.0	35.2
Obese	19.9		22.1	21.3	21.0	20.8
Severe obesity	4.2		5.1	5.4	5.0	5.1
Under weight	1.1		1.3	1.6	1.5	1.4

Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

The prevalence of excess weight in Year 6 was 35.2% in Kent in the latest year which was similar to the previous year and lower than the England average (36.2%).

Obesity was also lower in Kent than the England average (20.8% compared to 22.2%).

Severe obesity for Year 6 in Kent was 5.1%, significantly lower than England (5.6%).

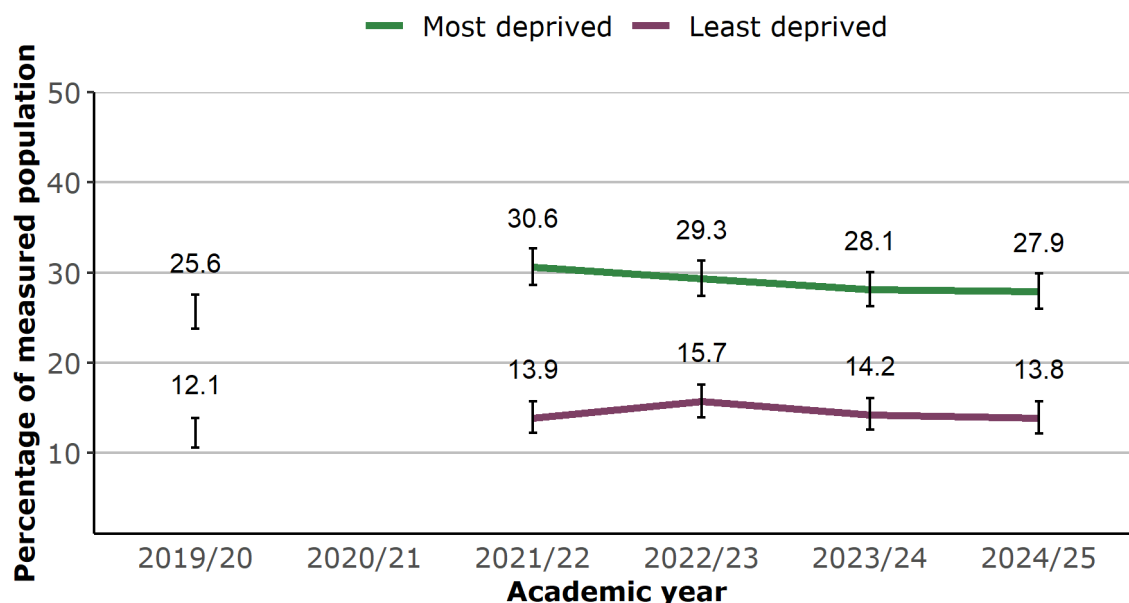
The healthy weight category is not presented in the chart, this was 63.3% in the latest year, better than the England average (62.2%).

Obesity prevalence has reduced in the last 2 years, from 21.3% in 2022/23 to 20.8% in 2024/25. Obesity, excess weight and severe obesity levels remain higher than they were in 2019/20.

## Inequalities analysis

### Obesity by deprivation

**Figure 10: Year 6, prevalence of obesity by deprivation in Kent, 2019/20 - 2024/25**

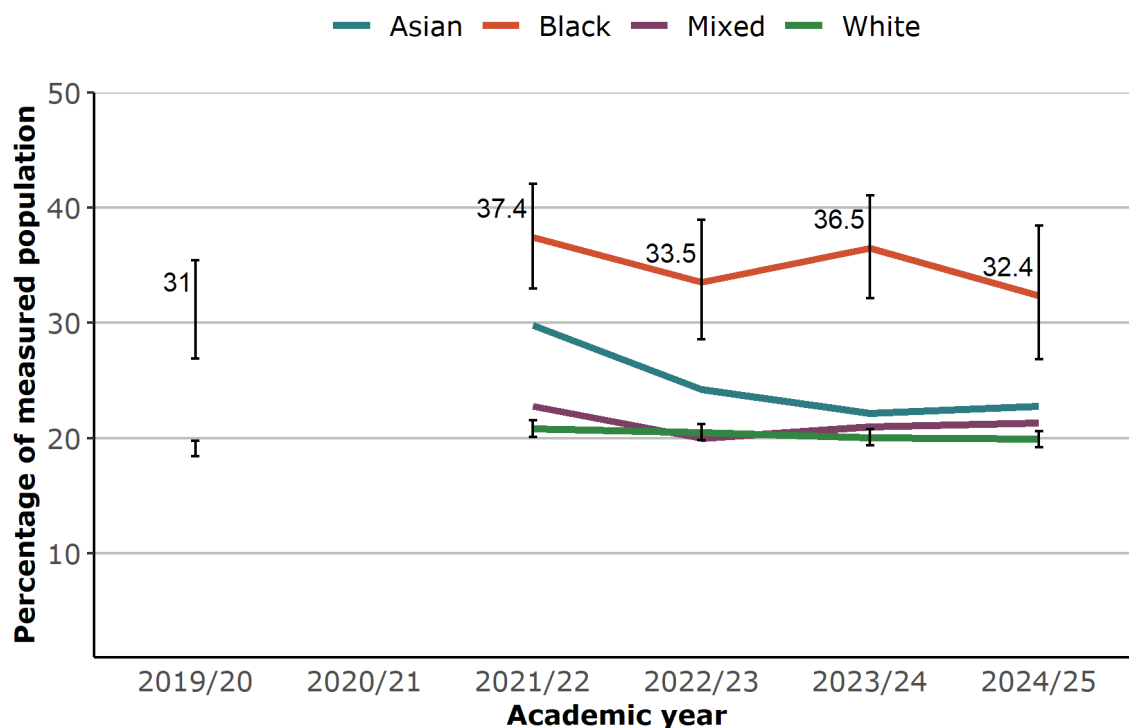


Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

Year 6 children living in the most deprived areas of Kent were more than twice as likely to be living with obesity than those living in the least deprived areas, 27.9% compared to 13.8%. For England this was 29.3% compared to 13.5%.

## Obesity by ethnicity

**Figure 11: Year 6, prevalence of obesity by ethnicity in Kent, 2019/20 - 2024/25**



Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

**Table 4: Year 6: obesity by ethnicity in Kent, 2019/20 - 2024/25**

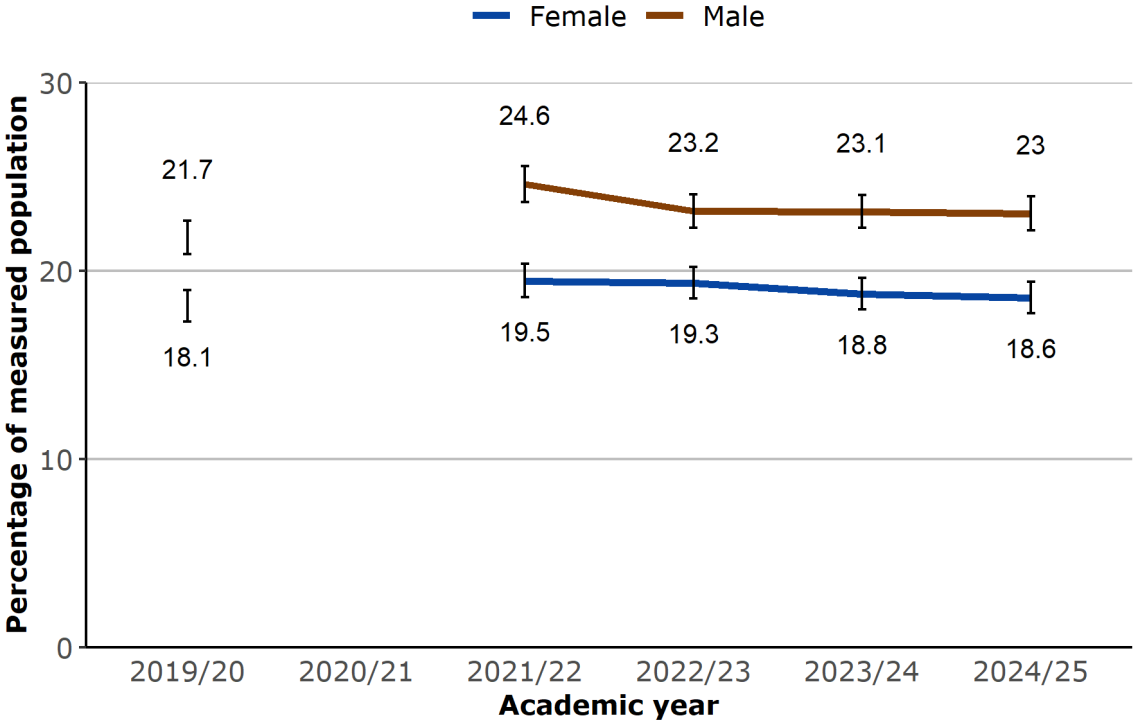
Obese %	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Asian	26.2		29.8	24.3	22.2	22.8
Black	31.0		37.4	33.5	36.5	32.4
Mixed	19.9		22.8	20.0	21.0	21.3
White	19.1		20.8	20.5	20.0	19.9

Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

Black children in Year 6 had a higher prevalence of obesity than white children (32.4% compared to 19.9%) in Kent with a slightly smaller gap than previous years. In England this was 30.5% of black children compared to 20.8% of white children.

**Obesity by gender**

**Figure 12: Year 6, prevalence of obesity by gender in Kent, 2019/20 - 2024/25**



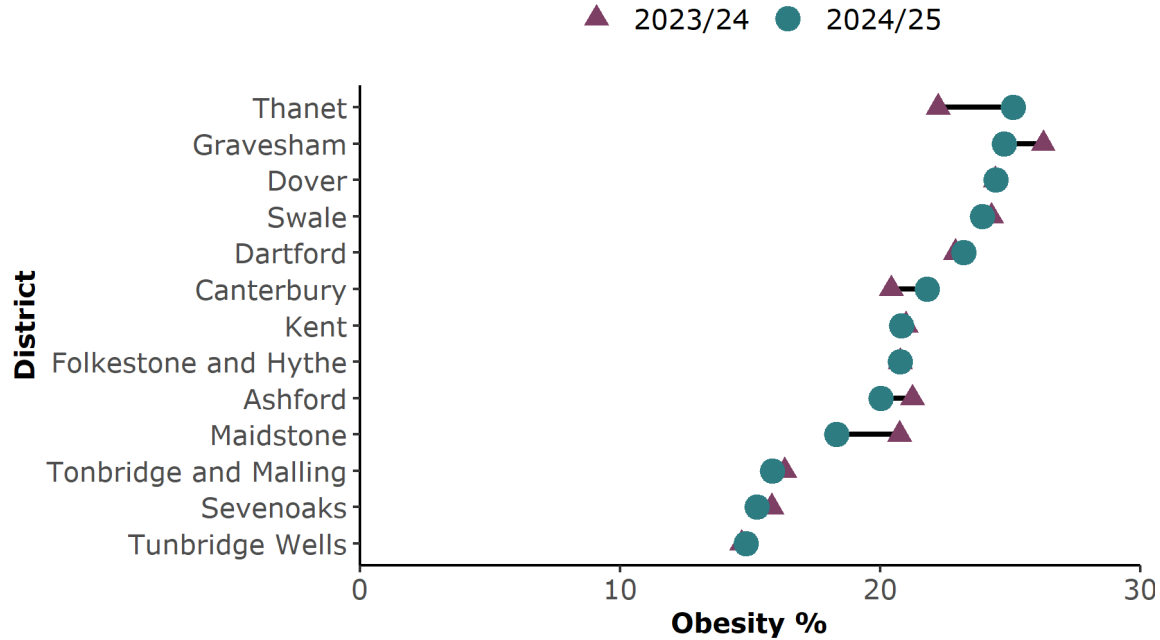
Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

In Year 6 obesity prevalence was higher among boys compared to girls in Kent in 2024/25. 23% of boys were living with obesity compared to 18.6% of girls, with a similar gap to previous years. In Year 6 pupils in England, 19.8% of girls were living with obesity compared to 24.5% of boys.

# Year 6 analysis at district level

## Obesity prevalence

Figure 13: Year 6, prevalence of obesity by district in Kent, 2024/25



Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

Thanet (25.1%), Gravesham (24.8%), Dover (24.4%), Swale (24.0%), Dartford (23.2%) and Canterbury (21.9%) districts had a higher prevalence of obesity in Year 6 than the Kent average of 20.8% in 2024/25.

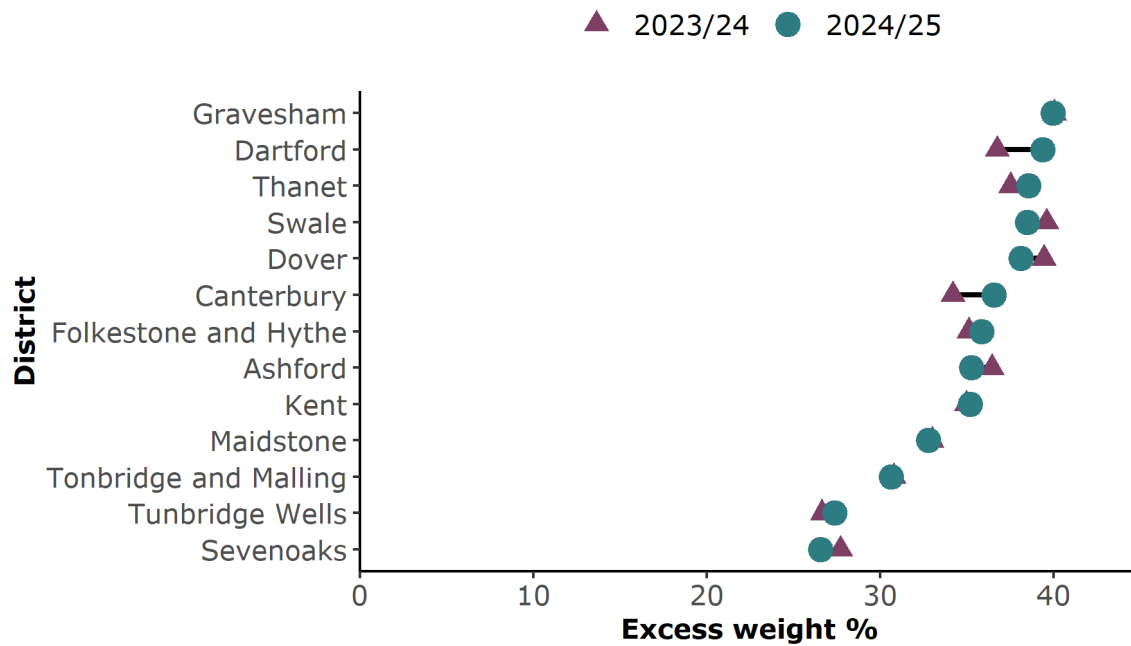
Tunbridge Wells (14.8%), Sevenoaks (15.3%), Tonbridge and Malling (15.9%) and Maidstone (18.3%) had lower levels of obesity than the Kent average.

The prevalence of obesity among Year 6 children was significantly lower in Kent (20.8%) compared to England (22.2%).

There were no significant differences in obesity levels within districts compared to the previous year.

## Excess weight prevalence

Figure 14: Year 6, prevalence of excess weight by district in Kent, 2024/25



Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

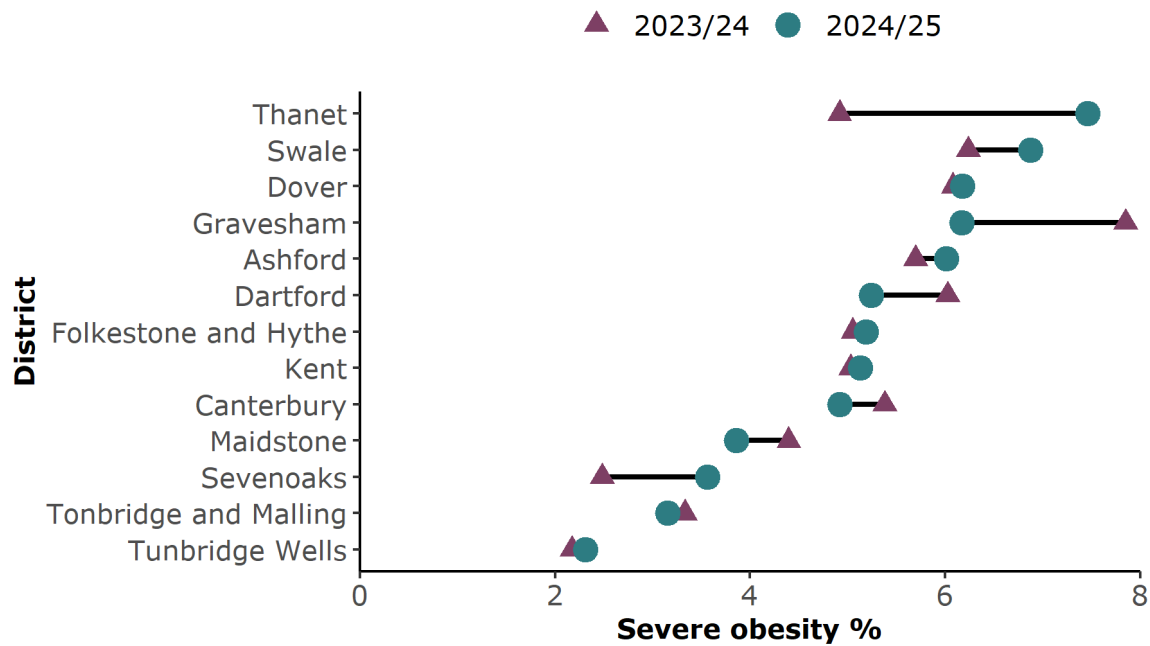
Excess weight prevalence was higher in Gravesham (40%), Dartford (39.4%) Thanet (38.6%), Swale (38.5%), Dover (38.1%) and Canterbury (36.6%) districts in Year 6 than the Kent average (35.2%).

Sevenoaks (26.6%), Tunbridge Wells (27.4%) and Tonbridge and Malling (30.7%) had lower levels of excess weight than the Kent average.

At a district level there were no significant changes in excess weight from the previous year for Year 6 children.

## Severe obesity prevalence

**Figure 15: Year 6, prevalence of severe obesity by district in Kent, 2024/25**



Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

The prevalence of severe obesity in Year 6 was higher in Thanet (7.5%), Swale (6.9%), Dover (6.2%), Gravesham (6.2%) and Ashford (6%) compared to the Kent average (5.0%) in the latest year.

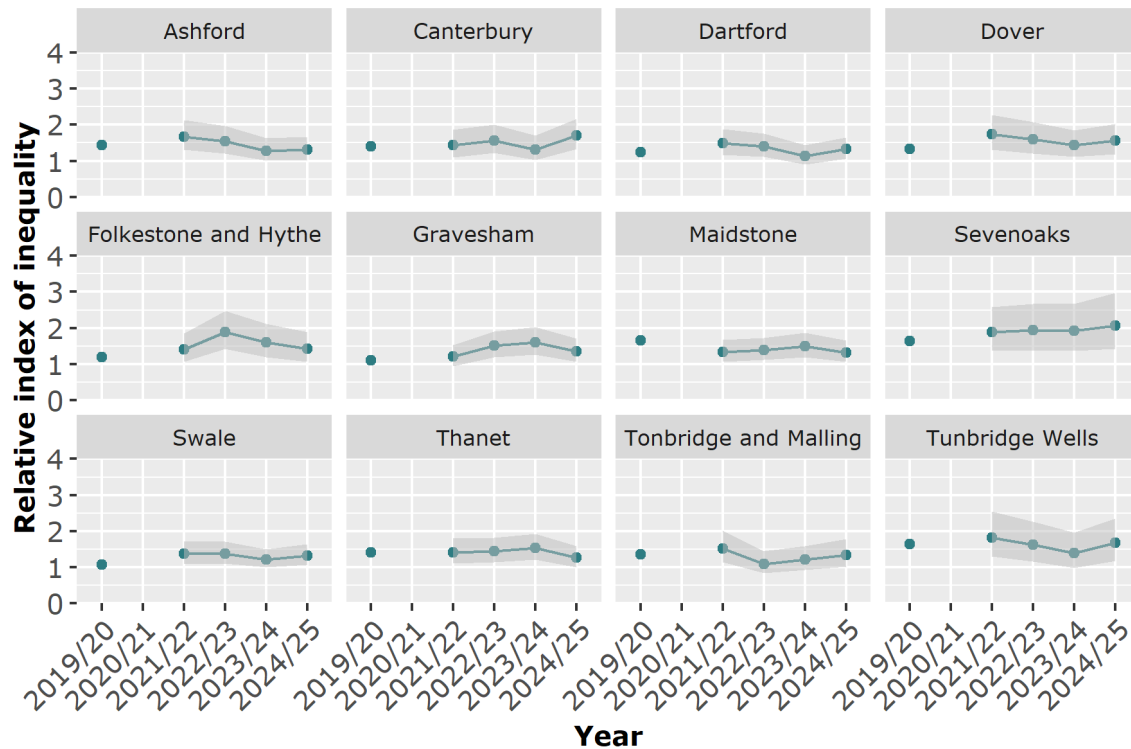
Tunbridge Wells (2.3%), Tonbridge and Malling (3.2%), Sevenoaks (3.6%) and Maidstone (3.9%) had lower levels of severe obesity.

There were no significant changes at a district level in Year 6 severe obesity since the previous year.

England had a similar level of severe obesity (5.6%) to the Kent average (5.2%) for Year 6.

## Inequalities by district

**Figure 16: Year 6, relative index of inequality by district in Kent, with 95% confidence intervals, 2019/20 - 2024/25**



Source: NCMP, prepared by KPHO

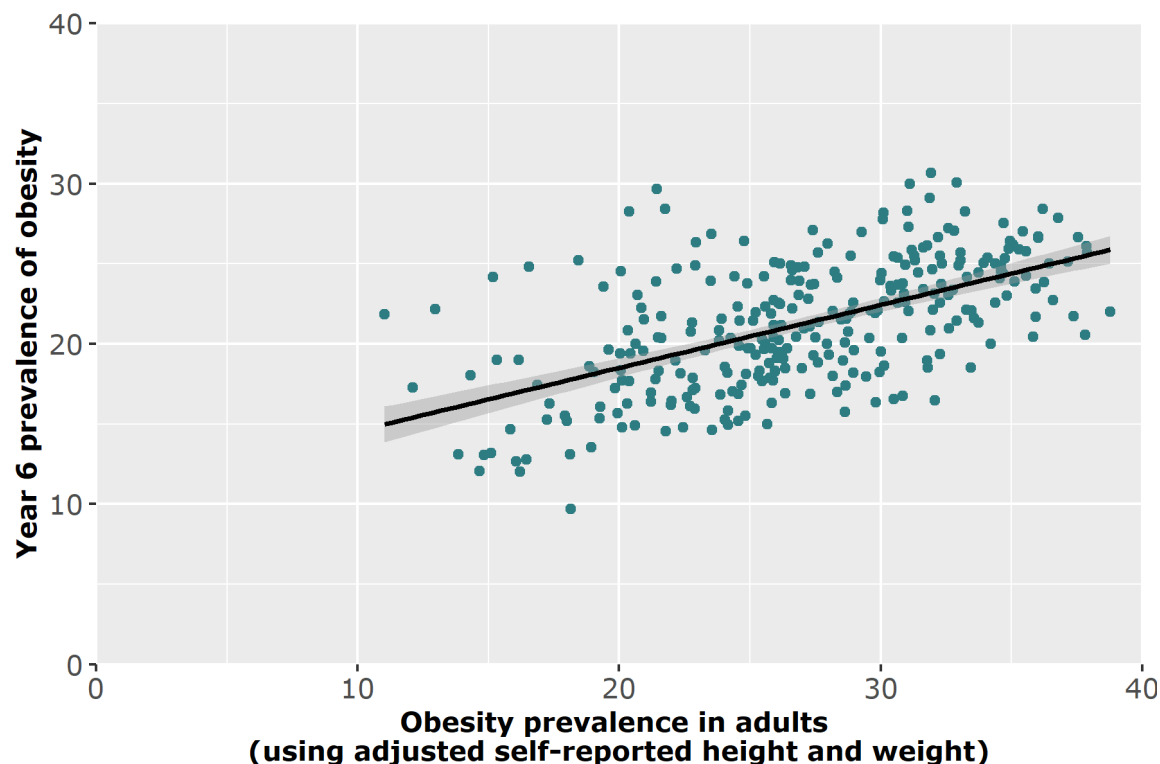
Relative Index of Inequality (RII) is greater than 1 in most districts in Year 6 children (Ashford, Canterbury, Dartford, Dover, Folkestone & Hythe, Gravesham, Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Swale, Thanet, and Tunbridge Wells).

This means that in these districts, children living in the most deprived areas are more likely to have excess weight than those in the least deprived areas, showing that inequalities identified in Reception persist into later childhood.

As with Year R, the confidence intervals (CIs) provide additional context. Longer CIs suggest greater variation across deprivation deciles, indicating that the differences are not only between the most and least deprived groups, but also across the wider deprivation spectrum.

## Adult and child obesity by district in England

**Figure 17: Adult obesity (18+) with Year 6 obesity by district in England, 2023/24**



Source: OHID Fingertips, prepared by KPHO

Analysis combining National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) Year 6 data with adult obesity prevalence from Active Lives Adult Survey shows a clear positive association between adult and child obesity at local authority level. Areas with higher adult obesity prevalence tend to also have higher rates of obesity among children in Year 6.

A linear regression model quantifying this relationship indicates that adult obesity prevalence explains approximately 32% of the variation in Year 6 obesity prevalence across local authorities ( $R^2 = 0.324$ ). While this does not imply a direct causal relationship, it highlights a moderately strong population-level association.

## Appendix

The height and weight measurements of children in reception year and year six are recorded annually as part of the National Child Measurement Programme.

Children living in Kent and attending mainstream Kent schools were included in the analysis. Children attending Free schools were included.<sup>1</sup>

Year 6 data for the academic year 2020/21 has not been presented. 10.6% of Year 6 pupils were measured due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the participation distributions showed it was not a representative sample.

<sup>1</sup> Free schools are state-funded schools run independently of local authorities, with greater flexibility over curriculum and organisation, while mainstream schools are managed by local councils and must follow the National Curriculum.

## References

1. GOV.Uk. 2019. Differences in child obesity by ethnic group. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/differences-in-child-obesity-by-ethnic-group/differences-in-child-obesity-by-ethnic-group#fn:3> [Accessed 04 April 2023].