

News release

15 December, 2011
For immediate release

Child obesity levels drop across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

The number of children classed as obese has seen a positive drop across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

In Leicester city 10.5% of children in reception classes are now classed as obese compared to 11.4% in 2010. There has also been a drop in obesity levels for Year 6 pupils from 21.9% in 2010 down to 20.6% for 2011.

Across Leicestershire and Rutland the figure for reception class pupils has dropped from 8.1% in 2010 to 7.1% and for Year 6 it has gone down from 15.4% in 2010 to 15.1% in 2011.

Stephanie Dunkley, public health principal in the city, speaking on behalf of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland PCT Cluster, said: "It's really positive to see further reductions in the number of children classed as obese. We have worked with Leicester City Council to develop initiatives include Playing 4 Health and Food Routes, where children can become active and learn about healthy foods and cooking through play.

"Health visitors and children's centre staff continue to receive training around breast feeding support, healthy eating and physical activity to allow them to better support families in making healthy choices. The Fit and Active Football programme in partnership with Leicester City Football club for eight to 14 year olds also encourages boys and girls to get active through a mixture of sporting activities.

"We also work closely with Leicester City Councils Active travel team to promote walking and cycling. Building healthy eating and activity into daily life will help to further reduce obesity levels."

Mike Sandys, consultant in public health for the county, added: "We are pleased to see obesity levels across Leicestershire and Rutland have continued to fall steadily. Making small changes can have a big impact on our children's health. Walking or cycling to school, swapping less healthy snacks for healthier ones, and making sure portion sizes are appropriate for children can all reduce the risk of child obesity.

"For the last 2 years Leicestershire Nutrition and Dietetics Service (LNDS) have developed and delivered an adult weight management service – LEAP and a children's weight management programme, family lifestyle clubs (FLic). FLic is a group programme for parents and overweight children aged four to eight years and eight to 12 years. The group runs weekly for eight weeks and involves family based food preparation, tasting, information session and fun active play/games for children."

The county has also seen the continued support of School Sports Partnerships (SSPANS) and working closely with the local council has meant a wide selection of support can be offered to families and children.

For further information visit www.leicestercity.nhs.uk/change4life or www.lcr.nhs.uk/keepinghealthystayingfit.aspx. Information is also available on local council websites www.leics.gov.uk or www.leicester.gov.uk.

ENDS

For interviews or more information please contact media officer Liz Thomas on 0116 295 7677 or liz.thomas@leicestercity.nhs.uk or senior media officer Caroline Higgs on 0116 295 7663 or caroline.higgs@lcr.nhs.uk.

Notes to editor:

In October 2010 NHS Leicester City and NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland joined forces to form a 'cluster', in line with the requirements of the Department of Health. Although we share one Cluster Board and our staff work across the city and county boundaries, we have not legally merged, and retain our separate statutory duties. Together we serve a population of more than a million people. Cluster formation is an interim stage in the reform of the NHS, involving on-going transfer of most local commissioning functions to GP-led clinical commissioning groups, in line with the Health and Social Care Bill, now before Parliament and the House of Lords.