Childhood obesity in Scotland

The [UK is the most overweight country in all of Europe](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-41953530) with 63% of adults being overweight or worse. With recent research showing that once you gain weight it is hard to lose it as your body resets its natural target weight (<http://time.com/4793832/the-weight-loss-trap/>). So it is important for long term health that we address childhood obesity to catch this problem early. In the UK 1 in 10 children (aged 5 to 19 years old) is obese. This is three time the level found in other European country’s such as Norway (<https://www.fhi.no/en/studies/child-growth-study/funn/proportion-overweight/>).

So How dose Scotland compare? Let’s look at the data gathered over the last decade for Scottish Primary 1 children (typically 5 years old) at the start of there first school year.(<http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Child-Health/Child-Weight-and-Growth/>).

The good news is that in contrast to the 63% of adults that are overweight in 2015 this is only 15% for Primary 1 children. This is split into 9% overweight and 6% Obese or Severally Obese (OSO) .

he level of Primary 1 children being OSO has flat lined over the last 10 years ranging between 5% and 6% even though the number of Primary 1 children has doubled over that time.

Using the map on the left you are able to scroll through the years from 2006 to 2015 and see how the Primary 1 obesity levels have changed across the region’s.

As you can see that is its not until 2011 that the survey has reach a of the regions. In general, the OSO level is evenly spread across the nation with OSO Primary 1 children ranging from 5% 7%. However, there are a some exceptions such as Orkney which reached the highest level of 11.6% in 2013. At the same time in 2013 East Renfrewshire reach the lowest level surveyed of 2.4%.

By far the strongest factor that influences a child’s likelihood to be obese is there economic background.

Since the economic crash of 2008 the gap between rich and poor has gotten even wider, with the most deprive seeing a 12% increase in obesity while the most well off have seen a 19% reduction.

In 2015 children from the most deprived children are 3 times more likely to be obese than the most well off.