

IMPACT-NCMP Work Package 1d:
Understanding the acceptability of measuring the height and weight of children

We are inviting local authority partners to collaborate on an important research study commissioned by the NIHR and DHSC that aims to improve the delivery and impact of the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP).

We anticipate that participation will require minimal additional resources from local authority teams, as NIHR research delivery networks will lead on school recruitment and data collection. Local authority support with data sharing will be key.

Eligibility

Local authorities conducting Year 6 NCMP measurements during the current academic year (Spring/Summer 2026) or planning measurements in the 2026–27 academic year will be eligible to take part.

We are particularly interested in areas where measurement is scheduled from March 2026 onwards, or in the Autumn term of 2026.

Background

There is limited recent quantitative data on acceptability of measuring the height and weight of children (assessed at the time of measurement) as part of the NCMP, or similar programmes. Therefore, one strand of the IMPACT-NCMP research project specifically focuses on whether children find the measurement of height and weight acceptable.

It aims to answer the following research questions:

- What proportion of Year 6 children find the measurement of height and weight acceptable?
- Are there any groups (e.g. by gender, body size, or height) for whom measurement is less acceptable? And if so, which groups are these?
- What are the reasons given by children for measurement being unacceptable?

Overview of proposed research

Measurement acceptability will be assessed in schools immediately after Year 6 pupils are measured. As soon as pupils have been measured, they will be asked to complete 4-5 survey questions by the NIHR research delivery team.

Support sought from local authority partners

We are seeking support from local authorities to **help recruit 6–10 schools** for this study. Subject to agreement with NIHR, the **local NIHR Research Delivery Network will assist with**

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school recruitment and deliver the short survey (4–5 questions) immediately after NCMP measurements.

Our key asks are:

- **Facilitating collaboration** between the NIHR research delivery team and the NCMP delivery team to enable identification of suitable schools;
- **Helping recruit schools** to achieve approximately 200–400 Year 6 pupils per local authority;
- **Supporting a data-sharing agreement** to link selected variables from the enhanced NCMP dataset with survey responses.

Local authority partners – what we hope you may gain from collaboration

The project may present the following opportunities to local authority partners:

- Collecting high quality research data on acceptability of NCMP measurement that you will be able to use locally;
- Showing engagement with efforts to improve the delivery of the NCMP;
- Delivering high quality research with opportunity for policy impact (locally and nationally);
- Engaging children and adults in your communities with research and helping to represent their views to policy makers;
- Developing research skills and capacity amongst local authority staff, for example there will be opportunities for your public health team to work with researchers at UCL to learn and develop skills in protocol development, research ethics, survey design, qualitative methods, quantitative methods and academic writing.

It is very important that this works for the local authority partners, and we will want to hear your views about how we can make this work for your local authority and your community – so that it is mutually beneficial. There are also many elements of the research protocol, for example around community engagement that are still to be shaped, and which we would value your input on.

Research team

We are a multi-disciplinary group of researchers (psychology, public health, economics, nutrition, behavioural sciences) from University College London, University of Birmingham, University of Cambridge and University of Newcastle. It is co-led by Prof Clare Llewellyn (Professor of Psychology and Epidemiology, UCL) and Dr Oliver Mytton (Associate Professor, UCL Institute of Child Health, and Consultant in Public Health).

Research timeline

- Pre-grant preparation: December 2024 – March 2025
- Formal start date for grant: 1 April 2025

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- NCMP Measurement Acceptability data collection: March 2026 to December 2026
- Data analysis and dissemination: December 2026 to June 2027

Please contact Sarah Marriott (sarah.marriott.24@ucl.ac.uk) for further information if you are interested.