

# Weigh to Go Progress Report 2024

## Improving Paediatric Care Through Consistent Growth Monitoring – a Review of National Audits



Growth monitoring is a cornerstone of paediatric care, ensuring the healthy development of children. It helps identify early signs of malnutrition, growth disorders, and other medical conditions. However, the accuracy and consistency of these measurements in clinical settings can vary, especially for disabled children.

In 2018, the National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcome and Death (NCEPOD) published its [Each and Every Need](#) report which identified that weight and height were not recorded in all children and young people (CYP). One of the key recommendations is that: “patients with neurodisabling conditions should have their weight and nutritional status considered at every healthcare encounter, and assessed and recorded based on clinical need.”

Weigh to Go! is a BACD initiative raising awareness of the need to weigh and measure all children and young people regularly, including those who are vulnerable, physically disabled, and neurodevelopmentally diverse.

The first national audit of growth monitoring was completed by 16 UK sites in January 2023; and repeated at 17 sites in February 2024. 23 providers have participated in total, 10 have completed both audits. The aim of the national audits is to assess growth monitoring of CYP attending clinical services; and review resources available in the provider environments to weigh and measure all CYP including those who are vulnerable, physically disabled and neurodevelopmentally diverse.

Additional to the audits, the initiative supports education for providers and sharing of learning, and peer support to improve resources to improve growth monitoring for all children. A national “Weigh to Go” study afternoon was well attended in November 2023; with excellent feedback from attendees. BACD members can access the recording of this via their member login on the website.

### Summary of findings

Trust champions were asked to collect data using a excel collection proforma for at least 30 clinical encounters; in in-patient, hospital out-patient settings, and community clinics, during the audit period. They also completed an online survey regarding the trusts growth monitoring resources, staff training, clinical audit of growth monitoring, available growth and nutrition support services for CYP.

	2023	2024
Provider sites	16	17
Patient encounters	746	770 (full analysis 554)
% weighed at encounter	80%	74%
% measured at encounter	68%	62%
% height and weight plotted on chart	80%	71%
% OFC plotted if indicated	59%	66%
No resource for weighing or measuring physically disabled children at encounter	115/746 (29%)	13/16 trusts
No resource for weighing or measuring neurodiverse children at encounter	62/746 (8%)	4/16 trusts

Individual trusts have received detailed analysis of their individual data captured; benchmarked to other providers. There is significantly more data recorded for further analysis.

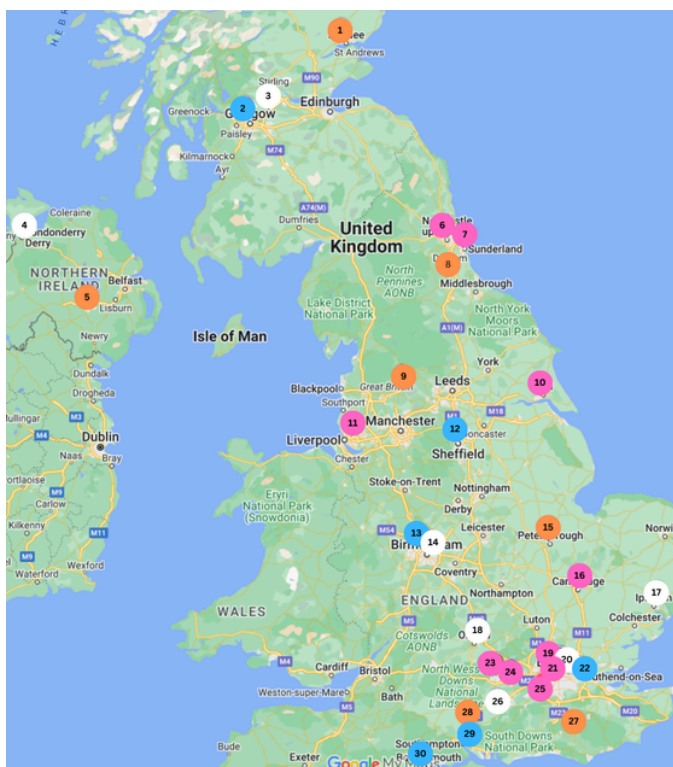
### Comparing 2023 and 2024: Little Progress?

While some trusts showed marginal improvements, particularly in weighing and measuring, the overall trend is disappointing, particularly as these data have been collected by engaged providers; who are knowingly participating in a national audit of growth monitoring. Many of the same issues identified in 2023 persisted into 2024, suggesting that the audit process itself has not yet led to substantial changes in practice.

Map showing all Weigh to Go! champion sites:

- Completed 2023 Audit
- Completed 2024 Audit
- Completed 2023 + 2024 Audit

Where there is no colour allocated this indicates that the site has a nominated Champion but has not participated in the audits.



## The Role of Governance and Training

Another area of concern raised in the audit was the lack of formal policies governing growth monitoring. Many trusts do not include growth monitoring in their clinical guidelines; or training as part of staff induction. The assumption that healthcare professionals are always competent in weighing and measuring children is falsely re-assuring.

Training gaps were highlighted by audit participants. While some trusts have started to implement training programs to improve staff competency in growth monitoring, these were often inconsistent.

## Impact on Clinical Practice

Despite the challenges, the audits have had a positive impact for some trusts. For example, the data provided by the audit was instrumental in persuading some trusts to invest in new equipment, such as wheelchair-accessible scales. In other trusts, the audit has helped initiate conversations about how to make clinics more accessible for disabled children.

However, as some participants pointed out, these changes are slow to materialise. Even after highlighting the lack of wheelchair-accessible scales in previous audits, some trusts have yet to act on these recommendations. This has led to frustration among healthcare professionals, who feel that these essential resources should be prioritised.

Some trusts have already taken steps to address the issues raised in the audit. For example, some have started working more closely with dietitians and school nurses to ensure that children's weights and heights are recorded accurately. Others are developing formal policies around growth monitoring, which will help standardise practices across clinics.

## Conclusion

- The national audits have highlighted significant areas for improvement, particularly regarding the resources available for disabled children. While some trusts have made progress, the overall results suggest that much more needs to be done.
- Addressing the lack of equipment and formal policies, along with improving training for healthcare professionals, will be key to ensuring that all children receive the high-quality care they deserve.
- The audits have started important conversations, but the next step is to turn these discussions into actionable changes that will improve the health outcomes of children across the country.

## Next Steps

The results of the first 2 annual WEIGH TO GO! audits raise important questions about how to move forward. We need to adjust the focus from simply collecting data to actively promoting best practices, sharing success stories and developing resources. The BACD Weigh to Go! website will be updated.

There is a fine balance between keeping the momentum and energy to keep the initiative moving forward; and the time interval to re-audit.

Participating sites in 2023 and 2024 will be sent a questionnaire in the coming weeks to review objective outcomes from the audit and their Weigh to Go! accreditation will be published on the website for 2025.

It is likely that we will make the next national audit week in Summer 2025. It may be that although there is an annual national audit trusts can choose an appropriate interval for their centre, e.g. every 2-3 years.

## DR JILL CADWGAN

### Weigh to Go! Lead

We would like to thank all of the trust champions and their colleagues who have participated in the Weigh to Go! audits and collected the data.

We would like to particularly acknowledge Dr Witney Lau for developing the audit spreadsheet for data collection and doing a sterling job number crunching the raw data received.

## Weigh to Go! Champion Sites

- 1 NHS Tayside
- 2 NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
- 3 The Scottish Centre For Children With Motor Impairments
- 4 Western Health & Social Care Trust
- 5 Southern Health & Social Care Trust
- 6 Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- 7 South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust
- 8 County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust
- 9 East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust
- 10 Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- 11 Alder Hey Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- 12 Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust
- 13 Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- 14 Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- 15 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust
- 16 Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust
- 17 East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust
- 18 Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- 19 Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust
- 20 East London NHS Foundation Trust
- 21 Guys and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust
- 22 Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust
- 23 Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust
- 24 Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- 25 Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- 26 Treloar College
- 27 Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust
- 28 Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- 29 Solent NHS Trust
- 30 University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust