

Dear Colleague

INTRODUCTION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION GROWTH CHARTS

This letter is to advise you of the introduction of the new WHO Growth Charts in Scotland for children aged 2 weeks to 4 years and to request that you ensure the growth charts are purchased and adopted for use within the timescales set out in this letter. In addition, I would be grateful if you could ensure this information is disseminated to all relevant staff within your Board area.

Background

The WHO Growth Charts were developed following a study of optimum growth in children, undertaken in a selection of countries across the world. The study showed that the growth patterns in breastfed children were remarkably similar and recommended that one growth chart, which reflects optimum growth – which is that of breastfed babies, should be adopted for use across the world. This recommendation was endorsed by the UK Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) were commissioned by the Department of Health to design the new UK-WHO charts and these include a range of design improvements in addition to well-evidenced instructions on their use. The new charts will be implemented to coincide with the launch of the new, Scotland-wide Personal Child Health Record (the Red Book) in Autumn 2009 and NHS Boards are required to complete the switch to the new charts for all babies born on or after 1 January 2010. The new charts include charts for hospital and community use and can be viewed at www.growthcharts.rcpch.ac.uk.

The Health for All Children guidance (Hall 4) issued in 2005 sets out the core programme of child health screening and surveillance contacts. The programme identifies that children should be weighed and measured at birth, within the first 10 days of life, 6-8 weeks, 3 months, 4 months, 13 months, between the ages of 3 and 5 years and at entry to primary school. This routine will not change through the introduction of the new growth charts nor should there be any change to clinical practice in weighing and measuring children as part of clinical care or treatment.

Cel 35 (2009)

Date 24 August 2009

Addresses

For action

Chief Executives – NHS Boards
Hall 4 Leads
Child Health Commissioners
CHP Managers
Clinical Education Leads, Regional Planning
Groups

For information

Board Chairs
Finance Directors
Nurse Directors
HR Directors
Medical Directors
Directors of Public Health
Primary Care Leads
Chair of NHS Public Health Nutrition Group
Scottish Infant Feeding Advisers Network
Scottish Dietetic Managers Group
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child
Health
Royal College of Nursing
Royal College of Midwives
Other

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Training

Staff using the new charts will require training in their use and this training will be the opportunity to improve growth monitoring practice for all health staff. The RCPCH has also produced free downloadable educational materials to support use of the charts and those can be viewed at www.growthcharts.rcpch.ac.uk

The Scottish Government will be hosting four 'Train the Trainers' events to assist this exercise and details can be found in Annex A. Please note there is no charge for these events. Please make sure that key representatives attend the sessions to ensure that this training can be rolled out in Board areas prior to implementation. As the WHO growth charts are based on growth of breastfed babies, Boards may if they wish fund the roll out of this training from the monies allocated through CEL (36) 2008 - *Nutrition of Women of Childbearing Age, Pregnant Women and Children under 5 in Disadvantaged Areas*. Training should be targeted at all health professionals who are involved in weighing and measuring babies and children. This includes, but is not exclusive to, Midwives, Health Visitors, Public Health Nurses, Practice Nurses, Staff Nurses, General Practitioners, Paediatricians and hospital staff who are involved in this process including nursing staff and Accident & Emergency staff who are involved in the weighing and measuring of children.

The RCPCH quick reference guide – *10 things you need to know about the new growth charts* is attached as Annex B for information. This can also be viewed or downloaded using the web link above.

Availability of the WHO Growth Charts

The new charts will be available for purchase from Harlow Printing (www.harlowprinting.co.uk) and NHS Boards should order these in the same way as the current UK 1990 charts are ordered. In addition, the new charts will be part of the Scotland-wide Personal Child Health Record (the Red Book) which we are currently consulting on and will also launch in autumn 2009. Arrangements are in place with Harlow Printing (who also produce the Red Book) to work with NHS Boards when ordering supplies of the new Red Book to ensure that they supply the UK 1990 charts for use up until changeover.

Next Steps

Chief Executives and other addressees are asked to ensure that this information is cascaded as appropriate to all relevant staff to ensure uptake of the training events, and successful rollout of the new charts.

Yours sincerely



John Froggatt
Deputy Director, Child and Maternal Health Division

WHO Growth Charts - Early years (0-4) TRAINING FOR TRAINERS PROGRAMME

13 October 2009	Thistle Hotel	Glasgow
30 October 2009	Edinburgh Training Centre	Edinburgh
13 November 2009	Apex Hotel	Dundee
8 December 2009	Ramada Hotel	Inverness

- 10.00 Introduction to the day & UK-WHO Charts
Quiz Completion
- 10.45 Measuring & Plotting Presentation
Activity Sheet: Measuring & Plotting
- 11.30 Video Clips on Measurement Techniques
Practice Measuring with Equipment
- 12.00 LUNCH
- 12.45 Newborn & Preterm
Activity Sheets: Newborn Infants & Plotting Pre-term Infants
- 13.30 Infants & Toddlers
Activity Sheet: Adult Height & BMI
- 14.15 AFTERNOON COFFEE
- 14.45 The new PCHR
- 15.15 The new Low-birth weight chart
Activity Sheet: Low-Birth Weight
- 16.00 Questions and closing session
- 16.15 CLOSE OF MEETING

To book your place at one of these events please go to www.shsceventsbookings.co.uk and click on the link to the most suitable date and venue.



10 Ten things you need to know about the new UK-WHO 0-4 years

growth charts

1. **New UK growth charts are being introduced using the WHO standard for children from birth to four years.**
 - They should be used for all babies born from May 11th 2009 for all babies born in England and from January 2010 in Scotland.
 - The existing UK90 growth charts will continue to be used for children over 4 years and also for any children who already have one.
 - The new charts, developed by the RCPCH for the Department of Health, are available in both A5 (personal child health record) and A4 format and can be downloaded free of charge from www.growthcharts.rcpch.ac.uk or purchased from specialist suppliers.
2. **The WHO charts for the first time describe optimal rather than average growth and set breastfeeding as the norm.**
 - The new charts were constructed using data from healthy breastfed children from around the world who had no known health or environmental constraints to growth.
 - They should be used for all infants however they are fed.
3. **The charts can be used for all ethnic groups.**
 - The WHO have shown that infants worldwide show very similar patterns of linear growth.
4. **The new charts will make weight patterns look different from age 6 months.**
 - On the new charts only 1/200 children will be below 2nd centile for weight after the age of 6 months and there will be twice as many children above the 98th centile.
 - Length and height show a very good fit to UK children.
5. **All health professionals who use charts should receive some training.**
 - The Department of Health recommend that occasional users receive 30 minutes and regular users 2 hours training.
 - Materials suitable for both experienced staff and students are downloadable for free from www.growthcharts.rcpch.ac.uk
6. **The new charts are going to look different and chart users need to familiarise themselves with the changes.**
 - The new charts and chart instructions were developed using focus groups of parents and professionals.
 - Though unfamiliar at first they should be clearer and easier to use in the long term.
7. **The new charts have a separate preterm section and clear instructions on gestational correction.**
 - A new low birth weight chart will also be available from May for use for any preterm infant below 32 weeks.
8. **The charts have no lines between 0 and 2 weeks.**
 - Children show highly variable weight loss and gain in the early days after birth, so users are encouraged to assess percentage weight loss rather than plot before 2 weeks.
 - At the age of two weeks, for the first time, the charts allow for slower neonatal weight gain so a drop sustained to 2 weeks will no longer be normal.
9. **The 50th percentile is no longer emphasised.**
 - Parents tend to expect all healthy children to be on the 50th centile.
 - To help plotting there are centile labels at both ends of each curve and more subtle indicators of the 50th percentile.
10. **The instructions draw on research evidence and UK policy on screening and referral and should be relevant to the majority of users.**
 - They define when a measurement or growth pattern is outside range of normality and advise when further assessment is advisable.
 - All information in the personal child health record is now aimed at parents.