

# Pregnancy and neonates: low birth weight

NICE indicator

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[www.nice.org.uk/indicators/ind22](https://www.nice.org.uk/indicators/ind22)

## Indicator

The proportion of full-term births where the child has a low birth weight.

## Indicator type

Network / system level indicator.

The indicator would be appropriate to understand and report on the performance of networks or systems of providers.

This document does not represent formal NICE guidance. For a full list of NICE indicators, see our [menu of indicators](#).

To find out how to use indicators and how we develop them, see our [NICE indicator process guide](#).

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## Rationale

Birthweight is a strong indicator of both maternal health and chances of survival, growth, long-term health and psychosocial development in newborn babies. High rates of low-birth-weight babies can suggest a need to improve antenatal care and health promotion during pregnancy.

## Source guidance

- [Maternal and child nutrition: nutrition and weight management in pregnancy, and nutrition in children up to 5 years. NICE guideline NG247 \(2025\)](#)
- [Antenatal care. NICE guideline NG201 \(2021\)](#)

## Specification

Numerator: The number of babies in the denominator with a low birthweight (less than 2,500 g).

Denominator: The number of live births at term (greater than 36 weeks) with a recorded birthweight.

Calculation: Numerator divided by the denominator, multiplied by 100.

Exclusions: None.

Data source: [NHS England Maternity Services Data Set](#).

Minimum population: The indicator would be appropriate to assess the performance of networks or systems of providers.

## Update information

### Minor changes since publication

**January 2025:** The source guidance was updated following the publication of NICE's guideline on maternal and child nutrition: nutrition and weight management in pregnancy,

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and nutrition in children up to 5 years.

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