

Date 05 August 2026
Your Ref
Our Ref 11687

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Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – ADULT WEIGHT MANAGEMENT SERVICES

I write in response to your request for information in relation to adult weight management services.

Question:

- Please could you send me a copy of (or link to) any current policies relating to adult weight management services (all tiers, including policies governing access criteria to surgery or drugs for weight management) AND copies of any equality impact assessments carried out in relation to those policies (including in respect of the Equality Act Public Sector Equality Duty and the Fairer Scotland/Socio-Economic Duty?) I would like the information for the purposes of academic research.

Answer:

Please find below information held by the Weight Management Service regarding our current pathways, eligibility criteria and prioritisation arrangements.

Referral Prioritisation: Obesity is recognised as a long-term health condition and, as such, all referrals to the Weight Management Service are routinely managed as non-urgent. Referrals may be expedited in exceptional circumstances, including:

- A diagnosis of Idiopathic Intracranial Hypertension (IIH).
- Where weight loss is required to access life-saving treatment, such as organ transplantation or certain cancer therapies.
- Military veterans where the condition is considered likely to be related to their armed forces service.

Tier 2 Digital Weight Management Programme: NHS Lothian currently commissions Second Nature as its Tier 2 digital weight management programme. The programme includes a 12-week core intervention supported by a qualified health coach (dietitian or nutritionist) and peer support group. Participants are provided with digital scales, a handbook and recipe book and have lifelong access to the app and self-monitoring tools. The programme is designed to be completed at a pace that suits the individual.

Eligibility criteria include:

- BMI ≥ 30 kg/m²; or BMI ≥ 27.5 kg/m² for people from non-white ethnic minority groups.

- Waist to height ratio equal or greater than 0.5 as an additional or alternative indicator of central adiposity and cardiometabolic risk (which is only applicable if BMI is less than 35)
- Willingness to engage with a structured digital lifestyle intervention.
- No upper weight limit.

Individuals wishing to pursue bariatric surgery are usually directed to the Tier 3 Specialist Weight Management Service for assessment and preparation.

Tier 3 Specialist Weight Management Service: The Tier 3 service provides specialist multidisciplinary support, including dietetic intervention and psychological assessment and treatment for individuals with binge eating disorder or clinically significant disordered eating. Patients also have access to an optional 12-week physical activity programme.

Tier 3 serves as the mandatory assessment and preparation pathway for individuals seeking consideration for bariatric surgery.

Referral to Tier 3 is generally prioritised where there is:

- BMI ≥ 35 kg/m² with 1 or more obesity related conditions.
- Where Tier 2 digital weight management has been ineffective.
- Complex presentations, including significant psychological distress or complex medical histories.
- Known or suspected disordered eating requiring specialist assessment.
- A desire to progress towards bariatric surgery.
- A need for enhanced one-to-one support, including where interpretation services are required.

Examples of obesity-related health conditions include: Type 2 diabetes, Hypertension, Hypercholesterolaemia, Gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD), Asthma, Arthritis, Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD), Non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH), Obstructive sleep apnoea, Cardiovascular disease, Pre-diabetes

This list is not exhaustive, and clinical judgement is always applied when determining the most appropriate pathway.

Bariatric Surgery Pathway: The Weight Management Service supports assessment and onward referral into the bariatric surgical pathway. However, the eligibility criteria and BMI thresholds governing access to bariatric surgery are determined by the relevant surgical service rather than the Weight Management Service.

Any requests relating specifically to other surgical eligibility criteria, BMI thresholds, or decision-making processes for access to surgery should be directed to the surgical teams responsible for those pathways.

I hope this information is helpful for your research.

For completeness, the Weight Management Service has also undertaken an **Equality, Fairer Scotland and Children's Rights Impact Assessment (ECRIA)** as part of the review of Weight Management Service eligibility criteria that we intend to implement later this year. The assessment considers our duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty, together with potential impacts on protected characteristic groups and people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. The assessment can be accessed here:

[Impact Assessment - Weight Management Service 2025 - Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership](#)

This information is exempt under Section 25 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 - Information otherwise accessible

(1) Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it under section 1(1) is exempt information.

I hope the information provided helps with your request.

If you are unhappy with our response to your request, you do have the right to request us to review it. Your request should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this letter, and we will reply within 20 working days of receipt. If our decision is unchanged following a review and you remain dissatisfied with this, you then have the right to make a formal complaint to the Scottish Information Commissioner within 6 months of receipt of our review response. You can do this by using the Scottish Information Commissioner's Office online appeals service at www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal. If you remain dissatisfied with the Commissioner's response you then have the option to appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law.

If you require a review of our decision to be carried out, please write to the FOI Reviewer at the email address at the head of this letter. The review will be undertaken by a Reviewer who was not involved in the original decision-making process.

FOI responses (subject to redaction of personal information) may appear on NHS Lothian's Freedom of Information website at: <https://org.nhslothian.scot/FOI/Pages/default.aspx>

Yours sincerely

ALISON MACDONALD
Executive Director, Nursing
Cc: Chief Executive