



Implementation support toolkit

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Introduction

Obesity is a growing public health concern. [Health Survey for England data from 2022](#) shows that 64% of adults in England are living with overweight or obesity. It is important that commissioners, providers and healthcare professionals are supported to apply evidence-based best practice to help address this.

We are aware of the challenges faced in implementing guidance on obesity. There is significant variation in overweight and obesity management services across the UK and there are considerable concerns about possible staff and resource shortages. This toolkit aims to help address or alleviate these concerns and challenges, but NICE accepts that it is not possible to resolve them completely.

This resource is not NICE guidance but is intended to support its implementation. It should be read alongside any local policies, pathways and commissioning arrangements.

Related guidance and support from NICE

To support the implementation of [NICE's guideline on overweight and obesity management \(NG246\)](#), NICE has produced:

- A [visual summary of the principles of care](#) (PDF only) aimed at healthcare professionals. It can also be used for staff training or inductions.
- A [visual summary of the potential care journey](#) (PDF only) that demonstrates the need for diet, physical activity and behavioural support through all support levels (sometimes referred to as tier systems).
- A [baseline assessment tool](#) (Excel 104 KB) to evaluate whether local practice is in line with guideline recommendations. It also helps plan actions to meet the recommendations, if needed.
- A [resource impact template and summary report for NG246, TA1026, TA875 and TA664](#) to estimate whole service resource implication. [Email NICE's resource impact assessment team](#) for more information or help to complete this.
- [Indicators on weight management](#) to support quality improvement activity.

Equitable care

The challenge

Overweight and obesity rates are highest in the most deprived quintile, according to [data from Health Survey for England in 2021](#). Data from [Health Survey for England between 2011 and 2019](#) indicated variation in the prevalence of overweight and obesity in adults by ethnicity, showing different patterns for men and women.

People with severe mental illness were 1.8 times more likely than the general population to live with obesity, according to [figures published by Public Health England in 2018](#).

The prevalence of obesity in people with learning difficulties was 37% compared with 30.1% for the general population, according to [figures published by Public Health England in 2020](#).

The NICE [Health Inequalities Briefing](#) on obesity provides more details on the risk factors and wider determinants of obesity, as well as inequalities in relation to prevalence, access to, and experience of, obesity management services.

What support is available

Severe mental illness

[NHS England's guidance on improving the physical health of people living with severe mental illness](#) includes a range of health advice including tailored weight management, oral health checks and physical activity assessments. A [case study on achieving a healthier weight for people living with severe mental illness](#) is also available.

[Rethink Mental Illness' guidance on physical activity and mental health](#) may also be helpful to adults affected by mental illness.

The [Royal College of Psychiatrists' intervention framework for people experiencing psychosis and schizophrenia](#) applies to adults and young people. It includes information on assessment, monitoring and care planning around weight and body mass index (BMI).

Learning disabilities

A case study from Somerset NHS Foundation Trust outlines the process of setting up a specialist service for obesity management medications as part of its specialist obesity management service. It demonstrates how the trust has further adapted its service to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities, neurodiversity and genetic causes of obesity.

East London NHS Foundation Trust's quality improvement project on weight management shows how the trust increased BMI monitoring for people with learning disabilities.

The following information from the British Dietetic Association (BDA) may help when offering dietary support to people with a learning disability:

- What do dietitians need to know when seeing a patient with a learning disability? and
- weight management for people with a learning disability.

The BDA also has a child and adolescent mental health (CAMHS) specialist subgroup where registered dietitians can access resources to support them in giving dietary advice.

Awareness and access to general resources and training

The challenge

Management of overweight and obesity is complex and multifaceted, and a personalised approach to treatment is essential.

Measuring waist to height ratio (in people with a body mass index (BMI) less than 35 kg per m²) may be new for some healthcare professionals, and they must be trained to do this. Where people can and prefer to measure themselves, it is important they are shown how to do so correctly. Please note that seeking permission to perform any measurement is essential before commencing.

What support is available

The NICE guideline includes advice on how to measure, calculate and interpret BMI and waist to height ratio. The [NHS webpage on obesity](#) also includes an interactive guide for calculating BMI and video on measuring waist to height ratio.

[NICE's practical guide to using medicines to manage overweight and obesity](#) covers the pharmacological management of overweight and obesity in adults. It provides an outline of the steps needed to safely assess, prescribe, monitor and stop medicines that can be prescribed in primary care, such as tirzepatide. It includes a section on managing adverse effects and [an initial assessment checklist](#) (Word, 34 KB) that summarises the actions and assessments that may be needed before prescribing tirzepatide.

In addition, the World Obesity's Strategic Centre for Obesity Professional Education (SCOPE) has produced [a set of training and events](#) aimed at empowering healthcare professionals to provide the best possible care for people with obesity.

The British Dietetic Association (BDA) obesity specialist group represents dietitians working in adult and childhood obesity prevention and management, recognising obesity as being a specialist area of dietetic practice. For more information, contact obesity@bda.uk.com

When implementing the recommendations on diet and physical activity, the following resources may be of assistance:

- [NHS England's physical activity and health programme](#)
- [NHS England's public health guidance on harnessing the benefits of physical activity](#)

[NICE's information for the public](#) also contains links to other resources that may be helpful to share with patients.

Encouraging sensitive, non-stigmatising and person-centred communication

The challenge

NICE's guideline on overweight and obesity management recommends that healthcare professionals seek to address weight stigma, use appropriate language and images when talking about weight and obesity, and focus on health and wellbeing rather than simply talking about weight. Keeping people engaged and ensuring adherence to interventions is paramount to success and to delivering a quality experience.

A lack of awareness of these principles, as well as a shortage of resources and capacity in overweight and obesity management services, may mean it is difficult for providers and healthcare professionals to implement these recommendations.

What support is available

NICE's discussion aid for healthcare professionals and patients supports discussions between healthcare professionals and people considering tirzepatide. It covers what the treatment involves, likely benefits, potential risks and alternatives.

NHS England's healthier weight competency framework includes relevant information such as how to avoid weight stigma and challenge biases, communicate effectively and measure a person's weight.

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities' (OHID's) healthy weight coaching provides guidance on how to have sensitive conversations about weight and health with adults.

The British Dietetic Association (BDA) guidelines on eliminating weight stigma talks about language and addressing weight stigmas for people living with obesity. The world obesity image bank for combating weight bias in the media is a gallery containing free-to-use, accurate, sensitive and non-biased images.

In addition, OHID's national child measurement programme conversation framework

provides guidance on talking to parents about their child's weight and treatment. [NHS England's national child measurement programme](#) also has resources that support conversations when discussing a child's weight.

[NHS England's person-centred approaches](#) and the [Personalised Care Institute](#) provide training to help healthcare professionals develop relevant skills in this area.

[NICE's guideline on overweight and obesity management](#) says that healthcare professionals should be aware that people can be affected by an eating disorder at any weight. If an eating disorder is suspected, [refer to NICE's guideline on recognising and treating eating disorders](#) and [NICE's quality standard on eating disorders](#).

Clear referral processes from obesity services to eating disorder services, and training on eating disorders for staff working in obesity services is important to establish. [NHS England's eating disorders training for health and care staff](#) may be useful when working with people with obesity.

Access to tirzepatide and other obesity management medications

The challenge

Tirzepatide, semaglutide and liraglutide are recommended for use within specialist obesity management services. Tirzepatide can also be prescribed in primary care.

All obesity management medications should be used alongside a reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity. Many primary care services are currently not set up to provide this, and access varies across the country.

Specialist obesity management services are also expecting an increase in demand because of an increased awareness and availability of tirzepatide.

What support is available

NHS England has published its [interim commissioning guidance on implementation of TA1026 and the NICE funding variation for tirzepatide](#) which should be read alongside NICE guidance. It details eligible patient cohorts, prioritisation strategy and phased implementation of tirzepatide across specialist obesity management services and primary care settings.

Obesity management medications (including tirzepatide, semaglutide and liraglutide) should not be used in pregnancy. People should be given advice on contraception and planning pregnancy as per the advice in the summary of product characteristics (SPCs) for each product.

[NICE's local formulary information on tirzepatide](#) supports the process of adopting this medicine into local formularies by summarising information that local formulary decision-making groups are likely to need.

How will this toolkit be reviewed and updated

How did we develop this toolkit

When developing this toolkit, we did research to explore and understand the implementation challenges. We gathered and listened to feedback from the health and care system through a series of activities that included (but were not limited to):

- engaging with NICE guideline development committees and lay members,
- reviewing comments from the guidance consultation on [NICE's guideline on overweight and obesity](#) and [technology appraisal on tirzepatide for managing overweight and obesity](#),
- engaging with key regional and national stakeholders and organisations,
- gathering and recording feedback from users of obesity related NICE guidance, and
- holding a stakeholder workshop to gather views on implementation of the [guidance on tirzepatide](#).

Acting on user feedback

Key findings from our stakeholder research included:

- The use of [appropriate language](#) when talking about weight and obesity, and reducing weight stigma, is important to people.
- Commissioners highlighted significant financial pressures and concerns around the [affordability of tirzepatide](#).
- There are challenges in primary care with [prescribing tirzepatide](#) alongside holistic care on overweight and obesity management.
- Concerns over the [lack of specialist weight management services](#).

- Providers and practitioners want to do their best to [upskill and implement NICE guidance](#), but time precludes this.
- [Equitable access](#) to services and medicines should be a priority.

The future

This toolkit will be updated as and when new guidance, insights, resources or support tools become available. We will continue to monitor uptake of the guidance in line with available data sources and insights, taking action where necessary.

NICE will highlight the areas that we will prioritise in the coming years through [our forward view](#). These topics will be refreshed on an annual basis.

See the [NICE topic page for obesity](#) for more information, including details of any new or updated guidance or quality standards that are currently in development.

Who we are and how to contact us

NICE has a regionally based system implementation team that engages with key health and care organisations, networks and system partners to help them use our guidance and standards in practice. Ideas for encouraging, informing and facilitating regional and local activities for the implementation of NICE guidance are always welcome. We are always seeking examples of good practice to share and for opportunities to connect with local health and care systems.

If you have any feedback on this toolkit, [email the national implementation team](#).

If you would like further information or support to implement NICE guidance, [email the system implementation team](#).

Note that external websites and resources have not been produced by NICE. NICE has not made any judgement about the methodology, quality or usability of the websites or resources.

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