

NHS Hampshire and NHS Southampton Tier 3 Weight Management Service
'The Weigh Ahead'

Referral Guidelines for General Practitioners

'The Weigh Ahead' Tier 3 Specialist Community Weight Management Service for severe and complex obesity will provide you with an extra option to support patients who are obese, and help your patients and your team manage their obesity. The service has been designed to lead to better outcomes for your patients and to be more cost effective to the NHS in the longer term.

'The Weigh Ahead' service is a Specialist Community Weight Management Service for severe and complex obesity, providing an intensive level of support to patients through a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) approach.

Referral Criteria:

- Patients must be aged 16 or over
- Patients must have a BMI ≥ 35 (with co-morbidities; see list of significant co-morbidities below) **OR** a BMI ≥ 40 (without co-morbidities)
- Patients must have complied with a range of weight loss interventions at Tiers 1 and 2 of the pathway over a 2 year period and have failed to achieve or maintain weight loss goals*

***Please note:** All patients who meet the criteria have one opportunity to join and complete the Tier 3 programme: therefore we would strongly recommend you advise your patients of this prior to referring to our service to establish whether the patient is ready to join the Tier 3 programme at this given time.

Significant co-morbidities we accept could include:

- Established cardiovascular disease
- Type 2 diabetes
- Sleep apnoea
- Severe hypertension
- Severe lower limb major joint disease requiring orthopaedic intervention, otherwise precluded on the basis of a BMI
- Dyslipidaemia
- Patients for whom surgery is dependent on weight loss (i.e. severe lower limb joint disease, polycystic ovaries, and impaired fasting glycaemia).

We can also accept patients with other related conditions such as metabolic syndrome, polycystic ovarian syndrome and osteoarthritis.

Service Exclusions:

- Patients **must not** have been enrolled on or completed the Tier 3 programme previously
- Any patient with serious uncontrolled disease, e.g. angina, asthma, COPD, heart failure, aortic stenosis
- Recent complicated Myocardial infarction and/or awaiting further investigation
- Uncontrolled arrhythmia that compromise cardiac function
- Blood pressure at rest above 180mg Systolic, 120mg Diastolic.
- Clients with an unstable psychiatric disorder
- Acute infection

Pregnancy – GPs and primary care professionals should contact the service for support and guidance on assisting patients during the antenatal period, with a view to referral into the scheme postnatally, following six week midwife check (12 – 13 weeks following caesarean).

Bloods Required

Patients referred into the service should have had within the preceding six month period prior to referral the following blood results:

- Thyroid
- Lipids
- U&E's
- Liver Function
- Fasting Blood Glucose
- HbA1c (if diabetic)

Any other biochemistry results or vitamin profiles already undertaken in the past 6 months should also be attached, detailing on the referral form the reason for the original request. These will need to be repeated at patient discharge from the service and again at 12 months after the original referral to '*The Weigh Ahead*' service and we will contact you to follow this up nearer the time.

If patients are under the care of any other consultants or specialists, please advise the weight management service at referral, or include copies of any communications pertaining to their care.

Bariatric Surgery Eligibility (Tier 4)

Patients will need to complete the Tier 3 specialist obesity management programme prior to being considered for bariatric surgery, this is in line with the current bariatric referral policies. Some patients may be considered for bariatric surgery on successful completion of the Tier 3 programme if appropriate. **Patients will still need to fulfil the national criteria as well as any locally determined criteria for bariatric surgery to be eligible regardless of completion of the Tier 3 programme.**

The Tier 3 programme is designed to help your patients achieve weight loss and prepare your patient for the outcome of a surgical procedure. The Tier 3 programme is not a delaying tactic for surgery, and is supportive of bariatric surgery in the right circumstances for the appropriate patients. Therefore this programme aims to avoid bariatric surgery for those patients who would not benefit and to instead develop sustainable long term behaviours; and to prepare those for surgery who can demonstrate they are ready. Patients who do not engage with their programme or who do not see the importance of making these lifestyle improvements are less likely to be recommended for bariatric surgery by the Tier 3 service.

All patients will be required to attend **ALL** sessions that are deemed necessary to achieve their programme goals. Failure to do this may result in discharge from the service, back to their GP, thus ceasing progress along the local NHS weight management pathway and as consequence withdrawal from the Tier 3 programme will apply.

Patients wishing to be considered for a referral to bariatric surgery on successful completion of their Tier 3 programme should be made aware prior to referral that they will be expected to demonstrate they are able to lose weight and commit to the lifestyle changes necessary to be successful in moving towards a healthier weight range if they were to be considered for bariatric surgery. This includes adherence to healthy eating advice, participation in physical activity and psychological preparation for the long term changes they will need to implement.

Patients should also be made aware that in addition to the potential benefits of bariatric surgery (for certain patients) there are pre-surgical dietary procedures that need to be followed and there are longer-term implications of bariatric surgery, as well as associated risks, including complications and perioperative mortality.

How to complete the referral form

Patients can be referred into the service using a paper version of the referral template, which can then be faxed via our secure fax line, mailed via the postal system or scanned and e-mailed to the Tier 3 NHS net e-mail address.

Please ensure that all fields within the form are completed fully and that the patient has been counselled as to why they have been referred into the service. Patients will need to have also signed the referral in order to establish some early commitment to positive participation in the service. Any referral forms that are incomplete will be returned to the referrer to complete all necessary details before the referral can be processed and accepted to the service.

How to contact '*The Weigh Ahead*' weight management service

Contact details:

Telephone: 02380 764964

Fax: 02380 512757

E-mail: spire.Tier3Soton-HantsWMS@nhs.net

Postal mail:

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