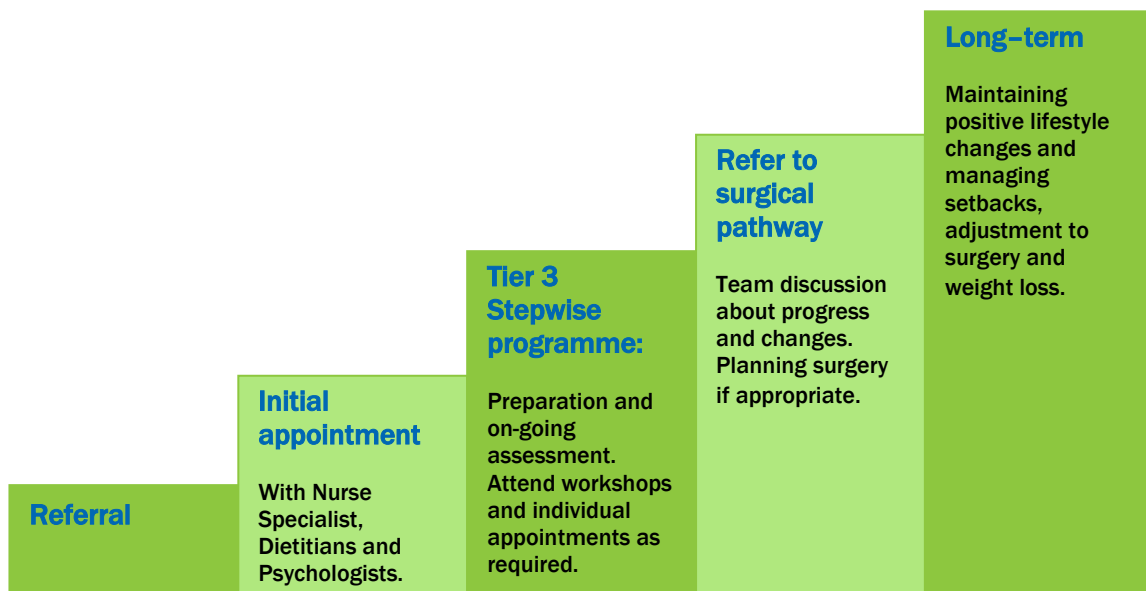




Weight Management Pathway at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital

Information for Patients





Introduction

This information booklet is designed to provide you with an understanding of the weight management pathway at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital.

We hope that after reading this booklet and talking with our team, you will have a better understanding of what is involved in weight management and referral for bariatric surgery, including the benefits and risks of surgery.

It should also help you decide which option is best for you and your lifestyle goals.

Why treat obesity?

The main concern about carrying extra weight is the impact it can have on your health. We know that being obese can increase the chance of having many other diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.

Being obese can also shorten your life expectancy, and approximately 6% of all deaths in the UK are related to being obese. The heavier you are and the longer you have been overweight or obese, the greater the risk. Surgery can be a way of managing your weight and preventing further health problems.

Weight loss surgery has been shown to prevent or improve conditions and diseases such as:

- Type 2 diabetes
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- High triglycerides
- Heart disease
- Asthma
- Sleep apnoea
- Certain cancers such as breast, colon and endometrial cancer
- Polycystic ovarian syndrome
- Osteoarthritis and joint problems
- Infertility
- Stress incontinence
- Weight loss surgery can also improve quality of life and increase life expectancy

What is weight management?

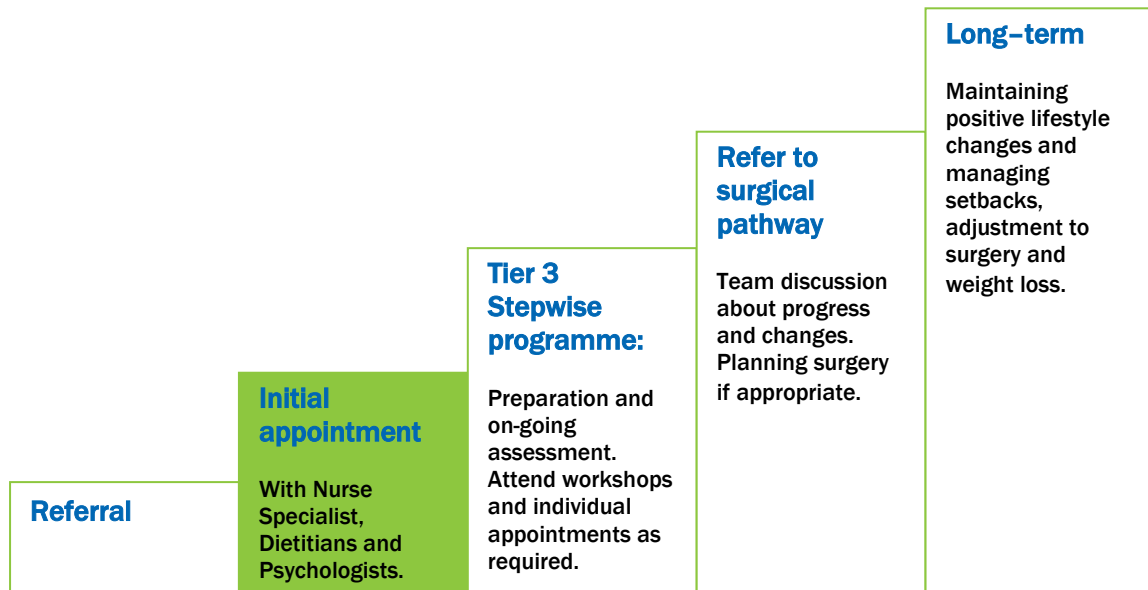
Weight management is the non-surgical approach to weight loss. This is a structured programme of individual and group appointments which take place over a number of months.

It can include lifestyle changes, use of weight loss medications, and interventions from a number of health professionals such as: Endocrinologists, Psychologists, Dietitians and Exercise Physiologists.

This is also known as a Tier 3 Specialist Weight Management Programme. At Chelsea and Westminster Hospital the tier 3 programme is called STEPWISE.



What happens after referral to the Weight Management Service ?



Initial assessment appointment

Nurse Specialist

The nurse specialist will go through your previous medical and surgical history and medications. The nurse will also ask about your weight history, dieting history and whether you have already attended a weight management programme (we will need evidence of this). The nurse will give an explanation of the weight management pathway and the different types of surgical procedures available - looking at why some types of surgery may suit you more than others. At this appointment you will also fill in some questionnaires, the nurse will order some blood tests and refer you to the sleep studies team if necessary.



Dietitian

The dietitian will talk to you about your usual eating habits and lifestyle and the methods of losing weight that have worked for you in the past. They will discuss with you the advantages and disadvantages of the different weight management and surgical procedures based on your eating patterns. If you want surgery this will help us guide you towards a surgical option that might suit you best and the changes you may need to make to have the most success from your surgery. We will discuss how much weight you would be likely to lose with surgery and the way your eating patterns and activity levels will impact on this. Individualised goals will also be agreed with you at this initial appointment and will be reviewed at subsequent appointments.

Psychologist

The psychologist will find out more about your eating patterns, your relationship with food and the impact of your weight difficulties on your emotional health. We will also ask you about any psychological difficulties (e.g. low mood) that you are currently experiencing or have experienced in the past. We will use this information to think about ways in which we can help you manage any difficulties which may impact on your eating, weight loss and future preparation for bariatric surgery if appropriate. We can also make referrals to other support services if further help is needed. It is important to be honest and open with us about any difficulties so that we can provide the most appropriate help and support for you. Our aim is to help you get the best possible outcome from bariatric surgery.

MDT discussion

After your assessment, the multidisciplinary team will review the information gathered and work out the plan going forward. The team will discuss whether you have completed a Tier 3 weight management service elsewhere or whether you need to complete the Tier 3 service that we provide (STEPWISE).



Eligibility for bariatric surgery

Bariatric surgery in England is funded (commissioned) centrally by NHS England. NHS England have set certain criteria which must be met before funding for bariatric surgery can be agreed. This is to ensure that the most appropriate patients are selected for surgery. Within these patient groups, bariatric surgery has been shown to be highly cost effective.

The NHS England Funding (Commissioning) Criteria are:

- BMI 35-40 kg/m² with other significant disease present (e.g. Type 2 diabetes, obstructive sleep apnoea, ischaemic heart disease).
OR
- BMI >40kg/m² without significant disease.
AND
- The obesity must have been present for at least 5 years.
AND
- **The individual must have recently completed and complied with a local Specialist Obesity Service weight loss programme (Tier 3 or 4) for a duration of 12-24 months. This must include input from an obesity physician, dietitian, psychologist, nurse specialist and exercise therapist.**
- For patients with a BMI>50kg/m² referred to a bariatric service this can include the period of assessment and stabilisation prior to surgery. The minimum period must be 6 months.
- The individual has failed to lose clinically significant weight during the Tier 3/ Tier 4 programme.

You will be unable to be referred onto the bariatric surgery pathway unless you have completed a Tier 3 weight management programme (or equivalent) and the team is satisfied that you are prepared and ready for surgery.

NICE Guidance

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Care Excellence (NICE) has recommended that certain groups could be considered for weight loss surgery if they have a BMI of 30-34.9kg/m², such as those with recent onset Type 2 Diabetes which is poorly controlled and those of Asian family origin with recently diagnosed Type 2 Diabetes.

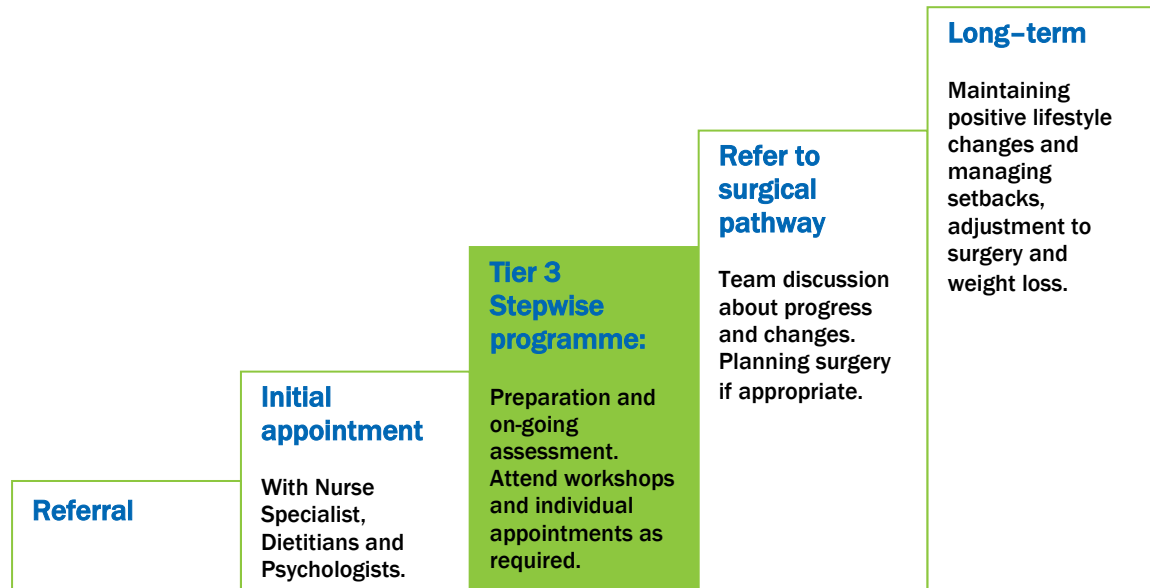
These individuals will need to have funding approved before being referred for bariatric surgery as they do not meet the current commissioning criteria.

Funding in the future

It is likely that in the future funding will move from NHS England to your local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). This may mean that the eligibility criteria will change depending on where you live.



What is the STEPWISE Tier 3 programme?



Many of the people we see in clinic have struggled with their weight for many years and have tried multiple diets to manage their weight. We know that it is not always easy to make and maintain lifestyle changes and we want to help you with this so that you get the best outcome from weight loss, with or without surgery.

In our experience, those people who are well informed, realistic and make changes to their diet and behaviour have better results if they go on to have bariatric surgery.

Bariatric surgery is one of the most effective means of losing and maintaining weight loss. However, it is not a quick fix and requires considerable commitment, motivation and a good understanding of your eating behaviour.

Sometimes people want to have bariatric surgery as soon as possible and feel disappointed when they hear that they need to attend STEPWISE beforehand – however, one of the aims of STEPWISE is to build upon your knowledge and skills in order to manage your weight and prepare for bariatric surgery if this is the approach you decide on. It is time well spent. This will include practicing the necessary lifestyle changes, increasing your awareness of your eating and addressing unhelpful eating habits. This is time for you to work towards reaching your goal and to get the best outcome from surgery.

Please note that the team will be unable to refer you into the surgical pathway unless you have completed STEPWISE (or a community Tier 3 weight management service).



What does STEPWISE involve?

STEPWISE is a programme to help you manage your weight, and if appropriate, make changes in preparation for bariatric surgery. STEPWISE involves attending two group workshops as well as individual appointments.

Workshops

STEPWISE includes workshops that are run by the psychologists and dietitians. The sessions will cover the following areas to help you manage your eating and prepare you for bariatric surgery:

- Understanding your role in weight loss including making bariatric surgery work
- Building awareness of your eating
- Understanding and managing unhelpful eating patterns
- Developing skills to stay on track and managing setbacks
- Pre and post- surgery dietary guidelines
- How to introduce exercise
- Opportunity to hear from and speak to expert patients

We have been running these workshops for patients for a number of years and patients consistently rate these as extremely helpful. Below are some examples of the comments that patients have made on their feedback forms:

“The workshops were very helpful and I learnt a lot about preparing for surgery”

“It was really useful to meet other people who have the same problems, questions and concerns”

“Comprehensive, very informative, great recommendations and strategies”

These workshops will be supplemented with your individual appointments.

Your workshops will be held on:

AND



Psychology & Dietitian Appointments

In addition to attending the two workshops described above, we will work out a specific plan for follow-up appointments with the psychologists and dietitians. If you proceed to bariatric surgery you need to understand that surgery is only a tool and, in order for you to achieve your weight loss goal, you will need to make significant and long-term changes to your behaviour. The purpose of these appointments is to provide information focused on your individual situation and address your specific needs.

Psychology appointments – our aim is to help you get the best possible outcome from bariatric surgery by helping you to identify and manage any psychological issues that may affect how you cope with all the changes required. The psychology appointments are part of your progression through the weight management and surgical pathway. There are areas that people often struggle with prior to surgery (e.g. difficulties changing habits, emotional eating,) that the psychologists can help you with.

How can psychologists help? Many people we see have struggled with their weight for a long time and this can affect how you feel about yourself, your confidence in your ability to make changes to your behaviour. We can help you to develop a better understanding of these issues and work with you to develop strategies to manage some of these problems.

Emotional eating or comfort eating is something that many people struggle with and research shows that this can affect how much weight people lose (with or without surgery). That is why it is very important to address these issues before surgery so that you have alternative ways of coping. We run an Emotional Eating Group which will help you to recognise how emotions can impact on your eating, your relationship with food and to help you find ways of managing this.

Dietitian appointments – our aims is to support you to lose weight safely and effectively. We know that most people have tried many diets in the past to help them lose weight with varying degrees of success. Some will have some knowledge of healthy eating so may not think that seeing the dietitian will be beneficial. We do not want to put you 'on a diet', but to help equip you with the knowledge and skills to be able to get the most out of the weight loss method you choose. Many people are surprised by the way their eating habits need to change if they proceed with surgery – it can be quite different from what they are expecting and from what they have experienced in the past from a weight loss 'diet plan'.

How can dietitians help? We will help you develop eating patterns to promote weight loss. This may include developing regular eating patterns and practicing certain eating



behaviours. You will also have the opportunity to discuss and agree on individualised goals and review them at subsequent sessions.

Your blood results from your initial assessment will be reviewed by the team and the dietitian will check to ensure you are taking the correct supplementation, if you were found to have any deficiencies – for example vitamin D.

We will discuss with you strategies to help to minimise weight regain, in particular looking at making changes to diet and lifestyle that can be sustained long term.

If you have surgery it can change the anatomy of your digestive system. An awareness of the way it will impact on your eating patterns can help you to avoid nutritional deficiencies in the long term after surgery.

For surgical patients we will discuss the special diet that you need to follow before surgery (the preoperative liver shrinkage diet) and will be asked to practice this early on to ensure you are confident and able to adhere to it at least two weeks prior to your surgery date. We will also discuss the diet to follow during the early stages after surgery (post-operative texture progression) and will provide guidance on meal volume, pace and food groups to help minimise potential nutritional deficiencies.

Weight loss expectations of the team

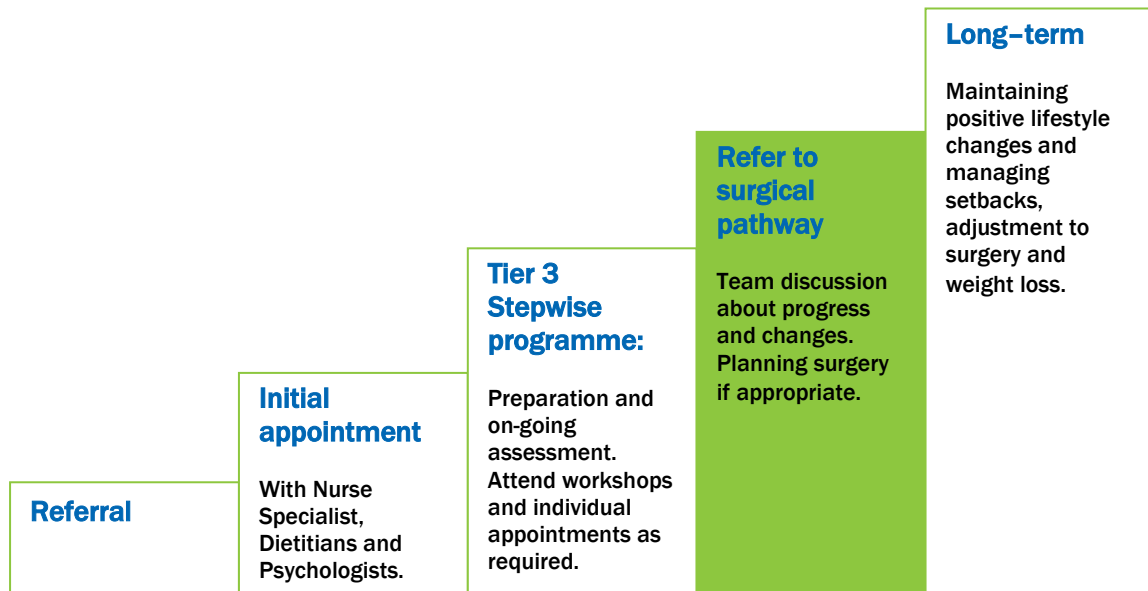
Individual weight loss goals will be set at the start of the pathway and monitored throughout. If you wish to go on to have bariatric surgery, weight loss or weight maintenance prior to surgery will be expected. Weight gain before surgery may delay your surgery.

Your role – commitment and attendance

If you wish to proceed to Bariatric Surgery you will need to attend both workshops and all individual appointments to be eligible for funding for your procedure. Attendance is one of the key ways that we assess your motivation and commitment. Please note that attendance of the group sessions and individual appointments is compulsory. If you do not attend or cancel repeatedly, then you will not be able to proceed to bariatric surgery and you will be discharged from the service.



Team discussion about your progress in Stepwise and potential referral to surgical pathway



It is important to recognise that as you progress through the STEPWISE programme the team will assess factors such as your ability to implement and make changes, recognition of unhelpful patterns and developing strategies to overcome these. At the end of the weight management programme if you wish to proceed to surgery we will review your progress and if the team are satisfied with this, an appointment will be made for you to see a surgeon. Please note that we are unable to book an appointment to see a surgeon until all members of the team have completed their assessment (and any intervention required) and are happy for you to proceed.

If you wish to continue on the weight management programme (rather than bariatric surgery) you will be referred into the long-term weight management service at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, or to a suitable community service.



Further Information

If you would like further information about the STEPWISE programme please get in touch with a member or the team.

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