**BNSSG Weight Assessment and Management Service (WAMS) - Information for GPs**

WAMS is a specialist service with the goal of improving the health and well-being of morbidly obese adults through promoting life-long behaviour change. It is not simply an assessment for bariatric surgery and those referred for consideration of surgery should understand that in most cases this will not be appropriate without some preparation, focussing on regulating eating, portion sizes and emotional regulation. Generally this takes 6-12 months in WAMS.

**Aims**

* To achieve clinically significant weight loss with safe and sustainable means (ideally 5-10%)
* To encourage long term behaviour change through promoting healthy eating, physical activity and recognising the psychological barriers to unhealthy relationships with food
* To prevent/reduce/improve the management of any associated co-morbidities
* To improve sense of wellbeing and quality of life

**Referral Criteria**

Inclusion (all apply)

* Registered with a BNSSG GP
* Aged 18 and over
* Patient has previously made sustained and co-ordinated weight loss interventions over a 2 year period but failed to achieve/maintain weight loss
* BMI≥40kg/m2 or BMI≥35kg/m2 and associated co-morbidities (type 2 diabetes, hypertension, obstructive sleep apnoea, ischaemic heart disease, idiopathic intracranial hypertension and non-alcoholic steatohepatitis)
* Patient is able to identify clear reasons for addressing weight
* Patient is prepared to engage and willing to enter into a contract of care outlining responsibilities on both sides and their ability to commit to the programme

Exclusion

* Significant mental health disorder that would prevent engagement with the service
* Active binge eating disorder (BED) or bulimia nervosa
* Active history of substance/alcohol misuse or dependence
* Pregnancy or planning pregnancy
* Previous referral within 12 months where they have disengaged from services.

At their initial assessment patients will have a comprehensive assessment by a bariatric physician/ surgeon, dietitian and psychologist. During this assessment a thorough weight history will be taken, detailing previous weight loss attempts, perceived barriers to losing weight as well as reasons behind wanting to lose weight at this point. Information and education will be provided so that he/she has appropriate understanding of the relationship between eating habits and weight aiming to help him/her understand the necessary changes in eating habits to improve health, and identify risk factors and vulnerabilities so that interventions can be planned to address and improve them.

Following the assessment, each patient will be discussed in the multidisciplinary meeting and the most appropriate intervention will be offered depending on individual needs. In the main this will be group work, with individual sessions for select patients where group work would not be suitable.

We will also determine that some patients are currently unsuitable for WAMS. Those not suitable for the service (untreated/unstable mental health such as active psychosis, severe anxiety/low mood, suicidal behaviour or self-harm, active eating disorder either bulimia nervosa or BED or those with current addictions to either alcohol or drugs) will require psychological input in their own right which is beyond the scope of our service. This will mean a percentage of patients are discharged after assessment to receive a different psychological intervention. Alternative services will be signposted to the GP if appropriate or present at this time.

At the moment there is a gap in commissioning for patients with binge eating disorder. These patients require a completely different pathway to manage their binge eating which we are not currently funded to provide. Many of these patients have concurrent problems with low mood/anxiety and may benefit from referred to Bristol Wellbeing Services, Positive Steps or South Gloucestershire Talking Therapies. We also recommend that they read ‘Overcoming Binge Eating’ (2nd edition) by Dr Christopher Fairburn.  It is a self-help guide for those who engage in Binge Eating which offers practical strategies for overcoming binge eating.

If you feel a patient is appropriate for the service and patient is keen to receive input from the team, please complete the referral form and include results of pre-assessment blood test results using the e-referral service. If incomplete the referral will be rejected.