



Cwm Taf Morgannwg's new weight management service



People who are overweight or living with obesity in Cwm Taf Morgannwg now have access to a new weight management support service to help them improve their health and wellbeing.

- A multidisciplinary integrated weight management support service is now available for adults in Cwm Taf Morgannwg.
- The service incorporates psychological support, nutrition advice, exercise, physiotherapy and, where appropriate, referrals for specialist surgical services.
- Life Sciences Hub Wales provided project management support to prepare for the implementation of the new service.



One in four adults aged 16 and over in Wales are living with obesity.



Overweight in Wales

According to NHS Wales, one in four adults aged 16 and over in Wales are living with obesity.

Excess weight can have implications for physical and mental health and is associated with conditions such as type two diabetes, coronary heart disease, some cancers, stroke and osteoarthritis.

Cwm Taf Morgannwg has some of the highest rates of obesity in Wales. Yet, until 2022, the area didn't have a full weight management service that covered all the recommended levels of support to help people manage their weight.

A brand new pathway

With funding from Welsh Government's Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales strategy and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board investment, the Health Board has now implemented a new weight management service that provides specialist multidisciplinary support, with a focus on early intervention and prevention.

Although Welsh Government funding for the service was made available in 2021, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB) experienced challenges that delayed the launch of the service. They approached Life Sciences Hub Wales for project support to help resource and deliver the project.

Partners and funding

Partners

- Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
- Public Health Wales
- Life Sciences Hub Wales

Funders

Weight management service funded by Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board and Welsh Government via Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales.

Project support costs were absorbed by Life Sciences Hub Wales.



Life Sciences Hub Wales input

- Developing project documentation and governance structures.
- Support satisfying Government reporting requirements.
- Research and analysis of weight management services in other health boards.

The service now on offer

Under the All-Wales Adult Weight Management (AWM) Pathway, a four-tiered service is recommended. Level one includes brief advice and self-directed support; level two includes multi-component weight management support; level three includes specialist multidisciplinary weight management services; and level four includes specialist surgical services.

The new service in Cwm Taf Morgannwg, launched in February 2023, spans levels one to three of the All-Wales AWM Pathway, and also enables referrals to level four services provided by Swansea Bay University Health Board.

The service is psychologically-informed, with all staff receiving training on motivational interviewing and trauma-informed practice, recognising the strong correlation between adverse childhood events and obesity.

The multidisciplinary service relies on a partnership approach, with services being delivered by the weight management service itself, local leisure centres, CTMUHB's Nutrition and Dietetics Service and commercial providers.

The intention is for the service to allow self-referrals into all levels of support. At the early stages post-launch, level two and three services are limited to referrals from healthcare professionals due to the high demand.

Level 1

BMI 25-30 kg/m² without comorbidities

- Signposting and self-directed care.
- Health board and community partner initiatives.
- Self-referral.

Level 2

BMI ≥ 30 kg/m² without co-morbidities, or BMI ≥ 25 kg/m² with co-morbidities+

- Those who need more specialist intervention will be clinically triaged into the most appropriate service options either virtually or in person, as part of groups or on an individual basis.
- Referral from a healthcare professional (self-referral in future).

Level 3

BMI ≥ 40 kg/m² or BMI ≥ 35 kg/m² with co-morbidities+ / significant additional considerations++ / both

- Specialist multi-disciplinary team will assess and provide individual tailored support for up to 24 months.
- Patients on a waiting list for Level 3 will be offered access to 'waiting well' options.
- Referral from a healthcare professional (self-referral in future).

Level 4

BMI ≥ 35 kg/m² and recently diagnosed with diabetes or BMI > 40 kg/m²

- Specialist surgical services.
- Referral from the level 3 multidisciplinary team.

Achievements



Successful partnerships established with providers across a range of multidisciplinary services



Weight management services at all four levels of support now on offer



'Legacy' waiting list of nearly 800 people offered support

Patient impact

Prior to the launch of the new service, people in Cwm Taf Morgannwg had access to limited level one weight management services, with no central offering at levels two or three. As well as the lack of support at these levels of need, the absence of a level three service meant patients that were in need of level four services (including bariatric surgery) had difficulty being referred.

Prior to launch of the service, nearly 800 people were placed on a 'legacy' waiting list for level two weight management support. All have now been offered access to support, including dietetic-led group support and access to exercise on referral. Future support at this level will also include one-to-one support for those that need it (for example those that need language support) and commercial services are being considered. The service is designed to be sustainable and build long-term healthy habits by delivering support where people can easily access it, including at community centres, leisure centres and remotely, via video calls.

People that need support at level three will have access to up to two years of specialist tailored support, including medical support, psychological support, physiotherapy and dietetic advice. Prior to the launch of the weight management service, people in Cwm Taf Morgannwg had access to some of these services, but their care wasn't joined up, and they may have had to travel to multiple places for their support.

Feedback on the service so far has been informally collated, with one service user describing their experience below:

“ I was expecting to come along to these appointments and be told to lose weight and what to eat, etc...but what was lovely was that you didn't tell me what to do at all..it's all psychological, isn't it..it's very clever and much more effective. ”

Service user

Clinical impact

The costs of obesity to health services have been escalating. By providing better support for people who are overweight or living with obesity, this new service should help reduce associated mental and physical health problems, thus reducing hospital stays and other treatment costs.



How Life Sciences Hub Wales has supported the programme

While recruitment for a service manager of the new service was ongoing, the project team lacked resource to project manage the development of the service. Our Project Lead joined the project team to provide dedicated support, helping to maintain momentum in the absence of a service manager. The scope of support included:

- Supporting the design of governance structures.
- Research and analysis of weight management services offered by other health boards across Wales.
- Developing documentation including the Project Initiation Document (PID) for the service.



This support meant that Maria Cole, the new service manager who started in October 2022, was able to quickly get started in her new role:

“The support that Life Sciences Hub Wales provided before I came into post was really helpful to me getting a ‘running start’. A really key benefit was the establishment of good links with other health boards and the scoping exercise that was done on how other health boards were running their adult weight management services. I was able to immediately link up with my equivalents at other health boards as soon as I started. Having lots of documentation already developed, including the PID, also really helped me quickly understand things like funding streams and where we were with recruitment.”

Maria Cole, Service Manager, CTMUHB Weight Management Service

“Having supported the early stages of planning and setting up Cwm Taf Morgannwg’s weight management service, I’m thrilled to see it up and running. It’s an essential service for residents of the area, and will bring real benefits to people and healthcare providers alike. The team has taken an innovative approach to both psychologically-informed support and partnership, so I’ll be interested to see how the service grows and develops.”

Hannah Crocker, former Project Lead, Life Sciences Hub Wales, now ATMP Outcomes Programme Manager, Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee

What next?

The service is now taking self-referrals at level one, and is working towards self-referrals for people needing level two and three support.

Demand for level three support is high, and the service is working through an extensive waiting list of patients. People waiting for these services are being signposted to other support options while they wait.

The service is also in active discussion with commercial providers to adopt innovative app-based solutions to expand the choice of services available.

Submit your enquiry today via our website: lshubwales.com/innovation-enquiry-form



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