

Tirzepatide briefing note

About obesity

Obesity is a complex, chronic relapsing condition for many people. In the UK it is estimated that around 3 in every 10 (or 29%) of adults are living with obesity.

Obesity is a modifiable risk factor for a range of chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes, many common cancers, cardiovascular disease and musculoskeletal disorders.

NICE's recommendation

In December 2024, NICE stipulated that tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) should be made available on the NHS for the treatment of obesity in both primary care settings as well as in specialist weight management services (SWMS), which are usually delivered in secondary care settings. Since 24 March 2025 tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) has been available in secondary care settings in England as a treatment option for qualifying patients, with access outside of specialist weight management services becoming available in June 2025.

Tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) is a GLP-1/GIP agonist. Other medications such as semaglutide (Wegovy®), liraglutide (Saxenda®), are also known as GLP-1 agonists. They mimic gut hormones released by the body after eating, telling your brain you are full, slowing down the time it takes the stomach to empty.

According to NICE's calculations, as part of its Technology Appraisal for tirzepatide (Mounjaro®), 3.4 million patients would potentially be eligible for the medication.

These drugs can also be prescribed on the NHS to treat diabetes by helping control blood sugar levels to help improve diabetes and other health conditions.

NHS access in primary care settings from 23 June 2025

From 23 June, primary care settings will be able to offer tirzepatide (Mounjaro®), where appropriate, for the management of obesity. Weight management services are not nationally commissioned but are locally commissioned and funded at ICB level, meaning services will differ across each ICB.

Introducing this new treatment to an estimated 3.4 million eligible patients requires the NHS in England to develop a new service for weight management and train the healthcare professional workforce to deliver tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) in primary care. A staged approach will help manage the impact on existing healthcare services, ensuring tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) is prescribed safely and that patients receive appropriate support.

It is important to note that access to tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) in primary care is for patients with the greatest clinical need, living with obesity and multiple obesity related comorbidities and who will benefit most from the treatment. Qualifying criteria is set out below.

It is for ICBs to commission appropriate services for their populations to enable those eligible to access weight management treatment outside of specialist weight management services.

Access via primary care won't necessarily be through a patient's GP

Community based programmes and other non-GP primary care providers may provide access depending on how services are commissioned locally. These models are designed to relieve current pressure on GP practices and reflect a broader approach, where services may be delivered outside a patient's registered GP practice but still within the primary care setting.



Ambition



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Focus

Some ICBs and primary care settings may be further ahead with local readiness than others.

Qualifying criteria

ICBs will be required to make tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) available in primary care settings. NHS England was tasked by NICE with developing a prioritisation statement considering both referral prioritisation in specialist weight management services and priority cohorts in other settings (including primary care based services) qualifying criteria and the cohorting of patient groups to develop a pathway for patients to be able to access the drug.

NHS England engaged with relevant clinical and professional bodies to establish which weight related comorbidities should be prioritised. To be able to access the drug in the first three years patients must meet criteria which we have outlined below.

Beginning from 23 June 2025 patients will be eligible for tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) for the management of obesity where a clinician considers it an appropriate treatment and if they have four or more of the following weight related health problems, as well as BMI of 40 and over:

- type 2 diabetes
- high blood pressure
- heart disease
- obstructive sleep apnoea
- abnormal blood fats or dyslipidaemia

The beginning of access to the medication in June does not mean people will be able to get a prescription for tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) on that day. Rollout to the entire eligible population will be phased in, in line with a Funding Variation approved by NICE.

People living with obesity, who meet the qualifying criteria will be able to explore with their healthcare professional whether this is the right treatment for them. How the patient accesses the drug will be determined by the clinical pathway / service the ICB has in place. Tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) might not be considered clinically suitable for everyone and not everyone who meets the eligibility criteria will want to use drug therapy to support their weight loss. There are other options available on the NHS, including weight loss programmes which use tried and tested methods such as lifestyle changes and nutrition and physical activity advice.

Prioritised patient cohorts

Given the expected demand for access to tirzepatide (Mounjaro®), a phased approach will enable fairer access to treatment for patients across the country. It will ensure the service is delivered safely and that the NHS in England is able to plan for an increase in service demand.

The NICE Funding Variation recommended the identification of an eligible cohort of 220,000 individuals over the first three years as part of a phased introduction for delivering tirzepatide (Mounjaro®). This is based on clinical need and is the first part of phased access and implementation.

Having clinical oversight and support in place is an essential component for accessing (Mounjaro®) for the management of obesity on the NHS. Those accessing the drug will also be required to participate in a structured wraparound care support package focused on good nutrition for health and for increasing physical activity. This support is designed to help people get the most out of their treatment and enhance their ability to achieve and maintain healthy weight loss.



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NHS resources

[Obesity - Treatment - NHS](#) - NHS - this will be updated on 23rd June to reflect primary care priority cohorts

[NHS England » Obesity](#)

[NHS England » Medicines for obesity](#)

[NHS England » Weight management injection](#)

NICE TA1026: [1 Recommendations | Tirzepatide for managing overweight and obesity | Guidance | NICE](#)

Funding variation request: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ta1026/documents/html-content-10>

Outline of NICE Funding Variation: [4 Implementation | Tirzepatide for managing overweight and obesity | Guidance | NICE](#)

NHS England interim commissioning guidance: [PRN01879-interim-commissioning-guidance-implementation-of-the-nice-technology-appraisal-ta1026-and-the-NICE-fu.pdf](#)

