

# Few eligible patients get access to publicly funded weight management programs in England, study shows

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Of the more than 1.8 million adults in England with a recorded diagnosis of overweight or obesity, only 3% are referred to publicly-funded weight

management programs, according to a new study published in the journal *PLOS Medicine* by Karen Coulman of University of Bristol, UK, and colleagues.

Nearly two thirds of adults in England live with overweight or [obesity](#), which can affect physical, mental, and social health and well-being. According to national guidance, these individuals should be able to access publicly funded [weight](#) management programs, including bariatric surgery for those where weight is having a serious impact on their health.

In the new study, researchers used routinely collected [health data](#) to identify 1.81 million adults who had overweight or obesity documented in their primary care record between 2007 and 2020. Only 3.13% of these adults had a weight management referral recorded during the study period. In addition, only 1.09% of the 436,501 adults with severe and complex obesity underwent bariatric surgery.

There were large regional differences in these results; patients from the West Midlands were more than twice as likely to have a weight management referral than those in the North West (RR 2.17, 95% CI 2.10–2.24, p

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