

FOI 3206

30th July 2025**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST**

What is the content of any policy document or clinical referral protocol or guidance (henceforth abbreviated as ‘policy’) in current use in the Health and Social Care Trust which describes whether patients living with overweight or obesity, who are under consideration or seeking referral for hip or knee replacement surgery, are subject to any of the following:

A BMI threshold for referral to surgery or listing for surgery.

Response:

The Orthopaedic Service do not discriminate against high BMI patients – at the clinic they can suggest that a small weight loss can aid the reduction in the patient’s pain until time of surgery.

The Orthopaedic Team refer all patients to the Preoperative Assessment Team for optimisation for surgery. There is no policy that explicitly states a BMI threshold.

Preoperative Assessment Dept offer a bespoke and rigorous preparation process for patients undergoing routine surgery with a BMI of >40.

A patient listed for routine surgery with a BMI > 40, the patient will require a face-to-face consultation. This enables a thorough assessment based on the guidance attached (attachment 1). A sensitive consultation will take place.

We currently do not offer weight loss advice. Pre-op Assessment will risk assess the patient for obesity associated chronic illness (OSA). At the end of the consultation, patients will be offered the options of proceeding on risk or postponing and allowing them to attempt to improve their health indices and modify their perioperative risk. This is shared decision making.

We do not discriminate against patients with high BMI in any regard in Preoperative Assessment nor in Orthopaedic Surgery.

A requirement to accept referral or support for weight management ahead of surgical referral or listing for surgery

Response:

We do not mandate weight loss or that people engage with weight loss services in the Preoperative Assessment Dept or Orthopaedic Service.

Ahead of surgical referral or listing for surgery

Response:

See answer above. There is no such requirement

Postponement or delay to their surgical referral or listing for surgery, whether the patient chooses to engage in weight management during that time.

Response:

See answer to first question above. For patients listed as 'routine', the Preoperative Assessment Team often enact a short postponement for the reasons listed in question one. This enables a higher quality preoperative assessment process, enables screening for obesity related chronic disease, enables bespoke preparation and planning of operative management and overall strengthens the consent process and enables shared decision making to happen.

Urgent and red flag patients with dates do not get postponed.

Attached is the proforma letter that is used to guide and document the consultations (attachment 2). Also attached is the Pre Operative Royal College of Anaesthetists patient information leaflet that is given to all patients with a BMI > 40 (Attachment 3).

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