

National Obesity Audit: Engaging People and Communities

Answers from User Panel about using tier 4 services

November 2022

A further User Panel session focused on members who had accessed surgery or tier 3 services.

Pathway to treatment	UP members again talked about a post code lottery for what kind of pathway is offered, some describe programmes, membership to specialised gyms and key worker support, whilst others had to self refer to counselling services for example. Even then some describe key workers as being “too embarrassed” to discuss the weight, or basic exercise classes that were patronising and useless for people with BMI’s over 50, co morbidities and mental health issues.
Referral process	UP members describe a very long waiting list to surgery, the services offered beforehand include psychological support, although only a one off appointment and not deep enough to discuss the concerns before surgery.
Concerns before surgery	UP members described real fear of dying and doubt about whether it would be worth the risk. They were worried about their body being “permanently altered”. Some said they didn’t tell anyone beforehand and talked about the stigma attached, with a view that surgery is “an easy way out”, or that some would think you’re not worthy and that it’s only for cosmetic reasons when it's not.
Follow up after surgery	<p>Before the pandemic, some UP members did have good initial face to face follow ups, but the move to phone calls were not as comprehensive or supportive.</p> <p>Others moved to GP care but felt that GP’s had little to no understanding of bariatric surgery. Others had dietitian appointments.</p>
Communication and available information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Pre-surgery group – Books suggested to read – Information about vitamins needed for after surgery – Diet information needed at each stage of recovery – Risks and complications – Psychologist evaluation and a follow up to answer questions. – Phone contact with the team and they have also written detailed letters to the GP copying in patient – Discharge appointment