Weigh Forward: Working collaboratively to address severe obesity

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BACKGROUND
Living with severe obesity comes at great personal cost to the individual in terms of health and well-being, as well as major cost to health and social care systems (1). Provision of services for severe obesity is patchy however; and the evidence base is not strong (2). The ‘Weigh Forward’ specialist weight management service was established in June 2015 as a pilot project in NHS Grampian to fill a gap in service provision for this group of patients. The project had a collaborative, person-centred ethos. It was jointly developed and delivered by dietitians and psychologists and physical activity was offered in partnership with third sector providers. The group based self-management programme also encouraged peer support in line with the NHS 2020 vision, the project involved seamless working between colleagues and partner organisations, and provided an effective, person centred intervention, enabling individuals living with obesity to live longer, healthier lives.

AIMS
The Weigh Forward project established and evaluated a “Tier 3” specialist weight management intervention for adults with complex and severe obesity over a two year period. The team aimed to support participants to improve their mental and physical well-being, and to achieve moderate weight loss (5-10kg). This poster describes key features of the group intervention, characteristics of service users and outcomes achieved.

OUTCOMES
Weight change was measured at 6, 12 and 18 months after the start of the intervention. Psychological measures were collected at the end of the group intervention at 6 months. 53% of those who were invited to attend completed the group sessions. Of these, 43% lost at least 5kg. The mean weight loss for completers was 5.6 kg at 6 months, 6kg at 12 months and 6.4 kg at 18 months after the start of the programme as shown in Figure 1. Highly significant positive change was shown in the psychological variables between the beginning and the end of the group. Table 1 shows means, standard deviations and statistical significance using a paired t-test.

![A group session in progress](image1.png)

![Programme handbooks developed for the Weigh Forward Service](image2.png)

**CONCLUSIONS**
This project demonstrates that individuals who engaged with this collaborative, patient centered programme achieved moderate weight loss which was maintained a year after completing the intervention. Significant improvements in psychological variables were also found, in particular, reduced binge eating and improved emotion regulation. These changes were associated with significant improvements in physical and mental health and for many patients, analysis of health care records shows an associated reduction in medication and healthcare usage. Patient feedback was overwhelmingly positive and highlighted the broader impact of supported self-management, for example, in relation to return to employment.

**REFERENCES**
7. 3 Hayes & Strosahl. ACT: the Process and Practice of Mindful Change (2016)
8. 4 Gilbert P CFT: Distinctive Features (2010)