

Cost Effectiveness of Weight Management Services in Wirral Executive Summary

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Brendan Collins

- This document summarises an economic evaluation of weight management services in Wirral. These are services to help overweight and obese adults and children to lose weight. The full report is 44 pages.
- The report also includes synthesis of local obesity prevalence data, particularly child height and weight which has not previously been analysed locally in detail.
- Local prevalence data on obesity is poor, with survey data being unreliable and General Practitioner collected data being incomplete. The best quality data is collected in children aged 4-5 and 10-11 as part of the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP).
- The majority of adults in the UK are either overweight or obese, and rates of obesity have increased over the past 20 years. There are an estimated 64,540 obese adults and 96,238 overweight adults in Wirral, and 7,170 obese and 6,046 overweight children aged 2-15.
- Obesity has a social gradient - the most deprived parts of Wirral have higher rates of child obesity and of adult diabetes which is mainly caused by obesity.
- The estimated annual healthcare cost of overweight and obesity in Wirral is £103million, or around 16% of the total healthcare budget.
- There are 4 main weight management services in Wirral, two adult services and two children & family services. In total these services cost around £873,213 per annum. This table shows a summary of the four services, and their cost effectiveness; the two adult services came out as cost effective with a cost per QALY gained of less than £20,000, while the two child & family services came out as having a cost per QALY that probably would not be considered to be cost effective. This was mainly because there was only data for a small number of children who been through these services and succeeded in having a lower or maintained body mass index after 12 weeks.

Service	Service			
	Adult LWMS 'Weigh 2 Change'	'Weigh to Grow'	'Measure up'	MEND [Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, Do it!] (Including 'All Fired Up')
Provider	Wirral Community Trust	Wirral Community Trust	5 Boroughs Partnership	MEND subcontracted to NW APEX
Time period for this evaluation	Sept 2011-Aug 2010	Sept 2011-Aug 2012	Sept 2011-Aug 2012	April 2011-March 2012
Client group	Adults 16+	Children 4-16 and families	Adults 18+	Children 5-16 and families
Target N clients (attending first session)	1200	120	1000	600
Actual N clients attending first session (percentage of target in brackets)	925 (77%)	81 (67.5%)	605 (60.5%)	161 (26.8%)
Spend estimate	£509,839	£100,000	£79,074	£184,300
QALYs gained	34.46	2.8	7.01	2.52
Net cost per QALY (after cost savings)	£5,646	£26,610	£2,139	£63,924

- Weight management services have been successful in recruiting clients from the most deprived areas, and services will impact positively on the Marmot objectives of child development, schooling, employment, minimum income and benefits, healthy environment and green spaces, transport, and reducing health and social inequalities. Clients using the adult service 'Weigh 2 Change' showed a significant improvement on general health related quality of life (EQ-5D) and SWEMWBS.

Recommendations

- Adult weight management services seem to provide reasonable value for money but need to do more to achieve their target numbers of clients, and also need to demonstrate long term outcomes.
- Adult weight management services should try to collect follow up data for more clients, including clients who have dropped out of using services, to see how they have fared compared with clients who have stayed in services.
- We need to understand more about people's motivations to change and who needs to use specialist services, and how maximum efficiency can be achieved, such as giving some psychological support to people who are using commercial services.
- Interventions aimed at children and families do not seem to be very successful in providing value for money, based on the data they have provided. These services need to be looked at in detail to see how they can be improved or made more efficient. They should also consider how to capture outcomes data about families as well as the children using the service.
- More needs to be done to get health professionals to refer to weight management programmes. Because clients can self-refer, health professionals can just give out leaflets instead of instigating difficult conversations with patients about their weight.
- People were enticed by Slimming World when it was commissioned by Wirral because they felt they were getting a commercial product for free. Some people would go to their GP asking to be referred to Slimming World then end up in the LWMS because they were too obese or had too many co-morbidities to be accepted in Slimming World. Wirral should consider the type of appeal that commercial products have and use this for their own commissioned services.
- Interventions should be considered to be commissioned on a Payment by Results (PbR) basis, where qualified providers only get paid for the number of clients completing an intervention. This has the potential to stimulate and broaden the market and make services more efficient.
- Wirral should consider commissioning weight management interventions on a bigger footprint with Wirral's neighbours which could bring economies of scale and shared knowledge.
- Most people who are overweight or obese are not using specialist services, and for those that do, a lot of them do not lose a significant amount of weight. So other interventions need to be considered to really make a difference to obesity rates at a population level. These interventions could start with an asset based approach looking at what is available already to reduce obesity.
- Wirral officers need to work together through the Health & Wellbeing Board to consider fast food outlets, sports provision, green spaces and employers which have a potential to have a bigger impact than weight management interventions.
- Wirral could set a population-based target for number of people setting personal weight challenges from NHS and Local Authorities and their commissioned providers.
- Encourage workplaces to give incentives for groups to lose weight.
- Wirral should push for national policy measures such as limiting sugar in foods and beverages or increasing taxes on sugar sweetened beverages, and displaying calories prominently on alcoholic drinks which are a big source of calories.
- A national data collection exercise, perhaps led by Public Health England and/or the NHS Benchmarking Network, would be useful to benchmark weight management services in terms of their costs and outcomes, as there is currently little or no benchmarking data.

For a copy of the full report please contact the author, Brendan Collins, Wirral Public Health, brendan.collins@nhs.net