



**Beyond BMI:**

## **Policy data**

March 2026

## Body Mass Index (BMI) policies by local health systems

Policy detail for Integrated Care Boards (ICB) in England was collected from publicly available documents by Ofosu, Whale and McLaughlin in research conducted at the University of Bristol in February 2025. The data and analysis were [published](#) in December 2025.<sup>1</sup> These policies were categorised as follows:

- **0:** No policy found.
- **1:** Policy has no mention of BMI/weight/obesity/lifestyle.
- **2a:** Mentions advice on weight and/or offers optional support but does not require weight management engagement or delay.
- **2b:** States that conservative treatment, including weight management/lifestyle modifications, should be attempted first but lacks details on enforcement or evidence requirements.
- **2c:** specifies that conservative treatment should be attempted for a defined period and/or must be evidenced, mandated, or deemed 'adequate'.
- **3a:** requires patients to have attempted weight loss or accepted referral for weight management support before referral for surgery.
- **3b:** Imposes a BMI threshold for surgical referral or an individual case-by-case application process, including upper limits on delays (for example, mandatory weight loss over a specified period).

Policy detail for Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland, and Health Boards in Wales and Scotland were collected through Freedom of Information (FOI) requests submitted to each local health provider in July 2025.

The categorisations above used in the England ICB policy research were converted as per the formula below, to assist in drawing comparisons between policies from each nation.

Categories in England ICB policy research	Categories in Arthritis UK briefing
0, 1, 2a	Non-restrictive
2b, 2c, 3a	Conditional
3b	Restrictive

### Policy categorisation

- **Restrictive:** policies with a defined BMI threshold applied as a criterion for referral or listing.
- **Conditional:** policies where weight loss is encouraged or required prior to referral but without an absolute BMI cut-off.
- **Non-restrictive:** no BMI-related restriction in place.
- **Policy under development:** a policy under development but not yet published.
- **Refers out of area:** the organisation does not deliver joint replacement surgery locally and refers patients to other providers.

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## Number of Boards by Policy Type and Nation

	Restrictive	Conditional / Ambiguous	Non-restrictive	Policy under development	Refers out of area
Scotland	3 <b>21.4%</b>	3 <b>21.4%</b>	7 <b>50%</b>	0 <b>0%</b>	1 <b>7.1%</b>
Wales	2 <b>28.5%</b>	2 <b>28.5%</b>	1 <b>14.2%</b>	1 <b>14.2%</b>	1 <b>14.2%</b>
Northern Ireland	1 <b>20%</b>	0 <b>0%</b>	2 <b>40%</b>	0 <b>0%</b>	2 <b>40%</b>
England	8 <b>19.0%</b>	23 <b>54.7%</b>	11* <b>26.1%</b>	0 <b>0%</b>	0 <b>0%</b>
Totals_	14 <b>20.5%</b>	28 <b>41.1%</b>	21 <b>30.8%</b>	1 <b>1.4%</b>	4 <b>5.8%</b>

\*10 ICB's have non-restrictive policies, and 1 ICB (Lancashire & South Cumbria) has no policy.

## Integrated Care Board policies, England

Integrated Care Board	Policy type
Black Country	Restrictive
Coventry and Warwickshire	Restrictive
Herefordshire and Worcestershire	Restrictive
Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland	Restrictive
Lincolnshire	Restrictive
Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin	Restrictive
Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent	Restrictive
Sussex	Restrictive
Bedfordshire, Luton & Milton Keynes	Conditional
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	Conditional
Hertfordshire & West Essex	Conditional
Mid & South Essex	Conditional

Norfolk & Waveney	Conditional
Suffolk & North East Essex	Conditional
North Central London	Conditional
North West London	Conditional
South East London	Conditional
South West London	Conditional
Birmingham & Solihull	Conditional
Derby and Derbyshire	Conditional
Northamptonshire	Conditional
Nottingham and Nottinghamshire	Conditional
North East and North Cumbria	Conditional
South Yorkshire	Conditional
West Yorkshire	Conditional
Greater Manchester	Conditional
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	Conditional
Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire	Conditional
Dorset	Conditional
Gloucestershire	Conditional
Somerset	Conditional
North East London	Non-restrictive
Humber and North Yorkshire	Non-restrictive
Cheshire and Merseyside	Non-restrictive
Lancashire and South Cumbria	Non-restrictive (no policy found)
Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West	Non-restrictive
Frimley	Non-restrictive
Kent and Medway	Non-restrictive
Surrey Heartlands	Non-restrictive
Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire	Non-restrictive
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	Non-restrictive
Devon	Non-restrictive

## Health and Social Care Trust policies, Northern Ireland

Health and Social Care Trust	Policy type
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	Restrictive
Southern Health and Social Care Trust	Non-restrictive
Western Health and Social Care Trust	Non-restrictive
Northern Health and Social Care Trust	Refers out of area
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust	Refers out of area

## Health Board policies, Wales

Health Board	Policy type
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	Restrictive
Swansea Bay University Health Board	Restrictive
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board	Conditional
Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board	Conditional
Hywel Dda University Health Board	Non-restrictive
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	Policy under development
Powys Teaching Health Board	Refers out of area

## Health Board policies, Scotland

Health Board	Policy type
NHS Grampian	Restrictive
NHS Highland	Restrictive
NHS Western Isles	Restrictive
NHS Ayrshire and Arran	Conditional
NHS Dumfries and Galloway	Conditional
NHS Fife	Conditional
NHS Borders	Non-restrictive
NHS Forth Valley	Non-restrictive
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	Non-restrictive
NHS Lanarkshire	Non-restrictive
NHS Lothian	Non-restrictive
NHS Orkney	Non-restrictive
NHS Tayside	Non-restrictive
NHS Shetland	Refers out of area

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