

1) Press Release

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Cross-Party Parliamentarians launch guidelines on obesity

- **Cross-Party Parliamentarians launch guidelines on speaking about obesity**
- **New survey data reveals 80% of people with obesity see a link between policy makers' language and the provision of health care for obesity.**

A group of cross-party Parliamentarians has endorsed a new set of guidelines to reduce weight stigma.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Obesity is today launching the guidelines at a parliamentary conference ahead of World Obesity Day. The guidelines are designed to support Parliamentarians to communicate and work in a non-stigmatising manner relating to obesity.

These are the first guidelines developed to give direction to MPs and Peers on how to speak about weight in a positive manner with constituents and in debates, and to reduce the levels of stigma faced by many of their constituents. The guidelines will help Parliamentarians to speak about body weight in a respectful and constructive manner and to help facilitate open and productive conversations on how to best support people with obesity.

The launch of these guidelines is supported by a new survey conducted by the APPG on Obesity. The survey found that people living with obesity face high levels of stigma which impacts their lives in work, leisure, their personal relationships and their likelihood to seek medical advice from their GP.

Results included:

1. 89% of people with obesity have felt stigmatised, criticised or abused as a result of their obesity.
2. 71% of people with obesity felt stigmatised when seeking health advice or support.
3. 90% of people with obesity said more understanding around obesity would make them more comfortable seeking care.
4. 80% of people with obesity thought there is a link between the way policy makers speak about obesity and the prioritisation of weight management services.

Mary Glendon MP, Chair of the APPG on Obesity, said: "Current efforts to reduce obesity simply aren't working. The APPG has found that weight stigma acts as a barrier to people with obesity seeking help and getting treatment. These guidelines will help MPs to lead the way in changing the way we speak about obesity, help to promote a wider understanding of the complexities of obesity, and will help us move away from damaging stereotypes. Reducing obesity is not necessarily all about eating less and moving more."

Ends

Notes to editors:

These guidelines have been produced by Dr Stuart W. Flint of the University of Leeds, Scaled Insights and Obesity UK. These guidelines have been reviewed by the APPG on Obesity and supported by the secretariat of the APPG on Obesity. The secretariat of the APPG on Obesity is funded by financial support provided by Novo Nordisk, Medtronic and Johnson & Johnson. These companies have had no influence over the content.

The guidelines launch is supported by evidence following an online survey conducted by the APPG on Obesity. This survey was conducted from 17th February – 26th February 2020. It aims to support the launch of Parliamentary Guidelines on speaking about obesity in a non-stigmatising manner.

Novo Nordisk has provided sponsorship to the secretariat of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Obesity to fund the development of this survey. Novo Nordisk has not had any influence over the survey content.

Sample size:

- 413 people with obesity
- 94 health and care professionals/academics
- 28 Members of Parliament

The Parliamentary Conference is organised by the APPG on Obesity. It is taking place today, Monday 2nd March, and brings together people with obesity, academics, healthcare professionals and policy makers, to find solutions to reduce stigma and discrimination associated with obesity. Novo Nordisk has provided sponsorship to the secretariat of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Obesity to fund this conference.

About the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Obesity

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Obesity calls for the Government to prioritise and drive increased investment and resource into both the prevention and treatment of obesity.

Officers and members of the APPG are as follows:

- Mary Glendon MP – Chair
- The Baroness Walmsley - Co-Chair
- The Baroness Jenkin of Kennington – Vice-Chair
- Dr James Davies MP – Vice-Chair
- Jim Shannon MP – Vice-Chair
- The Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe – Vice-Chair

The particular policy objectives of the Group are:

- Generate a public policy environment where it is recognised by politicians and the NHS that obesity needs to be prioritised and weight management services, covering prevention and treatment, are funded sufficiently.
- Create a call for joined up commissioning that addresses all aspects of obesity and creates a comprehensive pathway that delivers value for money; from prevention through to high quality care and treatment.
- Increase the effectiveness of obesity prevention and facilitate a living environment where healthy choices are encouraged through engagement across the whole health system – from

food and drink in retail, work places and schools, encouraging active lifestyles and weight management support.

- Change the way the NHS views, manages and treats obesity.
- Build Parliamentary advocates to support the implementation and objectives of the NHS Long Term Plan.

The APPG has made the following recommendations:

- A national obesity strategy for both adult and childhood obesity should be developed and implemented by the Government, with input from key stakeholders. This should look to strengthen existing services and replicate best practice across the country.
- Obesity/weight management training should be introduced into medical school syllabuses to ensure GPs and other healthcare practitioners feel able and comfortable to raise and discuss a person's weight, without any stigma or discrimination.
- The Government should implement a 9pm watershed on advertising of food and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt to protect children during family viewing time.
- The Government should lead or support efforts by the clinical community to investigate whether obesity should be classified as a disease in the UK, and what this would mean for the NHS and other services.
- The Government should commission or support the development of a thorough, peer-reviewed cost benefit analysis of earlier intervention and treatment of people with obesity.

Contact

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