WAMS is a service that supports people who have struggled with their weight for many years, but are motivated to identify the barriers to weight loss and make changes to their eating behaviours.

Exceptional healthcare, personally delivered
You have been referred to WAMS. The aim of the service is to help you to successfully lose weight and improve your health and wellbeing.

We are a friendly team of enthusiastic and committed people who provide specialist, non-judgemental support to help you reach your goals. The team includes a consultant endocrinologist, a bariatric surgeon, a dietitian, a psychologist and a bariatric practitioner.

We can offer individualised support in the following areas:

- Dietary education and advice.
- Guidance for making and maintaining healthy lifestyle changes.
- Help to explore your relationship with food past and present.
- Help to understand how your thoughts and feelings affect your eating.
- Help to develop self-compassion and self-soothing.
- Support you to find a sense of wellbeing.
How does the service work?

WAMS is a six to twelve month service consisting of an initial assessment followed by a period of intervention, which will be tailored to individuals.

What can you expect at your assessment?

Your initial appointment will be an in-depth assessment at Southmead Hospital. The assessment will be conducted across three appointments:

- **A consultant endocrinologist/consultant surgeon** will check that you have no reversible medical cause of obesity, or other medical problems that need treatment. Further tests may be arranged as considered necessary.

- **A dietitian** will discuss your dietary patterns and help you identify ways to make sustainable changes to your current eating. This may include advice around portion sizes, planning, managing hunger and fullness and avoiding yo-yo dieting.

- **A psychologist** will focus on understanding how you have struggled with your weight in the past and present. Please be aware that in this assessment you may be asked about possible barriers to weight loss, including past events that have contributed to your weight gain or emotional eating.

We understand that discussing these issues can be difficult, and you will be able to decide how much you wish to share at your assessment. However, we encourage you to take this opportunity to provide the team with as much knowledge of your individual needs as possible.
Following your initial assessment appointment we will discuss as a team if our service is the best pathway of care for you. The assessment is not pass or fail and will take into account your individual needs and circumstances to ensure the best pathway of care is provided.

In about 10% of cases, we find additional issues that need addressing before the WAMS will be suitable and where possible we will signpost you to the appropriate services. This will mean you will be discharged at this time but can be referred to us again once the issues have been dealt with.

**What do we offer?**

Over the course of six to twelve months the service will provide a tailored programme of intervention according to your individual needs.

**This could include:**

- Up to six individual sessions with a dietitian who can offer dietary education and advice.
- Up to six individual sessions with a psychologist who can support you to explore your relationship with food utilising cognitive behavioural and compassion focused therapy principles.
- Specialised medical support to help manage related health conditions.
- An eight week Mood and Food group run by a dietitian and psychologist during which you can gain both dietary education and explore your relationship with food in a friendly and non-stigmatising environment.
After around six months in the service, you will be reassessed to review your progress in the service so far. This is also an opportunity to think about other interventions that the service may be able to offer you.

We understand that making lifestyle changes can be very challenging, and that there may be reasons, medical or otherwise, which mean you are not ready to make the most of the service.

If this is the case is may be more appropriate for you to be re-referred back into the service at a more suitable time. If this is the case then this will be made clear to both you and your GP.

“I feel like this group has been invaluable and I am already sharing my new found knowledge with others. I feel prepared to continue with these changes so that they will lead to a healthier, slimmed, longer life.”

“Positive environment, non-jugemental, non-prescriptive. Lots of really useful advice and tips.”
Weight loss surgery

We are also part of the weight loss surgery team and you may be coming to this service hoping for surgery.

It is rare after many years of struggling with weight for this to be appropriate without some preparation and it is normal for people to need six to twelve months of support before moving onto this.

Our aim is to prepare people for the significant dietary and psychological changes which are required for surgery to be effective and safe. For some people it is not the right time for weight loss surgery and they may need to be re-referred at a later date.

It is North Bristol NHS Trust policy that if you do not attend your appointments without notice, we will discharge you from our service back to your GP’s care. If you cancel more than two consecutive appointments, it is also our policy to discharge you back to your GP.
If you or the individual you are caring for need support reading this leaflet please ask a member of staff for advice.

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