



OBESITY INSTITUTE

EDITION 2 | SPRING 2023

WELCOME

We are pleased to share our second newsletter for the Obesity Institute. There has been a great deal of activity since the autumn that we talk about in this edition and much of it contributed to the celebration of our first birthday.

As you know, the Institute undertakes activities across research, education and training and knowledge exchange under our key interlinked themes of Systems Approaches, Weight Management And Wellbeing and Tackling Disparities. Our members have been busy developing research grants and delivering programmes of research as well as developing a brand new Masters programme in Obesity.

Our Patient and Public Involvement & Engagement (PPIE) hub, known as Obesity Voices, has also made significant strides in its development with over 250 members signed up, we are now offering able to offer this valuable resource to our trusted partners. The feedback from our members and our partners has been phenomenally positive and we are delighted to be able to offer such a valuable resource that enables us to amplify the voice of lived experience not only across our work but for others too.

Our Obesity Voices Steering Committee have been very busy planning and delivering our activities for World Obesity Day this year. They helped design a new animation video explaining **our approach to tackling weight discrimination, stigma and bias** as well as supporting workshops with people from our least heard communities

that has led to a fully funded research project led by Obesity UK.

We are very proud to have achieved this with our Steering Group and Obesity UK, as it was a founding ambition of ours to develop research and other led by the voice of lived experience and we cannot wait for the project to begin in April. The team behind this work developed a podcast which you can access here: **'Obesity UK and Obesity Institute: Working with South Asian women and the LGBTQ+ communities to codevelop tailored support and inclusive research'**.

Continuing our collaboration with Obesity UK we held a panel session during our 1 year celebration and World Obesity Day event which answered questions from our attendees and members of obesity UK support groups. There was a great deal to get through so we have compiled answers to the questions that we weren't able to include in the session. If you missed it, a recording is available on our **website**.

We have also launched a new monthly seminar series with Professor Louisa Ells delivering the first seminar on people at the heart of research. These seminars are open to everyone and more details will be shared on our website. We couldn't include all of our work in this newsletter but our annual report does provide more details on what we have been up to in our first year and we look forward to delivering much more over the months ahead as we continue to strive to improve the lives of people living with obesity.

Best Wishes,
Saeeda Bashir, Principal Consultant

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HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE OBESITY INSTITUTE

YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE ABOUT US AND OBESITY VOICES BY VISITING: [LEEDSBECKETT.AC.UK/OBESITYINSTITUTE](https://leedsbeckett.ac.uk/obesityinstitute)

For any other enquiries please email obesityinstitute@leedsbeckett.ac.uk or call Saeeda Bashir, Principal Consultant on 0113 8123199 or Suneet Morley, Insitute Co-ordinator on 0113 8129389

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ONE YEAR OF THE OBESITY INSTITUTE

The Obesity Institute was launched on World Obesity Day 2022 and to mark our anniversary we have published an **annual report** detailing our strategy, activities, people and projects.

The Obesity Institute believes in bringing multi-disciplinary experts together along with the voice of lived experience to co-design and co-produce advancements in the study, prevention and treatment of obesity. To this aim, we continue to build our community at Leeds Beckett University by collaborating with broad and diverse experts. We held an event in January 2023 with Leeds School of Arts to help us to improve the impact of our work and how we can support a more positive narrative addressing bias, stigma and discrimination which is too often faced by people living with or at risk of obesity.

Our work hasn't stopped there. We have also developed new partnerships with The Association for the Study of Obesity (ASO)

to enable other researchers to access the voice of lived experience.

Dr Nicola Heslehurst, Newcastle University, Chair of ASO said:

"Ensuring that the lived experience is embedded into the work we do at the UK Association for the Study of Obesity (ASO) is a priority. For example, we have a Trustee role dedicated to patient and public involvement and engagement, and people living with obesity are involved in all ASO events, including our annual conference, the UK Congress on Obesity. This partnership with Obesity Voices is another step towards ASO providing our members with an important resource to ensure that their research is informed and shaped by people living with obesity. We hope that this partnership will support ASO members develop and

deliver more impactful research, that makes a real difference to understanding obesity and informing obesity prevention and management."



MEET OUR PPIE STEERING COMMITTEE

Our Steering Committee has a broad and diverse membership, bringing a wealth of knowledge, expertise, and experience to guide our work involving patients and members of the public. Meet some of our dedicated Obesity Voices Steering Committee members:

COUNCILLOR ABIGAIL MARSHALL KATUNG

Councillor Abigail Marshall Katung is an Elected Member in Leeds City Council. She's Scrutiny Chair for Adults Health & Active Lifestyle, Lead Member for Faith & Religion, Chair of the Hate Crime Strategic Board, Chair of Further Education (14-19) 25yrs Strategic Partnership Board and Food Champion.

Abigail has a Masters degree from the University of Leeds and is the first African to be elected on to the Leeds City Council in May 2019.

Abigail is an athlete and an England Athletics coach and coaches U15 Boys and Girls. She specialises in sprinting at the Leeds City Athletics club. She enjoys running and raising funds for charities such as the Twins and Multiple Birth Association a Charity very close to her heart, Cancer UK, Age UK, and she will be running the Rob Burrow Leeds Marathon on the 15th of May 2023 to raise funds for Motor Neurone Disease (MND).

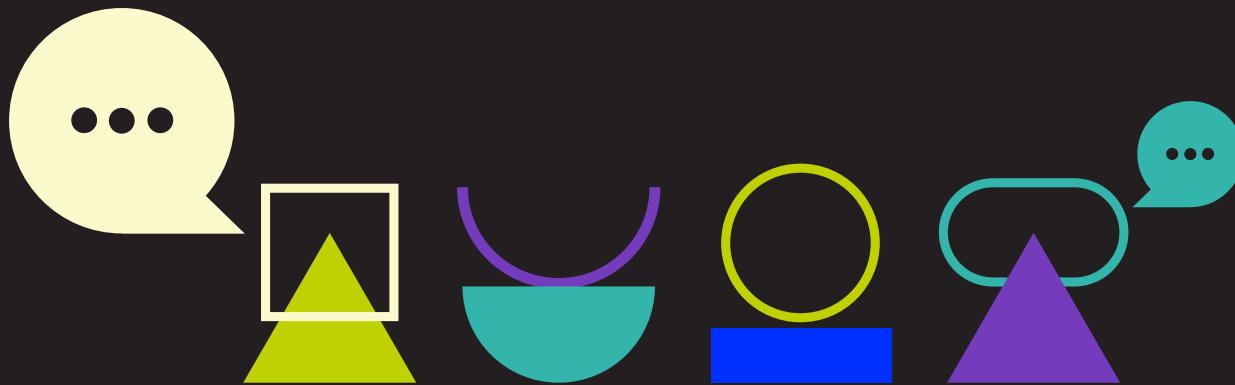
We will be showcasing more of our amazing steering committee members in future newsletters and blogs. For a full list of all of our Committee Members please visit leedsbeckett.ac.uk/obesityvoices



COUNCILLOR HANNAH BITHELL

Hannah Bithell is a Leeds City Councillor, representing Kirkstall ward. She is Deputy Executive Member for Resources, Strategy and Community Safety. She is also both LGBTQ+ Champion and Obesity Champion on the council. These roles have both played an integral part in her interest in the Obesity Institute PPIE steering group. Hannah lives with Obesity and has engaged with the health system and wider weight loss programmes to limited success. She is passionate about the classification of Obesity as a chronic relapsing condition so that appropriate wellbeing services can effectively be put in place to improve the lives and life spans of people living with Obesity. This is especially important for those who are underserved by provisions in the wider health service, something she knows all too well in her work with the LGBTQ+ community.





OBESITY INSTITUTE PRESENTS: A YEAR OF SEMINARS

We are proud to deliver a programme of monthly seminars showcasing the valuable work and insights of our community. We will be sharing our views on best practice, research methods and insights, the impact of our work and that of our partners and some exciting guest lectures and much more, all underpinned by the perspective of those living with obesity.

The monthly seminars will run from March 2023. They will all be free to access online with an option to join some in person at one of our campuses here at Leeds Beckett University. All seminars take place on a Wednesday from 13:00-14:00, to find out more & register please visit: [Obesity Institute Presents Series](#)

PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF OBESITY RESEARCH By Professor Louisa Ells	29 th March 2023 Watch the recording now
PPIE & THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OBESITY VOICES HUB By Ken Clare	26 th April 2023
SYSTEMS APPROACHES TO IMPROVING POPULATION HEALTH By Dr James Nobles	31 st May 2023
YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH OBESITY By Dr George Sanders & Professor Paul Gately	28 th June 2023
TABLE 2 FALLACY By Professor Mark S Gilthorpe & Ms Ridda Ali (PhD Student)	27 th September 2023
COMPOSITE VARIABLE BIAS By Professor Mark S Gilthorpe & Ms Ridda Ali (PhD Student)	25 th October 2023
GUEST SPEAKER FOOD MARKETING TO YOUNG PEOPLE: IMPACT ON DIET AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS By Professor Emma Boyland, Chair of Food Marketing & Child Health	29 th November 2023
DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL WHOLE SYSTEMS APPROACH EVALUATION FRAMEWORK By Dr Duncan Radley	31 st January 2024
GIVE US THE TOOLS TO THINK IN SYSTEMS, AND WE MIGHT START TALKING ABOUT THE PROBLEM IN SYSTEMS By Hannah Sharpe	28 th February 2024

Please note these seminars were updated 9th May 2023. Please use link above for regularly updated information.

IMPROVING THE LIVES OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH, OR AT RISK OF OBESITY | [LEEDSBECKETT.AC.UK/OBESITYINSTITUTE](https://leedsbeckett.ac.uk/obesityinstitute)





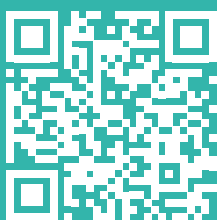
OBESITY VOICES HUB

Obesity Voices is a group of patients and members of the public living with, or at risk of obesity and their families and carers , who work with us and our partners to help improve the lives of people living with or at risk of obesity.

Our members ensure everything the Obesity Institute does is driven by the voice of lived experience and supports other organisations to do this too.

To become a member of Obesity Voices, no experience or skills are required - anyone can join us – all you need is to share our passion to make a positive difference to people living with or at risk of obesity.

YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE & REGISTER AS A MEMBER BY VISITING: **[LEEDSBECKETT.AC.UK/OBESITYVOICES](https://leedsbeckett.ac.uk/obesityvoices)**



WORKING CREATIVELY TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF OTHERS

Obesity Institute and Leeds School of Arts creative collaborations: In January 2023, we brought together colleagues from the Obesity Institute and Leeds School of Arts to share each other's work and discuss how we can apply our collective expertise to develop exciting new projects and maximise the impact and sharing of our existing projects.

This was an inspiring event which led to some great collaborations including the new animation officially launched on our 1-year anniversary demonstrating our approach to tackling stigma, weight discrimination and bias. This event would not have been possible without the commitment and support from Professor Simon Morris, Director for Research, Art & Design. This is an exciting area of work and Professor Morris shares some of this with you below:

In Leeds School of Arts, our shared project is making a positive difference to the lives of others through our practice-based arts research that actively contributes to: the creative economy; promotes inclusivity, diversity and well-being; and builds collaborative partnerships that allow our students and staff to participate in cultural activities. Established September 2019, Leeds School of Arts (LSA) includes 165 academics and 3022 students at Leeds Beckett University (LBU).

Demonstrating our commitment to the arts, a new £80-million building opened in January 2021. Co-design and socially engaged participatory arts practice are key methodologies for our area. One of my favourite quotations on collaboration comes from the artist Brion Gysin in conversation with the writer William Burroughs who put it so eloquently in their publication, *The Third Mind*, as they worked to finish each others' 'cut-up' sentences to make one complete sentence:

"[BG] It says that when you put two minds together...[WB]...there is always a third mind...[BG]...a third and superior mind...[WB]...as an unseen collaborator."

- William S. Burroughs & Brion Gysin, *The Third Mind* (New York: Viking P, 1978) 19.

The American artist Mark Dion also recognises that collaborations provide an artist with the opportunity to take 'a vacation from yourself', and he reflects

on the complexities of this particular methodology in his book *Collaborations*:

"One great thing about collaboration is that it's like taking a vacation from yourself, if you're honest about it. I have a way of doing things and other artists have their way of doing things, and I learn a lot from that. Sometimes methods are very contradictory, and it has to be their way or my way. It can be a struggle, things turn out differently. If I design a collaboration and it comes out exactly the way I thought, then it wasn't a productive collaboration. If it looks nothing like how I imagined it would look, then it is really successful. The best test for me, personally, is how much the idea evolves with the influence of another person. My collaborators have always been strong personalities with definite positions, and so, while it is always rewarding, it is not always easy. Some collaborations are also simply good excuses to travel and spend productive time with friends. We enjoy working together even if it is a challenge."

- Mark Dion in conversation with Zina Davis and Chris Horton, *Collaborations: Mark Dion* (Hartford CT: Joseloff Gallery, Hartford Art School, 2003) 3-4.

An influential teacher of my own, Professor Jane Rendell from the Bartlett School of Architecture said so beautifully in her text 'Travelling the Distance/ Encountering the Other':

"I discover parts of myself in my encounters with others."

- Jane Rendell, *Travelling the Distance/ Encountering the Other', Here, There, Elsewhere: Dialogues on Location and Mobility*, ed. David Blamey (London: Open Editions, 2002) p.53

Collaboration can enrich your own practice and open you up to new ways of working and thinking. We're very excited about the opportunities for future collaborations with colleagues from the Obesity Institute and we believe that a process of co-creation will help us find innovative models for making accessible complex information on prevention, system science, health inequalities and treatments.

We're really proud of our academics and the research they do, that makes a positive difference to the lives of others. Our creative colleagues have a strong history of collaborating with people in the community and in the health sector:

- Jo Hamill (Acting Head of Art & Design) and Ashleigh Armitage (Senior Lecturer in Graphic Design) create live project briefs that give our students real industry experience that will support their future employability.
- Dr Alan Dunn, Reader in Contemporary Art working in a collaboration with the Bluecoat gallery Liverpool and the Belong Care homes for those living with dementia. His work with this project, *Where the Arts Belong* has won two national awards, including the Market Third Sector Care Creative Arts Award and the NAPA Year of Creativity Award.



- Dr Joan Love, Senior Lecturer in Interior Architecture whose research focuses on creating autism-friendly spaces for specialist schools, colleges and adult autism housing, works with Leeds City Council and the national organisation, Homegroup.
- Dr Liz Stirling (Senior Lecturer in Graphic Design), Alison McIntyre and Tom Bailey founded 'The Art Doctors' in 2015. They aim to playfully break down barriers to participation in contemporary art, and explore the positive role of creativity in all our lives. They collaborate with the NHS and their project engages with social prescribing, allowing people experiencing psychological or physical distress to be referred or to self-refer for an



engagement with arts in the community. Arts on prescription projects across the UK was recognised by an All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing Inquiry Report (2017) as having shown a reduction in GP consultation rates of 37% and a reduction in hospital admissions of 27%.

- As well as working as a Senior Lecturer in Graphic Design, Jonny Briggs is co-Director of the Graphic Design agency FIELD in Sheffield. They created some inclusive environments called 'Diversity houses' that provided places of sanctuary, exhibitions and guides for marginalised communities visiting major football tournaments. These were created for the Men's football World Cup in Russia & Qatar and The Women's World Cup in Paris and received international media attention. They have also worked collaboratively with Artfelt, creating a relaxing but stimulating environment in the Children's Cancer Ward at Sheffield Children's Hospital where young people are immobilized for long periods and need to stimulate both their imagination, mind and body. All of



the design applications were created to foster calm and creativity.

- Laura Taylor (Head of Sound and Course Director in the Northern Film School) and Brian Machin (Senior Lecturer in the Northern Film School) have longstanding experience as documentary filmmakers and have previously worked with the Police and the NHS as well as patients suffering from dementia. They see their mission as empowering others, listening to them and trying to tell their stories in as faithful and consistent a way as possible. They look forward to working with the Obesity Institute on future documentaries.
- Dr Marc Fabri (Reader in Creative Technology) supports autistic young people through a participatory design approach. He has created toolkits

that help autistic learners navigate the HE landscape as well as to find employability after completing their qualifications. His research with partners across Europe has generated over one million euros of funding and his toolkits are being used by multiple HE providers in the UK and Ireland.

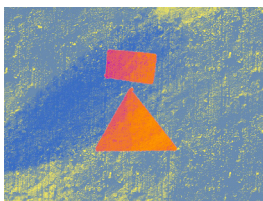
In Leeds School of Arts we welcome the opportunity to develop collaborative research projects with the Obesity Institute. It's really wonderful to work with the energy and enthusiasm of Professor Louisa Ells and her team. It's great to have colleagues who are open to interdisciplinary research and the opportunities our work across Schools in the University can afford. What matters is not so much the work we do individually but what our research allows others to do: its impact on local, national and international communities.

We're looking forward to developing our engagement with the Obesity Institute and using our arts expertise to communicate complex messages simply and effectively and that really will change peoples' lives for the better.

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS: ADVOCATES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Graphic Design in the Leeds School of Arts is committed to socially responsible, collaborative projects which support local communities. It seeks to actively challenge social conventions, political rhetoric and injustice, to explore the nuances of human relationships and give voice to those unrepresented in our society. We are delighted to be working on a project with the Obesity Institute exploring the social narrative around obesity.

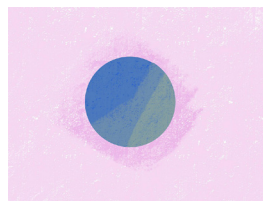
Four of our third-year **BA (Hons) Graphic Design** students are working on the project. In our initial briefing we presented a series of challenges around how the othering of individuals can be represented and how obesity should be looked at as a chronic disease and not self-inflicted. This first stage of research was essential, as our students were quick to recognise how entrenched in the language of bias obesity is and how contrary this is to the science. Not only was this an important moment in establishing priorities for the project but also for our students as Graphic Designers. Whilst recognising



Jacob Church – Animation stills focusing on bias

this as a societal issue our students also had to question their own in-built biases, in affect acknowledging their own internal complicity before focusing more widely on society, education and misinformation. We have been impressed by our student's willingness to go on this journey and how a project such as this can challenge the positioning of Graphic Design as a mere service provider and reframes the designer as an advocate for social change.

Our students have methodically worked through stages of research and development to locate and prioritise key challenges within the brief. This has been both an expansive and reductive process, which has required the students to explore widely but also to succinctly identify viable creative routes. These processes have informed a more in-depth understanding of the brief which has been reframed as the development of an educational tool,



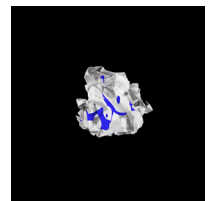
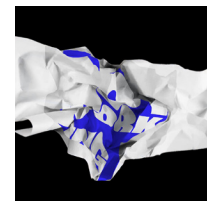
Taro Gent – Animation stills focusing negative narrative.

with the potential to shift preconceived ideas of obesity. This is an ongoing project which will end in May. It is evident from the work produced thus far that our students are connecting with the topic on a creative and empathetic level, offering a balanced and well understood perspective on the subject matter.

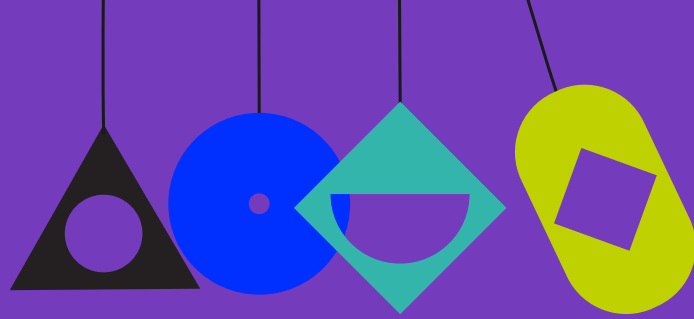
Looking forward, we would like to continue to explore how we can communicate the message of inclusivity and remove bias from our natural mindset. We are excited by the far-reaching potential this has for emerging technologies and other design solutions beyond the confines of our current approach.

Students working on the project: George Thomas & Huw Wynne, Taro Gent and Jacob Church

Project Academic lead(s): Jonathan Briggs and Jo Hamill



OUR OBESITY INSTITUTE CELEBRATORY EVENT



On Friday 3rd March, we hosted a celebratory event for our one year anniversary and for World Obesity Day. We would like to express our thanks to those of you who joined and have watched the [recording](#).

Part of our event was a Questions & Answers Panel in partnership with Obesity UK hosted by Co-Director, Professor Carlton Cooke and in the panel were:

- **Professor Louisa Ells**
Co-Director of Obesity Institute
- **Professor Paul Gately**
Co-Director of Obesity Institute & MoreLife
- **Ken Clare**
PPI&E Lead in Obesity Institute & Obesity UK
- **Professor Jason Halford**
President of the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO)
- **Councillor Hannah Bithell**
Leeds City Council, Obesity Champion & LGBTQ+ Champion
- **Dr Helen Parretti**
Consultant Clinical Associate Professor at University of East Anglia and a GP, BOMSS Council Member and co-opted member of OEN steering group

Thanks to all who asked questions and to panel members for their response. We were not able to answer all questions during the event. Here are the remaining questions and answers:

Screenshot of our online event

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS PANEL

CHAIRIED BY PROFESSOR CARLTON COOKE
Co-Director of Obesity Institute

PROFESSOR LOUISA ELLS
Co-Director of Obesity Institute

PROFESSOR PAUL GATELY
Co-Director of Obesity Institute & MoreLife

KEN CLARE
PPI&E Lead in Obesity Institute & Obesity UK

PROFESSOR JASON HALFORD
President of the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO)

COUNCILLOR HANNAH BITHELL
Leeds City Council, Obesity Champion & LGBTQ+ Champion

DR. HELEN PARRETTI
Consultant Clinical Associate Professor at University of East Anglia and a GP, BOMSS Council Member and co-opted member of OEN steering group

Questions can be submitted for the panel Q&A using [slido.com](#)

Go to [www.slido.com](#)

Enter event #: **LBUObesityInstitute**

Type your question and select send

I have felt for years that there is a link between my depression, mental health and weight – does the panel have any insights on that?

Your feeling is right, there is a bi-directional relationship between mental health and weight. NIHR have recently funded a study about the association between mental health and obesity highlighting the lack of psychological and emotional support. Emphasising the importance of moving towards a more person-centred approach to triage the right support and tools in practices to help improve outcomes. A paper relevant to this question can be found here: [Psychological support within Tier 2 Adult Weight Management Services, are we doing enough for people with mental health needs? A mixed-methods survey. Clinical obesity](#)

Everyone talks about obesity being a life long chronic disease, but I keep getting discharged/ given treatments for a short period of time - panels view on this?

Obesity is a lifelong chronic disease and requires lifelong care. Unfortunately, current policy and commissioned practice are not aligned with the evidence. There are real tensions in the NHS and service provision. Here at the Obesity Institute, we are committed to shifting the mindset of policy makers and commissioners.

What do you think needs to be done to end weight stigma and reduce weight related inequalities? Not just in healthcare but also society more widely?

We have made positive steps in this direction, using first person language, recognising stigma as an issue and providing forums for people with a lived experience to have an equal voice around problems of obesity, actions and tools. However, we appreciate bias and stigma still exists both in healthcare and wider society.

There is still more to do in changing the narrative and language through guidance and publications for journalists and the media. Obesity UK have created the resource [‘Language Matters: Obesity’](#) that is a helpful guide of alternative language choices, addressing bias, and the principles and tone in changing the language around Obesity and weight management conversations.

We will continue to move forward with action in a non-stigmatising and non-discriminatory way. Our new animation speaks about [Our approach in addressing obesity](#).

What work is being done to work with GPs to help educate them that obesity ISN'T a choice? Any ailment seems to be blamed on obesity. Education is needed.

We hear this from many people in our patient groups and Obesity Voices Hub. Groups are working across this, and we will promote and share any new resources available to healthcare professionals. You can also monitor this through the Royal College of General Practitioners' (RCGP) website as they are in the process of developing additional training materials on this topic for GPs.

My local health service has NO weight management service. We are signposted to NHS digital programmes. How do the panel feel about this? Is this evidence based?

We do not disagree with NHS Digital Programmes; however, they are evidence informed but not evidence based. NHS Digital should not be a replacement for these services and there is an existence of a postcode lottery. We are also aware that not all people have access to digital tools, and/



or digital literacy is an issue too. The Local Health Commissioners should provide services for tier 2 and tier 3 services.

There isn't a one size fits all approach to obesity and people need options that can be tailored to their individual needs. The local integrated care board is responsible for the provision of services, and we call upon you to get in touch with them to ask for provision.

Can you outline the research/engagement activity you are undertaking with primary age school children? Thanks

We have completed evidence reviews involving children and supported the January 2023, EASO and EFAD Position Statement on Medical Nutrition Therapy for the Management of Overweight and Obesity in Children and Adolescents.

We are supporting PhD students;

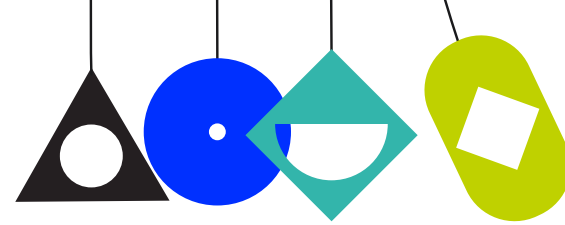
- One who is working with **BiteBack** a campaign organisation for young people lobbying on food advertising and free school meals. They are looking at the process of involving young people and the impact of this on wider policy.
- Another PhD focuses on working with **North Yorkshire Council** to co-develop

and test a new digital weight management programme for children based on the Australian back to basics programme.

Our subsidiary company, **MoreLife**, are delivering children services in schools across England utilising a whole school approach including training for leaders, teachers, parents and delivering health related workshops and programmes for children and young people in primary and secondary school.

As an institute we have completed multiple studies around intervention and prevention for childhood and adolescent obesity, impact of social disparities, mixed method approaches and much more. You can read published articles here:

- **The effectiveness of e-health interventions for the treatment of overweight or obesity in children and adolescents: a systematic review and meta-analysis**
- **Impact of weight management nutrition interventions on dietary outcomes in children and adolescents with overweight or obesity: A systematic review with meta-analysis.**
- **The Impact of Allied Health Professionals on the Primary and**



Secondary Prevention of Obesity in Young Children: A Scoping Review

- **Study of Obesity (EASO) position statement on medical nutrition therapy for the management of overweight and obesity in children and adolescents developed in collaboration with the European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians (EFAD).**
- **Social disparities in obesity treatment for children age 3–10 years: A systematic review.**
- **Barriers and facilitators to implementing practices for prevention of childhood obesity in primary care: A mixed methods systematic review.**
- **A collaborative approach to develop an intervention to strengthen health visitors' role in prevention of excess weight gain in children.**
- **The impact of, and views on, school food intervention and policy in young people aged 11–18 years in Europe: a mixed methods systematic review.**

WORLD OBESITY DAY



As a studio **Field** are interested in projects and ideas that challenge how we understand and communicate societal complexities. For nearly 15 years, we have worked with academics, arts institutions, and educational providers to communicate complex problems across multiple mediums including: The Royal College, The Science Museum Group, multiple Russell Group universities. All these organisations share a common goal – they are aiming to punctuate complex ideas and concepts in simple and digestible formats, where research and development needs to get its message across in a digestible manner. At Field, we thrive on these problems and deliver solutions across digital, moving image and spatial design to weave those difficult narratives into an appropriate solution.

There is always an air of excitement when an ambitious brief comes into the studio, where the subject matter challenges how to communicate the idea of being human without the need to represent the human form. What an amazing opportunity for a team of creatives to orbit their ideas around. The brief asked us to represent the idea of how Obesity is viewed in the public domain and challenge the long-standing

perceptions that Obesity is a self-inflicted condition and not a chronic disease.

"Obesity is a sensitive subject to illustrate so I leaned into making the characters completely abstract and focusing on the motion/movement of the shapes to evoke the ideas of change/stigma etc. For subjects like care and support I stayed away from literal illustrations and used large type supported by the background shapes so it felt intentional and direct."

Jasmine Forbes, Lead designer and animator.

So how do you go about representing a human narrative without getting into the intricacy of the human form? For us it was a case of how we make shapes and motion represent society without the necessity of drawing and animating people, this is as complex as the communication challenge itself. Our approach involved creating a set of shapes and forms that loosely represent society, we're all different shapes and sizes but we're equally all distinct personalities, with our own characteristics. Our aim was to let

personality shine through at the same time as making a personable connection to the shapes and forms used within the animation. Our methods involved bringing loose facial features to the forms whilst avoiding any suggestions that these forms were in any way gendered, this allowed us to focus on the core messages of bias, change, stigma and care.

We delivered a 1 minute animation with a voiceover that communicated all of the key aspects of Obesity and the communication challenges we face as a society. The '**Our approach in addressing obesity**' animation supported Leeds Beckett's Obesity Institute World Obesity Day and their 1-year anniversary conference on the Friday 3rd March 2023.

To find out more about Field visit: field.studio or follow them on instagram [@fielddotstudio](https://www.instagram.com/fielddotstudio)



Illustration design, click image to watch



OBESITY INSTITUTE THEMES

SYSTEM APPROACHES

CO-LEADS DR CLAIRE GRIFFITHS & DR DUNCAN RADLEY

During the last six-months, members of the team have been busy extending their knowledge exchange and research activities in Wales. In South Wales, we have been working with Hywel Dda and Swansea Bay Public Health teams, helping local stakeholders understand the interconnections between the root causes of obesity, and the strength of collaborations among local stakeholders. In Merthyr Tydfil, Anglesey and Cardiff we have been carrying out in-depth interviews with key stakeholders to understand the current system and system connections in each area, as part of the evaluation of the Children and Families Pilot Programme. Nationally we have been commissioned to undertake two projects for the Welsh Government:

- 1) to develop an Evaluation Framework for the Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight to Wales
- 2) to specifically look at the demand element of the food system in respect of food purchasing and dietary choices, using systems analysis to help policy officials identify potential key levers and interventions for creating change in the dietary choices made by people in Wales.

We have also continued our knowledge exchange work in Northern Ireland, where they have identified six early adopter sites for their Whole Systems Approach to Obesity Prevention. The first early adopter site is launching soon, so have we spent some time in March training their leadership and core group.

In other work, members of the team have been involved in the **evaluation of the Bristol Advertising and Sponsorship Policy**, in collaboration with the University of Bristol and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Leading on the qualitative component of this work, we will be interviewing a wide range of stakeholders who are involved in, or affected by, the policy. This will feed into the broader natural experimental evaluation of the policy, which looks at the policy's impact on exposure to unhealthy



Health Connections coproduction meeting February 2023

commodities, consumption or purchasing of these commodities, and whether or not the policy represents a cost-effective intervention.

Three members of the team have also continued their work with The Pragmatic Evaluation of Systems Approaches in Public Health Network (i.e. the Systems Evaluation Network, SEN). The SEN is a member-led consortium of researchers, practitioners, and policy makers from multiple disciplines and sectors and now has over 600 members. The systems Evaluation Network aims to:

- bring people together who are involved in the evaluation of complex systems approaches in Public Health;
- learn from each other about the evaluations, and methods, being applied in local contexts; and
- provide upskilling opportunities through network meeting and through sharing of resources.

The network has now delivered 7 online sessions since its inception in June 2021. The next two 'Using Systems Mapping in Evaluation' and 'Embedded Researchers in the Evaluation of a Systems Approach' taking place in December 2023 and March 2023. To find out more about future sessions and join our network, follow us on twitter:

[@SystemsEvalNet](https://twitter.com/SystemsEvalNet)

TACKLING DISPARITIES

LEAD PROFESSOR MARIA MAYNARD

We have exciting projects underway, codeveloping new interventions and tailored support for those wanting to prevent, or are living with, obesity. Lived experience is the cornerstone of this work with thriving public involvement groups within all of our projects. There is also wide ranging community, policy and practice partnership, increasing the likelihood of sustainability. Our research is theory based and also practical. Later this month we are looking forward to testing 'cook & eat' and 'physical activity for all' sessions with our public involvement group, delivered by one of our community partners, at a Leeds community venue with which we have close links. In the sessions we will explore the suitability of the activities as potential intervention components for our Health Connections project.

We continue to increase the breadth of our research, addressing inequalities experienced by a diverse range of groups that are currently underserved in research and practice. This includes activities recently underway exploring the health priorities and intervention needs of women and men with current or past asylum seeking or refugee experiences. The health of people seeking sanctuary in the UK (as elsewhere) is affected by events before, during, and after migration, additionally shaped by socio-economic status, language diversity, racism and other forms of



OBESITY INSTITUTE THEMES

discrimination. Further, the psycho-social stress of forced migration and interruption of life chances increases the risk of metabolic ill-health such as cardio-vascular disease and type 2 diabetes. The reasons for this health impact are complex, but is partly due to the influence of unfavourable conditions on diet quality, activity levels, and risk of obesity. Currently, there is limited understanding of what effective interventions for the health improvement of people seeking sanctuary would look like. Our research will centre people's own voices, ensuring life story and wider social contexts are taken into account. We aim to use this essential insight, alongside public involvement activities with people that also have this lived experience, to codesign, test and implement interventions. The long term aim will be to produce better outcomes for those living in such vulnerable circumstances.

For further information about our work, please contact Professor Maria Maynard m.maynard@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT & WELLBEING

CO-LEADS DR JAMIE MATU & DR GEORGE SANDERS

Over the last six months the Weight Management and Wellbeing theme has had substantial developments including the submission of multiple large research projects and high quality journal articles. Projects include topic areas such as an evaluation of the national complications of excess weight clinics, a bid to develop novel collaborations exploring disordered eating in people living with obesity, and an exploration of the expectations, experiences, and needs of people who experience weight regain after accessing Weight Management Services. We have also continued with funded projects for **National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)**, **World Health Organization (WHO)**, **Office for Health Improvements & Disparities (OHID)** – which will influence policymaking about weight management. Dawn Power began a school funded PhD bursary investigating the role of emotional eating in obesity and obesity management, and Dr Elizabeth

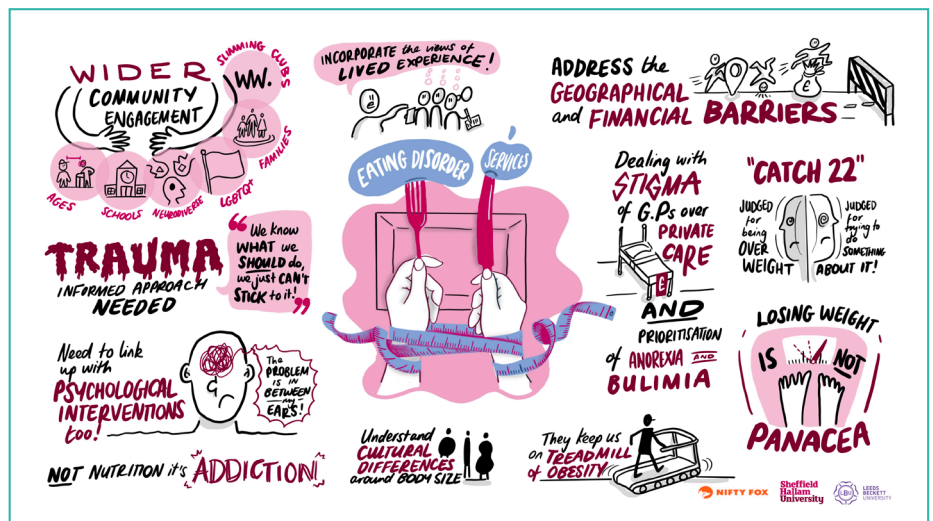
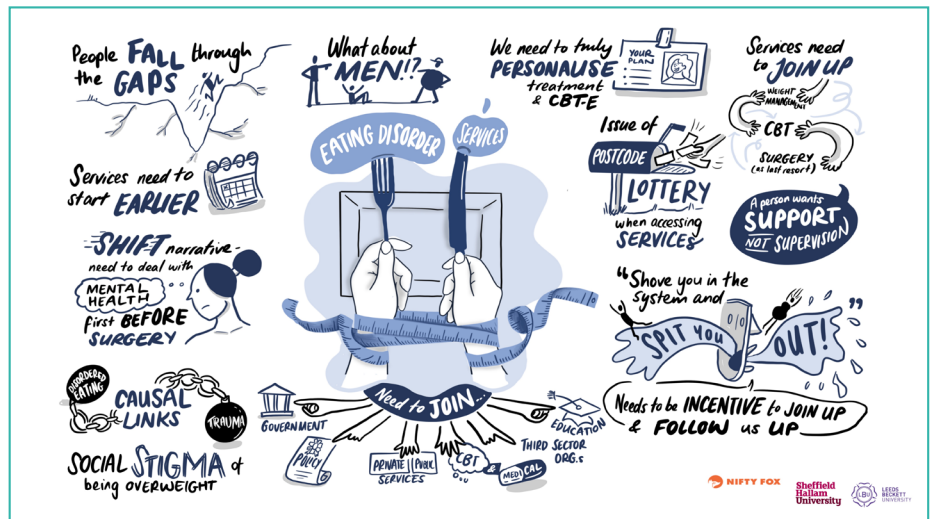
Beardsmore completed her PhD titled “an exploration and analysis of macro level factors that can influence behaviours affecting weight status”.

Public and Patient Involvement & Engagement & Involvement (PPIE) work remains at the heart of the work we complete in the weight management and wellbeing theme. An example being the PPIE underpinning a recent research project funding application where we ran a focus group with children to help inform the research plan. The children provided excellent insights and we included children living with excess weight as co-applicants on the bid.

We undertook two focus groups gathering the views of people with lived experience

of eating disorders and we worked with Nifty Fox who developed ‘live-scribed’ illustrations to capture the main discussion themes in an innovative way, which was well-received by PPIE participants.

Looking ahead we hope to be successful in the research funding applications that we have submitted with our Obesity Voices Hub members and other PPIE groups which will allow us to continue to deliver high impact, high quality, coproduced research with the ultimate aim of improving the lives of those living with excess weight. We also have several research papers under review, and hope to share their details on these when they are published.



Live-scribes illustrations by Nifty Fox



NEW MSc OBESITY

The Obesity Institute is delighted to share that we have been developing a new **Masters programme in Obesity**. Led by Dr Claire Griffiths and Dr Duncan Radley and closely supported by Head of Subjects and members of the OI Education and Training Working Group.

Professor Louisa Ells, Co-director of the Obesity Institute said:

"Our new masters programme aims to provide a cornerstone in compassionate, person-centred obesity education, research and practice. This course has been co-developed with policy and practice partners, and people living with obesity, to ensure cutting-edge obesity science is tailored to address real-world needs and priorities, underpinned by the voice of lived experience."



The programme has been developed with our Obesity Voices Steering Group and Councillor Hannah Bithell, PPIE Steering Group Member said:

"In the past research into Obesity as a disease has been generally lazy at best, vilifying those with the disease rather than improving external factors and providing services for internal ones. I am pleased a new generation of researchers are using a person-centred approach which can change the face of Obesity health care and I am delighted this MSc adds further opportunity to add to this resource base."



The new Masters programme is just one of many new teaching and training programmes under development by the Obesity Institute. Saeeda Bashir, Principal Consultant Obesity Institute said:

"Offering the new Masters in Obesity is an exciting step for the Obesity Institute at Leeds Beckett University which brings together a community of leading multi-disciplinary experts and partners to deliver a unique programme of study, underpinned by the voice of lived experience. The Obesity Institute is committed to developing the next generation of compassionate, person-centred health care professionals and policy makers, equipping them with the latest advancements in the study of obesity as well as the learnings taken from decades of highly applied research in obesity here at Leeds Beckett University. The Obesity Institute has created a vibrant community committed to improving the lives of people living with obesity and we look forward to welcoming our first cohort of students in the next academic year"



For more information about our new Masters in Obesity and to apply please visit leedsbeckett.ac.uk/obesity-msc



MORELIFE

MoreLife is a subsidiary company of Leeds Beckett University and a trusted an integral partner of the Obesity Institute.

The MoreLife team work to ensure that patient and public experiences are at the forefront of their work. By recognising the value of Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) they provide high-quality and cost-effective community healthcare programmes and services.

MoreLife deliver a range of healthy lifestyle programmes, supporting local individuals and communities to lose weight, eat healthier, be more active, quit smoking and improve their mental health and wellbeing.

They strive to involve and engage patients, members of the public and community partners in programmes to ensure they accommodate their voices and stories into their work. Through their various PPIE activities they aim to:

- Build strong and meaningful partnerships
- Co-create innovative healthy lifestyle programmes and initiatives
- Share our achievements and results

Collaboration and Co-Creation

At its core, PPIE is about collaboration and co-creation. MoreLife works in partnership with a range of Integrated Care Boards (ICB) and Local Authorities (LA) including Mid and South Essex ICB, Hertfordshire and West Essex ICB, Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes Local Authority, Greater Manchester ICB, Camden and Islington Council as well as organisations such as Active Essex, MCR Active, Voluntary Action Camden, GLL, Mind, Age UK, and Citizens Advice.

Leeds Beckett University

Working alongside colleagues from Leeds Beckett University, MoreLife supported the 3-year Public Health England funded project, led by Professor Paul Gately, to develop a Whole Systems Approach to Obesity. This project involved working with a number of local authorities, providing them with the skills, knowledge, tools, and confidence to work in a whole systems way. This is one example of how MoreLife and the University work together to generate practice-based evidence and evidenced-based practice to support more effectively those living with or at risk of obesity.

"MoreLife believe that working in partnership with the obesity institute will ensure that we are both contributing to and benefitting from evidence based practice to support our clients in the best way we can."

Founder & Chief Executive of MoreLife, Professor of Exercise and Obesity and Co-Director of Obesity Institute at Leeds Beckett University

Binge Eating Programme – South Essex

Patients in Essex with severe binge eating behaviours were dropping out of the standard MoreLife programme as the course did not meet their needs and there was no commissioned binge eating service in the area. MoreLife worked collaboratively with patients, commissioners, and Leeds University to address this gap in services and successfully rolled out a guided self-help (GSH) binge eating course for patients who have severe binge eating behaviours.

Results of the pilot are very promising with binge eating behaviours significantly reducing during the GSH phase. These behaviours remained low when clients engaged with the main Tier 3 weight management programme and both weight loss and retention were higher than in previous cohorts. Increased funding has been provided for next year and the GSH element is now part of our core part of our T3 weight management services.

At MoreLife, we are so proud of all our patient achievements, and we love sharing their success stories and experiences.

Community Engagement Activities at MoreLife

Alongside our various partners we attend local community engagement activities to allow members of the public to learn more about our services and experience our healthy lifestyle programmes first-hand.



Our Suffolk team at Suffolk show providing NHS Health Checks to residents.



Our weight management practitioners at a local baby week event promoting the importance of a healthy start in life.



Our Junior PARS team at a local primary school in Manchester promoting physical activity and wellbeing in children.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

POLICY FORUM FOR WALES: IMPROVING CHILD AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S HEALTH IN WALES

ONLINE CONFERENCE | Wednesday 19th April 2023, 8:30am-1:30pm

Professor Paul Gately, Professor of Exercise and Obesity, Leeds Beckett University is part of the keynote seminar: **Healthy weight management in children - assessing strategic approaches, industry initiatives, addressing health inequalities, and workforce support for delivery of the Primary Care Obesity Prevention Plan**

The conference agenda is [here](#) and for more information & to register visit: [Active Wales Conference](#)



TACKLING CHILDHOOD OBESITY IN THE UK: TAKING MEANINGFUL ACTION TO TACKLE A GROWING PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

PUBLIC POLICY EXCHANGE WEBINAR | Thursday 20th April 2023, 9:30am-1:00pm

Key Speakers Include:

- **Professor Stanley Uljaszek**, Professor of Human Ecology at the University of Oxford
- **Professor Paul Gately**, Founder & Chief Executive of MoreLife & Professor of Exercise and Obesity at Leeds Beckett University
- **Dan Parker**, Chief Executive of Veg Power
- **Nicki Whiteman**, Director of Communications at Bite Back 2030
- **Kim Roberts**, Chief Executive of HENRY (Health, Exercise, Nutrition for the Really Young)
- **Dr Nicola Heslehurst**, Senior Lecturer in Maternal Nutrition at Newcastle University

For more information & to register visit: [Public Policy Exchange](#)

ASO & YORA EVENT: INEQUALITY AND STIGMA IN OBESITY RESEARCH AND CARE

Wednesday 3rd May 2023

Please follow [@YorkshireORA](#) on twitter for updates.

YORA

Yorkshire Obesity Research Alliance

CAUSAL INFERENCE WITH OBSERVATIONAL DATA: CHALLENGES AND PITFALLS IN OBSERVATIONAL RESEARCH

5-DAY COURSE | Monday 15th - Friday 19th May 2023, Leeds Beckett University (Headingley Campus)

Learn about the third task of data science at the Causal School. This five-day event offers state-of-the-art training in the theory and utility of contemporary causal inference methods with focus on directed acyclic graphs (DAGs) – attendees learn to recognise and avoid the challenges and pitfalls of identifying, estimating, and interpreting causal relationships in observational data.

The school will be delivered by Prof Mark S Gilthorpe, with assistance from data science staff and PhD students with expertise in causal inference methods: Dr Claire Griffiths (Reader in Obesity Research, LBU), Dr Liz Hensor (Medical Statistician, University of Leeds), Mr Rob Long (freelance Consultant Data Scientist, North England), and Ms Lydia Kakampakou (Statistics PhD student, University of Lancaster).

For more information & to register visit: [Leeds Beckett University Causal School](#)

30TH EUROPEAN CONGRESS ON OBESITY: ECO2023

CONFERENCE | Wednesday 17th May - Saturday 20th May 2023, Dublin

For more information & to register visit: <https://eco2023.org>



UK CONGRESS ON OBESITY (UKCO) 2023

UK ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OBESITY EVENT | Thursday 14th September - Friday 15th September 2023, Belfast

For more information & to register visit: <https://aso.org.uk/ukco>



LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY
OBESITY INSTITUTE

THANK YOU FOR READING OUR NEWSLETTER.

YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE ABOUT US AND OBESITY VOICES BY VISITING: [LEEDSBECKETT.AC.UK/OBESITYINSTITUTE](https://leedsbeckett.ac.uk/obesityinstitute)

For any other enquiries please email obesityinstitute@leedsbeckett.ac.uk or call Saeeda Bashir, Principal Consultant on 0113 8123199 or Suneet Morley, Institute Co-ordinator on 0113 8129389

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