

## WELCOME

We are pleased to bring you the latest edition of our newsletter, providing you with updates on key developments and activity here at the Obesity Institute.

We are delighted to welcome Dr Claire Griffiths to the Obesity Institute Senior Leadership Team as the new Co-Director of the Institute, Claire will be joining the team as Prof Carlton Cooke will be stepping down. Carlton has been instrumental in the development and success of the Institute and though we are sad to lose him from the leadership team, we are pleased he will continue to remain a valued member of our community.

I would also like to highlight the fantastic achievement and honour our PPIE

(Public and Patient Involvement and Engagement) lead Ken Clare received at the UK Congress of Obesity this September. Ken was awarded the very prestigious Association for the Study of Obesity (ASO) Fellowship Award, and he is one of four to receive such an honour since it was established in 2017. You can read more about this on page 7.

Our Co-Director Prof Louisa Ells shared insights on weight discrimination and stigma in her recent Ted Talk (see page 2).

You will also find updates on our activities across our Obesity Voices Hub and Themes as well as information on our exciting new MSc in Obesity which is open for recruitment.

Best Wishes,  
Saeeda Bashir, Principal Consultant

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Image: Group photo at the Obesity Institute, LBU Community Away Day in July 2023.

### 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](mailto:obesityinstitute@leedsbeckett.ac.uk) or call Saeeda Bashir, Principal Consultant on 0113 8123199 or Suneet Morley, Institute Co-ordinator on 0113 8129389

### FOLLOW US ON:



# TEDx LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

On 22 November 2023, the Obesity Institute's co-director Professor Louisa Ells and one of our PhD students Lauren Senior, delivered talks at TEDx Leeds Beckett University.

The theme of the event was *Our Changing World* and featured four talks by individuals from LBU's research community. On the day, Louisa and Lauren were joined by Dr Emily Zobel Marshall and Professor David Glew. You can find out more about all the speakers here: [TEDx | Leeds Beckett University](https://www.tedx-leedsbeckett.com/).

Brought together in the heart of Leeds, the aim of TEDx Leeds Beckett University was to encourage positive conversations and challenge perceptions. Louisa's talk 'The weight of words' discussed the need to change the narrative around obesity. She explored why we need to remove the bias, stigma, judgement, and inequalities associated with living with obesity. In her inspiring presentation, Louisa looked to the future and talked about what can be done to make a real and tangible difference to people's lives.

Lauren Senior's talk 'Nutrition across borders' looked at how culturally tailored interventions can improve the nutrition related health of Black African and Black Caribbean migrants and reduce type 2 diabetes and obesity risk. Lauren is currently studying her PhD at Leeds Beckett University and her work investigates the dietary habits and nutrition related health of West African, North African, and Caribbean adults. You can follow Lauren's work on X (formerly Twitter): [@lse19](https://twitter.com/lse19).

The link to Louisa's talk is below and Laura's talk will be added very soon, with the link provided through our social media channels: [The Weight of Words | Louisa Ells | TEDx Leeds Beckett University](https://www.tedx-leedsbeckett.com/)



Image: Professor Louisa Ells delivering 'The weight of words'



Image: Lauren Senior, PhD Student, delivering 'Nutrition across borders'

# FIO-FOODS PROJECT

**The FIO-Food project – Food Insecurity in people living with Obesity – is about improving sustainable and healthier food choices in the retail food environment and is now in its second year.**

During its bi-annual meeting in September, hosted by Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen (see picture) initial findings were shared by colleagues investigating the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on food insecurity in people living with obesity. These findings have been able to inform the design of work package 3, which is led by members of the Obesity Institute, Professor Mark Gilthorpe, Professor Paul Gately, Dr. Claire Griffiths, and Dr. Hannah Greatwood.



Image: FIO Food team at their annual team meeting.

We have 3 work streams to investigate. First, we are going to explore insights from people living with obesity and food insecurity on promotional communications from real-world retail promotions. These will inform the development of future retail interventions for sustainable purchasing. Second, we will analyse supermarket transaction data to investigate health and sustainable metrics in shoppers, and how these findings can inform the sample reweighting (i.e., the statistical adjustments that are necessary for survey data after they have been collected in order to accurately convey

results from the survey for the wider UK population) that is necessary when working with large national samples of supermarket transaction data. Third, we will use findings from all areas of the FIO Food project to gain insights from people living with obesity, some of whom are undergoing treatment, to ask what can retailers and service providers do to support people living with obesity to consume a healthy and sustainable diet?

Further information about FIO-Food is available at <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/rowett/research/fio-food/>

X [@FIOFood](#)

## MEET OUR NEW OBESITY INSTITUTE CO-DIRECTOR: DR CLAIRE GRIFFITHS

My Leeds Beckett journey started over 20 years ago as an undergraduate student, and I am delighted to be taking on the role as Co-Director to drive forward the ambitious mission of the Obesity Institute.

My interests are driven by the question, how do we implement and evaluate a systems approach to address population level obesity in real world settings, creating systemic, transformational, long-term systems change, that is feasible and affordable. More specifically I want to understand how we shift from the theoretical application of a complex systems approach to real world implementation, application, and evaluation.

We can only achieve this by strengthening interdisciplinary research, breaking discipline silos and identifying creative ways to broaden inclusion and strengthen engagement and partnerships with all stakeholders, including people with lived experience of obesity, communities, practitioners, and policymakers.

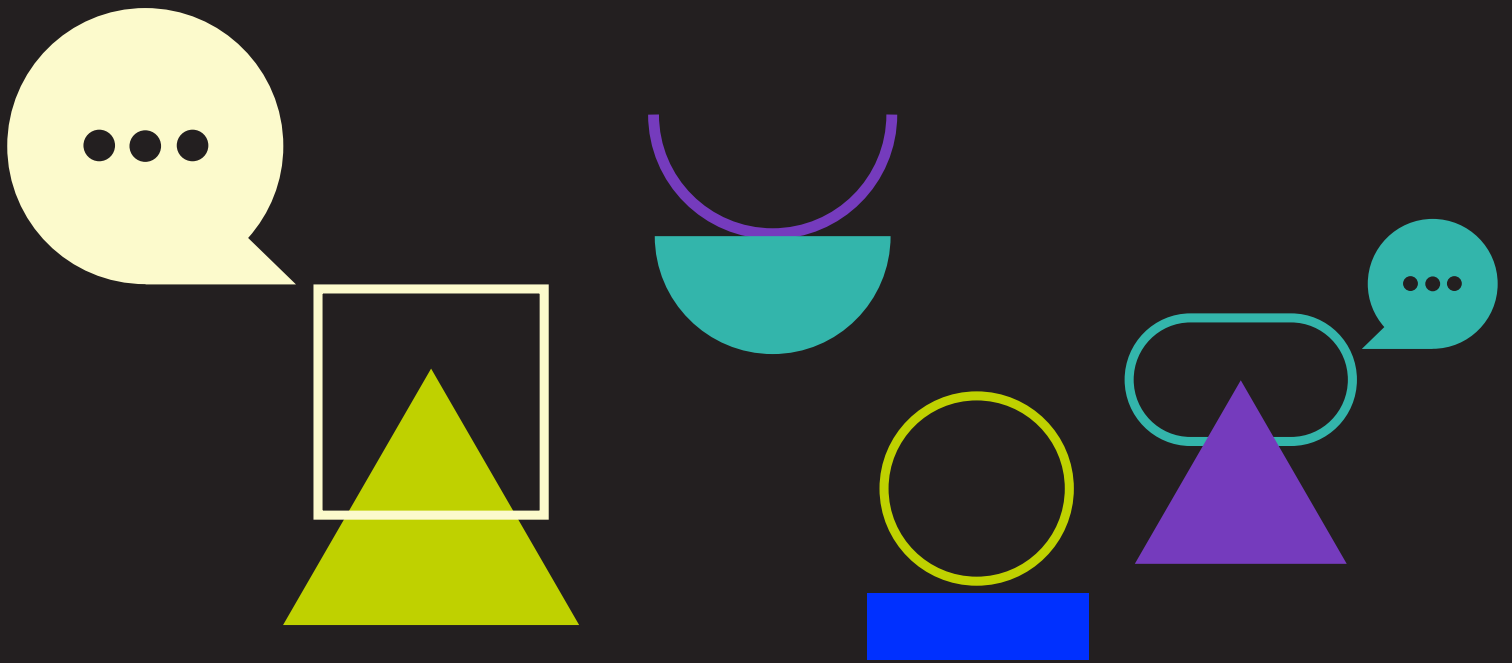
I look forward to working with the leadership team and members of the Institute, building upon our success to date to increase our capacity and capability in transdisciplinary, person-centred applied innovation, that is accessible and relevant to all, and inspires the next generation.



Image: Dr Claire Griffiths

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





# OBESITY INSTITUTE SEMINAR SERIES

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined our seminar series throughout the year. Your engagement has been invaluable, and we are excited to announce the continuation of our program, showcasing the significant work and insights of our community and others that work in the field of obesity.

Our seminars provide a platform to discuss best practices, research methods, and the impact of our collective efforts, as well as those of our partners. We are proud to include exciting guest lectures and diverse contributions, all underpinned by the perspective of those living with obesity.

In February 2024, we will be rolling out the next of our Obesity Institute Seminar Series. Follow us on X (previously known as Twitter) for on-going updates or check our events at [leedsbeckett.ac.uk/events/obesity-institute-presents](https://leedsbeckett.ac.uk/events/obesity-institute-presents).

Meanwhile, we invite you to join us for the final session in the current series:

**[Development of a national whole systems approach evaluation framework by Dr Duncan Radley](#)**

**Date: Wednesday 31st January 2024, 13:00-14:00**

**Location: Lecture Theatre 3 in Carnegie School of Sport, Headingley Campus & Online**

If you missed any of our previous seminars or if you're interested in revisiting the insightful discussions, we've got you covered. Each seminar has been conveniently recorded and is now available for viewing on our YouTube channel. Use the links below to catch up on the talks by our speakers to gain valuable insights and knowledge shared.

**You can watch all our previous seminars online, using the links below:**

[People at the Heart of Obesity Research, by Professor Louisa Ells](#)

[PPI&E and the development of the Obesity Voices Hub, by Ken Claire](#)

[Systems approaches to improving population health, by Dr James Nobles](#)

[Table 2 Fallacy, by Professor Mark S Gilthorpe & Ms Ridda Ali \(PhD Student\)](#)

[Composite Variable Bias, by Professor Mark S Gilthorpe & Ms Ridda Ali \(PhD Student\)](#)

[Food marketing to young people: impact on diet and implications for policymakers, by Professor Emma Boyland](#)

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# EMPOWERING VOICES: OBESITY VOICES HUB

The Obesity Voices Hub is now a community with over 250 members from across the UK and beyond. The community's strength is not the numbers, but the impactful stories and diverse experiences shared by its members, who are either living with or supporting those living with experience of obesity.

One of our members captured the essence of the hub's impact, stating:

**"Listening to others, hearing their experiences, and not feeling so alone in this journey."**

Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to all our members for their unwavering commitment and valuable contributions. Over the past year, the hub has facilitated the exchange of insights, perspectives, and challenges faced by individuals living with obesity. With over 25 opportunities shared through project requests for contributions from those with a lived experience of obesity, an impressive 100-plus members actively participated, lending their insights to create impact and drive change.

Emma Houghton, another Obesity Voices Hub member, emphasises the importance of having one's views heard, hoping to

**"change the path for future patients."**

The strength of the Obesity Voices Hub lies in its ability to connect people from diverse backgrounds and geographical locations. Through shared experiences, members find solace, inspiration, and motivation to navigate the challenges associated with obesity. Members of the Obesity Voices Hub continue to demonstrate how a community of dedicated individuals can collectively make a meaningful impact and drive change in various aspects of obesity.

A PPIE requestor described the process of working with Obesity Voices as "clear, straightforward, and a pleasurable experience." The hub has collaborated with

over 40 stakeholders, including local councils, professional bodies, researchers, and healthcare professionals. These collaborators aim to understand the lived experience and bring about real-world changes to improve the care and lives of those affected by obesity.

Another PPIE requestor praised the exceptional organisation of Obesity Voices Hub, by making a complex process more manageable and engaging. He noted,

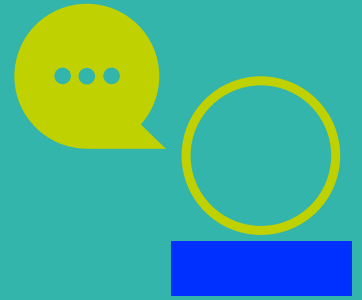
**"All the Obesity Voices members were exceptionally responsive and keen to engage in the research topic."**

It is not only our requestors that gain insights and understanding; one member shared,

**"I participated in the PPIE activity and developed a deeper understanding of the issues and the project."**

As the Obesity Voices Hub continues to grow, we encourage all members to share their experiences and feedback. This crucial contribution to our Institute will continue to help us evolve and ensure that our collective impact keeps growing.

**If you are interested in sharing project opportunities for our members to engage with, please explore our "Information for Professionals" section on the webpage [leedsbeckett.ac.uk/obesityvoices](https://leedsbeckett.ac.uk/obesityvoices) to discover the how you can collaborate and engage with Obesity Voices.**



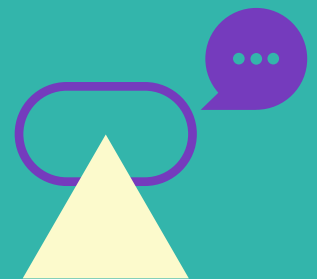
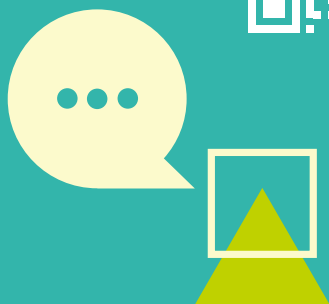
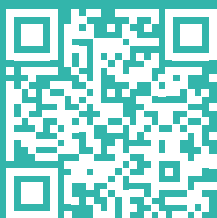
# OBESITY VOICES HUB

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.

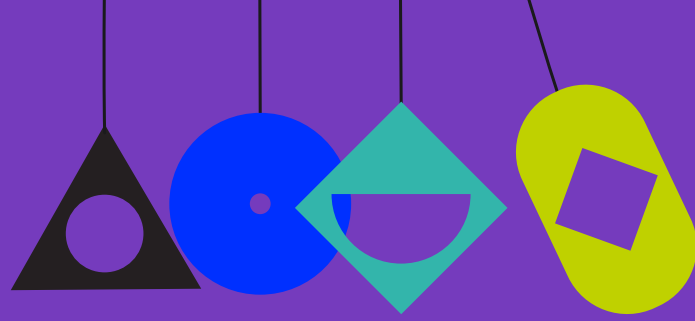
YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE & REGISTER AS A MEMBER BY VISITING: **[LEEDSBECKETT.AC.UK/OBESITYVOICES](https://leedsbeckett.ac.uk/obesityvoices)**



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# BAME VOICES PARTNERSHIP



I am delighted to announce the start of a new partnership of collaboration between Leeds Beckett University (LBU) and BAME Voices (BV), a social enterprise dedicated to empowering marginalised communities through advocacy and engagement. Specialising in community outreach, BV has a proven track record of working within the HealthTech/MedTech sectors alongside esteemed organizations like the NIHR and NHS to promote health equity.

Driven by our mission to reduce striking health inequalities that disproportionately impact minority groups, BV leverages our Marginalised Community Engagement Network (M-CEN) to raise awareness of and increase participation in research—especially clinical trials and public health interventions where representation has historically lagged. Established earlier this year, M-CEN consists of over 60 community groups representing diverse racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. We strive

to amplify voices that have for too long been excluded, and are constantly growing our network by actively seeking partnerships with new groups, focusing on encouraging groups not currently represented in the network.

This exciting new collaboration with LBU represents a watershed moment that will revolutionise inclusive public involvement in research. By directly interfacing marginalised groups into all stages of the research pipeline, from agenda-setting to data collection to application, we can develop solutions, diagnostics and therapies that meet the needs of the entire community.

For example, a 2021 study found that pulse oximeters are less accurate for patients with darker skin pigmentation, demonstrating that without diversity in clinical trials, critical oversights cause disparate health outcomes. We must change old research paradigms if we

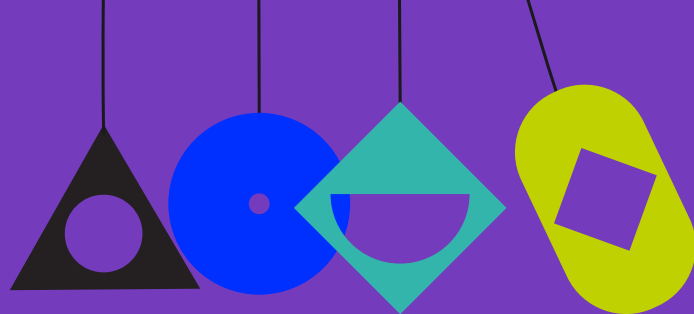
want innovation that benefits everyone equitably, this partnership embodies that disruptive, inclusive approach.

I am confident this partnership between BV and LBU will set the standard for engaged scholarship that foregrounds marginalised voices and experiential knowledge—paving the way for research that is equitable and just by design. The time has come to remake the future where no one gets left behind.

*Written by Kursh Siddique, CEO of BAME Voices.*



# ASO FELLOWSHIP AWARD



The ASO established prestigious Fellowship Awards in 2017. These are awarded every two years to individuals who have been nominated and voted on by ASO Trustees. Nominations are based on the recognition of the contribution individuals have made to the ASO and/or the field of obesity.

Since inception, ASO Fellowships have been awarded to Prof Susan Jebb (2017), Prof John Blundell (2019), Prof Jason Halford (2021), and in 2023, a fellowship was awarded to Ken Clare for both outstanding contribution to the ASO and to the field of obesity.

The ASO received multiple nominations for Ken Clare to be awarded a fellowship due to his instrumental leadership in ensuring the voices of people with lived experience of obesity is embedded into the ASO, other organisations in the UK and internationally, research, and the development of guidelines. In the nominations for this award, Ken was described as being “a backbone of ASO”, “committed member of the board” and someone who has “dedicated his life to improving the lives of thousands of people living with obesity”. He was instrumental in embedding the lived experience of obesity into ASO activities including our webinar, and the UK Congress on Obesity (including having lived experience exhibitors, co-chairs, speakers, bookable PPI sessions, ensuring people were paid for their PPI contributions and involvement on local



Image: Ken Clare presenting the new Ken Clare award to Dr Ella Hinton

organising committees). In 2023, the ASO also established the Ken Clare award for the best PPI activities in research; this will be an annual prize at UKCO.

His various roles outside of the ASO over the years were also recognised in his nominations for the ASO Fellowship. For example, Ken established Weight Loss Surgery Info, and has been involved in various roles with Obesity UK, European Patients Council, European Coalition for People Living with Obesity, Obesity Empowerment Network, British Obesity and Metabolic Surgery Society, International Federation of the Surgery of Obesity and Metabolic Disorders,

Leeds Beckett University's Obesity Institute and Obesity Voices.

The ASO Trustees would like to thank Ken for his tireless work to improve the lives and care for people living with obesity. When the award was announced at UKCO in 2023, the conference delegates' reaction said it all about how well deserved this award was and demonstrated how much Ken is admired and respected by researchers, clinicians and people living with obesity.

*Written by Dr Nicola Heslehurst, Senior Lecturer in Maternal Nutrition and NIHR Advanced/Career Development Fellow*



Image: Ken Clare and Dr Nicola Heslehurst with the fellowship awarded to Ken



# OBESITY INSTITUTE THEMES

## SYSTEM APPROACHES



**CO-LEADS DR DUNCAN RADLEY & DR CLAIRE GRIFFITHS** pictured left to right

Our work in Wales has continued over the last six months. Members of the team have been busy developing an Evaluation Framework for the Whole Systems Approach to Health Weight in Wales and fantastic progress has been made in our work with the Welsh Government to understand the complexity associated with the Welsh food system. This has included running a series of workshops with the Welsh Government to a) visually map out the factors influencing dietary intake of the Welsh population, and b) identify areas of this system that the Welsh Government could influence via new or existing policies. Working with Dr Adam Hulme (University of Queensland) there are some really exciting methodological developments happening here too.

Members of the team are entering the second year of a 5-year commission by Active Derbyshire and Active Notts to undertake a joint complex systems evaluation of Making our Move, their shared vision for transforming lives and communities through sport and physical activity in Notts and Derbyshire, and Walk Derbyshire, a whole system approach to walking.

Supported by two PhD students, with a third to follow in the New Year, we are using a variety of systems approaches to capture progress on, and feedback information about, the conditions which are important foundations for sustainable system change.

It is four years since the PHE "Whole Systems Approach to Obesity" guidance was published. As such, now seems like a very good time to undertake some follow up work. We are about to start a new project which will look into how widely systems approaches are used in the UK to prevent population-level overweight and obesity. This work will be guided by intensive engagement with local public health teams to ensure that the results really inform what goes on locally. If you work in local public health, and are interested in helping to shape this work, please get in touch with Dr James Nobles ([j.d.nobles@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:j.d.nobles@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)).

The Systems Evaluation Network (SEN) continues to go from strength to strength. In May 2023, we brought the organising committee together in person for the first time which was a brilliant opportunity to plan out the next steps for the SEN. The next session was on the 6th December which focussed on novel and emerging methods in the evaluation of public health orientated systems approaches. The SEN has also set up a YouTube channel which hosts all recorded videos and presentations from previous meetings. While this is only accessible to SEN members and not to the public, if you would like to join the SEN [@SystemsEvalNet](https://twitter.com/SystemsEvalNet) (on X) you will have access to these.

Finally, we are delighted to have worked as guest editors for a special edition of Perspectives in Public Health focused on Systems Approaches in Obesity.

## Publications

Radley, D., & Homer, C. (2023) Editorial: Systems approaches in obesity. Perspectives in Public Health.

Griffiths, C., Radley, D., South, J., Sanders, G., Gately, P., Morris, M., Clare, K., Martin, A., Heppenstall, A., McCann, M., Rodgers, J., Nobles, J., Cooke, C., Coggins, A., Cooper, N., Gilthorpe, M., & Ells, L. (2023) A complex systems approach to obesity: A transdisciplinary framework for action. Perspectives in Public Health.

Bertscher, A., Nobles, J., Gilmore, A., Bondy, K., Van Den Akker, A., Dance, S., Bloomfield, M., & Zatonski, M. (2023) Building a Systems Map: Applying Systems Thinking to Unhealthy Commodity Industry Influence on Public Health Policy. International Journal of Health Policy and Management.

Bertscher, A., Matthes, B., Nobles, J., Gilmore, A., Bondy, K., Van Den Akker, A., Dance, S., Bloomfield, M., & Zatonski, M. (2023) Complex Interventions for a Complex System? Using Systems Thinking to Explore Ways to Address Unhealthy Commodity Industry Influence on Public Health Policy. International Journal of Health Policy and Management.

Scott, L., Nobles, J., Sillero-Rejon, C., Brockman, R., Toumpakari, Z., Jago, R., Cummins, S., Blake, S., Horwood, J., & de Vocht, F. (2023) Advertisement of unhealthy commodities in Bristol and South Gloucestershire and rationale for a new advertisement policy. BMC Public Health.

Scott, L., Toumpakari, Z., Nobles, J., Sillero-Rejon, C., Jago, R., Cummins, S., Blake, S., Horwood, J., & de Vocht, F. (2023) Assessing exposure to outdoor advertisement for products high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS); is self-reported exposure a useful exposure metric? BMC Public Health.

# OBESITY INSTITUTE THEMES

## TACKLING DISPARITIES

### CO-LEADS PROFESSOR MARIA MAYNARD, DR TAMARA BROWN & DR JOLANTA SHIELDS

Since the last newsletter, there has been a change to the make-up of the Theme Leads and I (Tamara Brown) and my colleague Jolanta Shields from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences are delighted to join Prof Maria Maynard to co-lead the 'Tackling Disparities' theme. As you can see from the details below, we all bring distinctive strengths and research interests to the role. Health inequalities underpins all research within the Obesity Institute and as such having three co-leads will benefit from additional complementary expertise and capacity.

[Prof Maria Maynard](#), Professor of Health Inequalities:



- Specialises in the patterning of health by ethnicity and migrant status in local and global contexts.
- Key interests include how racism and other structural discrimination and exclusion shape physical and mental health and their intersections.
- Combine quantitative and qualitative epidemiological and sociological methods and a range of theoretical lenses, within an overarching inequality framework.

[Dr Jolanta Shields](#), Lecturer in Politics & Public Policy:



- Main interest is in health politics, specifically the social determinants of health and health inequalities.
- Exploring how health system

governance is shaped by historical policy choices and wider socio-political conditions.

- Use of innovative research methods such as oral histories, infographics, storytelling as valid sources of evidence in the policy process.

[Dr Tamara Brown](#), Reader of Obesity



- Champions co-production and the voice of lived experience within obesity-related public health research.
- Key interests include how gender intersects with other forms of discrimination and the health impacts for people living with obesity.
- Uses a variety of research methodologies to produce evidence which informs practice, including evidence synthesis, mixed-methods, qualitative research.

We have collaborated to develop our strategy and are working on our short, medium and longer-term goals. Our overarching aims and values include Equity, Social Justice, Equality, Community and Shaping Narratives:

- We view health inequities as unfair and avoidable. Addressing them is therefore a social justice issue.
- Inequalities among certain ethnic groups, LGBTQ+ communities, people living with severe mental ill-health or neurodiversity, and young and older carers requires specific attention.
- Person-centred, community-based and participatory research is at the heart of what we do, developing empathy with diverse communities and bridging gaps where there are divisions.
- Affecting societal change through shaping narratives around identities and their intersections is

how we do it!

All three of us are working with underserved and marginalised communities through coproduction. Current example are: Tamara is currently working with community-based co-investigators on an Obesity UK project to coproduce peer-led weight management support groups for people from the LGBT community who are living with obesity (NIHR Programme Development grant). Maria is currently coproducing an intervention called 'Health Connections' to understand the needs of diverse South Asian ethnic groups (MRC Public Health Intervention Development (PHIND) grant). Jolanta is currently leading a grant application to understand the health needs of people who originally came to the UK from refugee camps in East Africa.

### Publications:

Maynard MJ, Orighoye O, Apekey T, Simpson E, van Dijk M, Atherton E, Blackshaw J and Ells L (2023) [Improving adult behavioural weight management services for diverse UK Black Caribbean and Black African ethnic groups: a qualitative study of insights from potential service users and service providers](#). *Front. Public Health* 11:1239668. doi:10.3389/fpubh.2023.1239668 [IF: 5.2]

Maynard MJ, Joshi K, Ells LJ, Apekey TA (2023). ['Health Connections': study protocol for the development of a coproduced, community based diet, physical activity, and healthy weight intervention for UK black and Asian adults](#). *BMJ Open*;13:e073750. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2023-073750 [IF: 3.006]

Connell C, Birken M, Carver H, Brown T, Greenhalgh J. [Effectiveness of interventions to improve employment for people released from prison: systematic review and meta-analysis](#). *Health Justice* 11, 17 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40352-023-00217-w>



# OBESITY INSTITUTE THEMES

## WEIGHT MANAGEMENT & WELLBEING



**CO-LEADS DR GEORGE SANDERS & DR JORDAN MARWOOD** pictured left to right

### New theme leads:

The new lead for the Weight Management and Wellbeing theme is Dr Jordan Marwood who joins Dr George Sanders. Jordan undertook her PhD in the psychology department at LBU and returned to take up a research fellowship in the School of Health in January 2022. Her research focuses on disordered and emotional eating in people who live with obesity. George is a qualitative researcher focusing on evaluating national and international weight management interventions.

### Update on two current projects:

*Exploring barriers and facilitators to shared working in obesity and eating disorders research and practice.*

Funded by the School of Health Small Grant fund, this project is surveying and interviewing practitioners and researchers to examine the understanding and philosophies of eating disorder and weight management professionals. It is hoped that the insights of this project will contribute to the development of a common language and shared goals

to ensure that people in larger bodies receive appropriate and timely care and support.

*How does the evidence map to policy recommendations and applied practice for obesity treatment in children?* Obesity is an ongoing public health challenge within the 21st century. Prevalence of obesity in English children continues to increase with data from the latest National Child Measurement Programme (2021/22) reporting that 14.4% of children aged 4-5 years and 25.5% aged 10-11 years are obese. This is an increase of 4.5% in both age groups from the previous year (2020/21). Whilst the UK Government has recognised the need for change, it is hypothesised that public strategy, policy, and guidance does not always follow the findings from academic literature.

In collaboration with members of the Obesity Institute, across various LBU schools and beyond, we are currently working on four aligned papers: i) Scoping review - we are reviewing all treatment and prevention studies on childhood obesity within Europe, America, New Zealand and Australia over the last 10 years. We will then map these findings onto the Foresight Map (i.e. food consumption/ production, individual/ social psychology, individual/ environmental activity, whole systems). ii) Methodology review - we are reviewing all the methodologies of the studies within the scoping review to assess the quality of the papers. iii) Policy review - this is being led by Essex County Council. They are reviewing all the childhood obesity policies currently in place and then we will map these against the findings from the scoping review. iv) Case study - we are going to look at how the policies for childhood obesity can be developed by a local council (Essex).

### Events

- Jordan was recently invited to speak at an NIHR Clinical Research event in addictions and mental health at The Principal Hotel in York (10.10.23)
- George recently guest lectured at the University of Leeds on process evaluations of multicomponent interventions and how to ensure research impact (06.11.23)

### Publications:

Connell C, Birken M, Carver H, Brown T, Greenhalgh J. [Effectiveness of interventions to improve employment for people released from prison: systematic review and meta-analysis.](#) Health Justice 11, 17 (2023).

Marwood J, Brown T, Kaiseler M, Clare K, Feeley A, Blackshaw J, Ells L. [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. 2023;e12580. doi:10.1111/cob.12580

Whatnall MC, Kolokotroni KZ, Fozard T, Evans T, Marwood JR, Ells L, Burrows TL. [How is online self-reported weight compared with image-captured weight? A comparative study using data from an online longitudinal study of young adults.](#)

Oxford University Press. 27/05/2023. 10.1016/j.ajcnut.2023.05.029

American Journal of Clinical Nutrition (0002-9165). 25/05/2023. 10.1016/j.sste.2022.100538

# MSc OBESITY

The Obesity Institute is delighted to announce that we are now recruiting students to our new Masters (MSc) programme in Obesity. The course has been developed with the voice of the lived experience at the core and will embed this and a focus on compassionate person-centred care throughout.

**"We are excited to welcome students to Leeds Beckett University and commence our MSc Obesity programme in September 2024. The course, which has been co-developed with policy and practice partners and people living with obesity, has the voice of the lived experience at the heart of it. Students will develop knowledge and expertise on the transdisciplinary complexity of obesity to address real-world needs and priorities."**

*Dr. Hannah Greatwood  
Course Leader MSc/PGrad Obesity*

The MSc Obesity program goes beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries, integrating insights, methods, and theories from multiple disciplines to address the complex issues related to obesity. Students on the course will study various themes including prevention and treatment strategies, health psychology, epidemiology, data modelling, dietary behaviours,

as well as public health and systems approaches to obesity. It will allow students to develop their knowledge around the complexity of obesity and think about its application to research, policy and practice. Students on the MSc Obesity will work with world-leading multi-disciplinary experts and partners of the Obesity Institute. They will gain an understanding of the importance of the perspectives of those living with obesity by working with the only Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement hub in the UK, Obesity Voices.

**"I am really excited about the forthcoming MSc in Obesity. I believe it will allow a next generation of researchers and professionals a unique chance to embark on a higher-level course of study in our Institute. Most importantly to me the voice of lived experience will be at the heart of the course. In addition, there are many people living with obesity who have expressed an interest in enrolling."**

*Ken Clare, PPIE lead*

The MSc Obesity program recognises the need for a significant change in the prevailing approaches and perspectives regarding obesity. The course will help students challenge existing assumptions by introducing new methodologies, as well as adopting a more comprehensive and integrated view of obesity that goes beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. The course will support students to think innovatively and holistically in their study of obesity and provide the opportunity to integrate work experience with academic study to enhance employability skills. The programme is suitable for qualified undergraduates with the aspiration to pursue a career in obesity and weight management or a closely related area, and for healthcare professionals wanting to develop their expertise.

To find out more about our MSc Obesity or to apply please visit: [leedsbeckett.ac.uk/obesity-msc](https://leedsbeckett.ac.uk/obesity-msc).

Please also join our **MSc OBESITY WEBINAR on Wednesday 28 February 2024, 13:00-14:00** to explore our program, the skills you will gain to make a change and enhance your career opportunities.

The webinar will feature a brief presentation about the course and its modules, insights from academic leads, and a Q&A session for any questions you may have.

To join us for our online please register here: <https://bit.ly/MScObesityWebinar>



MoreLife delivers 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. Here are some highlights of the last 6 months.



Image: Paul Gately presenting at UKCO 2023

## UK Congress on Obesity (UKCO) 2023

In September, The Association for the Study of Obesity (ASO) hosted the annual UKCO in Belfast. Prof Paul Gately delivered a keynote on Missed targets, limited action, and decreasing priority. Time to regroup, rethink, and give children/families living with obesity a chance?

Our Lead Dietitian Dr Ranjana Babber was also awarded the Prevention and Treatment Award for MoreLife's T3 Specialist Adult Weight Management Service Pathway.



Image: Rajana Babber receiving award at UKCO 2023

## Adventure Therapy Pilot

We piloted an Adventure Therapy programme for children living with obesity and their families, in Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes, delivering 10-weekly sessions on obesity-related topics including nutrition, physical activity, sleep, and stress. A total of 41 families benefitted from the programme saying, "This is a fantastic place to send your children" and "We will recommend this club to other parents because it does help".

## Perspectives on Exercise in Clinical Populations (PECP)

Our Service Lead in Cambridge and Peterborough, Sarah Knapp, did a flash talk at The Perspectives on Exercise in Clinical Populations (PECP) conference showcasing MoreLife's 6-week pilot programme supporting individuals through an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) intervention to be more active.

## EASO

Our T3 Specialist Adult Weight Management Service in Greater Manchester is now a recognised Centre of Obesity Management by The European Association for the Study of Obesity, making us a leading and accredited multidisciplinary treatment centre for obesity.

## Community Engagement

We attended a range of local community engagement events to reach, target and support key communities and groups including:



Health and Wellbeing Fair at the Madina Masjid and Community Centre in Manchester



Suptober Event at Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust



Junior Physical Activity on Referral Service (PARS) Summer Celebration Event

# EMOTIONAL EATING PILOT OVERVIEW

Emotional eating is common in people living with obesity, and people who engage in this behaviour have poorer mental health and weight outcomes. However, there is currently limited support for emotional eating within weight management services in the UK. As part of a collaborative project, Dr Jordan Marwood, Research Fellow from the School of Health and co-lead of the Weight Management and Wellbeing theme has undertaken an evaluation of an emotional eating pilot programme being run by MoreLife.

The qualitative evaluation examined the acceptability of the pilot by holding focus groups with service users (n=12). The data was analysed using thematic template analysis, which resulted in 4 primary and 16 sub-themes:

1. **Conceptualising emotional eating and its consequences**
  - a. Emotional eating as a lifelong issue
  - b. Emotional eating as a journey
  - c. Emotional consequences of emotional eating
  - d. Illness, addiction or eating disorder
  - e. Loss of control over eating
  - f. Stigma and shame
2. **Pre-programme**
  - a. Awareness of the “right” thing to be doing for weight management
  - b. Specific need for emotional eating rather than generic weight management support
  - c. Lack of support for emotional eating outside this service
  - d. Motivation to understand own behaviour
  - e. Referral to the programme
3. **Reflections on the programme**
  - a. Valued elements of the programme: including general principles as well as practical and specific programme factors
  - b. Qualities that a practitioner needs
  - c. Reported outcomes
  - d. Comparison to other weight management services
4. **Post-programme**
  - a. Suggestions for improvement
  - b. Next steps on the journey

**30th EUROPEAN CONGRESS ON OBESITY**  
17-20 May 2023 | The Convention Centre Dublin | Dublin, Ireland

**An evaluation of an emotional eating intervention pilot for UK adults eligible for Tier 3 weight management support**

**J.R. MARWOOD<sup>1</sup>, AB. SIRIN AYVA<sup>1</sup>, N. HEYWOOD<sup>2</sup>, B. MARKS<sup>1</sup>, P. GATELY<sup>3</sup>, S. EDWARDS<sup>2</sup>**

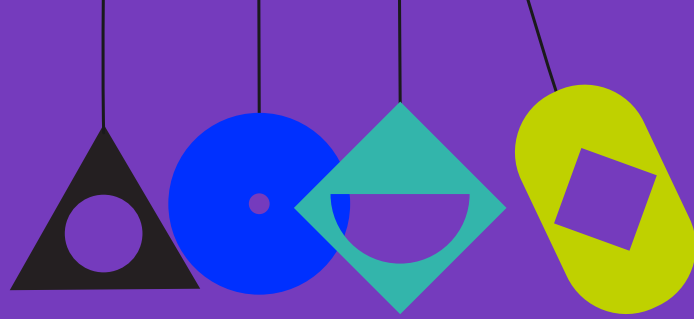
1 Obesity Institute, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds, UK  
2 Morissett, Leeds, UK  
3 Salford Eating Disorder Service, Manchester, UK

INTRODUCTION & AIM	METHOD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional eating (EE) is common in people living with obesity (1), and people who engage in this behaviour have poorer mental health (2) and weight (3) outcomes. However, but there is currently limited support for EE within weight management (WM) services in the UK.</li> <li>MoreLife, a UK WM provider, identified EE as a significant difficulty faced by many of their clients and developed a group therapy intervention to address and reduce EE, with the aim of improving weight and psychological outcomes.</li> <li>This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the EE pilot through comparison of pre- and post-questionnaire scores (data collection ongoing) and to evaluate the acceptability of the emotional eating pilot via focus groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The pilot was conducted with two groups of clients, who were internally referred. Group 1 (n=6) ended in October 2022, Group 2 (n=5) ended in March 2023</li> <li>The intervention consisted of eight x 90-minute weekly sessions covering topics such as mindfulness, distress tolerance, urge surfing and body image</li> <li>Clients completed questionnaire measures pre- and post-intervention to assess psychological outcomes including: depression, anxiety, emotional regulation capacity, emotional eating and binge eating.</li> <li>Clients also participated in a 90-minute focus group via Microsoft Teams to gather their views on the pilot, or submitted views via webform. The data was analysed using Thematic Template Analysis (4-5).</li> </ul>
RESULTS: TEMPLATE ANALYSIS	
<p><b>Sample descriptions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N = 11, 2 male, 9 female</li> <li>Age: 18-29 n = 1, 30-39 n = 3, 40-49 n = 1, 50-59 n = 3, 60-69 n = 1</li> <li>All participants were White British and lived in the North West of England</li> </ul> <p><b>Conceptualising emotional eating and its consequences</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>EE as a lifelong issue:</b> participants noted they had experienced EE since childhood or adolescence. This was often discussed in the context of a short intervention in the face of a lifetime of difficulties</li> <li>2. <b>EE as a journey:</b> Participants described that they all have different paths, priorities and goals. The narrative of a journey suggested a high level of self-reflection and self-compassion, and some suggested that they saw an end point to their emotional eating.</li> <li>3. <b>Emotional consequences of EE:</b> guilt, stress, sense of failure</li> <li>4. <b>Illness, addiction or eating disorder:</b> Participants described themselves as being “ill” rather than being “bad people”. This illness was conceptualised as: “never being full, addiction (it’s an addiction in my opinion it’s an addiction like anything else to me like smoking or drugs or alcohol)” or an eating disorder (“My eating disorder or what, and I think it is a disorder, and I don’t think people recognise it”)</li> <li>5. <b>Loss of control over eating:</b> in the presence of negative emotions or certain foods</li> <li>6. <b>Stigma and shame:</b> many had never disclosed their experience, and felt criticised or judged</li> </ol> <p><b>CONCLUSIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant views on the programme were overwhelmingly positive, with self-reported improvements in emotional eating. All focus group participants stated they would recommend the programme: “you’ll literally be changing lives”. However the need for ongoing support was emphasised.</li> <li>The pilot was frequently compared to other WM programmes and the elements considered to be positive about the pilot were those missing from other WM groups.</li> <li>While these results suggest the pilot is highly acceptable, further quantitative analysis will determine effectiveness of the intervention</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pre-programme</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Awareness of the ‘right’ thing to be doing for WM</li> <li>2. Specific need for EE rather than generic WM support</li> <li>3. Lack of support for EE outside this service</li> <li>4. Motivation to understand own behaviour</li> <li>5. Referral to programme</li> </ol> <p><b>Reflections on the programme</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Valued elements of the programme</b> Practical and specific programme elements: body dysmorphia, guided meditation, transactional analysis, journaling, helpful resources provided and shared between group, small group size, support extends beyond sessions</li> <li>2. <b>General principles:</b> peer support, openness and honesty in the group, importance of person-centredness</li> <li>3. <b>Qualities that a practitioner needs:</b> empathy, flexible and person-centred support, patience, positivity</li> <li>4. <b>Reported outcomes:</b> better understanding of eating triggers, improved emotional awareness, relationship with food and stress management, improvements in emotional or binge eating, sessions provided: learning or realisation, new skills, a starting point for guided self-learning, hope.</li> <li>5. <b>Comparison to other weight management services:</b> lack of person-centred support, inflexible and repetitive delivery, large group size with little room for discussion, surface level content which did not get to the root cause of behaviours.</li> </ol> <p><b>Post-programme</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Suggestions for improvement:</b> everyone should be offered the programme, the programme should be longer, differing preferences of delivery model, duration and frequency, one-to-one sessions, format and timing of resources, need for WM programmes to address feelings and emotions, need for ongoing support</li> <li>2. <b>Next steps on the journey:</b> Most noted that although they had seen improvements in their behaviour and emotional awareness following the pilot, they still had improvements to make and wanted ongoing support to help with this.</li> </ol>
<p><b>REFERENCES</b></p> <p>(1) Wong J et al. 2020. Emotional eating in patients attending a specialist obesity treatment service. <i>Appetite</i>, 151, 104708. (2) Cebolla, A. et al. 2012. Group dialectical behavior therapy adapted for obese emotional eaters: a pilot study. <i>Nutrition hospitalaria</i>, 27, 1141-1147. (3) Braden, A. et al., 2016. Emotional eating is associated with weight loss success among adults enrolled in a weight loss program. <i>Journal of Behavioral Medicine</i>, 39, 727-732. (4) King, N., 2004. Using templates in the thematic analysis. <i>Essential guide to qualitative methods in organisational research</i>, 256. (5) Brooks, J. et al., 2015. The utility of template analysis in qualitative psychology research. <i>Qualitative research in psychology</i>, 12(2), pp.202-212. <b>Funding:</b> this evaluation was commissioned and funded by MoreLife.</p>	<p><b>CONTACT INFORMATION</b></p> <p><a href="mailto:j.r.marwood@leedsbeckett.ac.uk">j.r.marwood@leedsbeckett.ac.uk</a> <a href="mailto:ab.sirin-ayva@more-life.co.uk">ab.sirin-ayva@more-life.co.uk</a></p>

Participant views on the programme were overwhelmingly positive, with self-reported improvements in emotional eating. All focus group participants stated they would recommend the programme: “you’ll literally be changing lives”. However, the need for ongoing support was emphasised. The pilot was frequently compared to other Weight Management programmes and the elements considered to be positive about the pilot were those missing from other Weight Management groups. While these results suggest the pilot is highly acceptable, an upcoming quantitative analysis of patient data will determine effectiveness of the intervention by examining change in emotional eating over time.



# EASO EARLY CAREERS NETWORK (ECN)



## EASO Early Careers Network (ECN) Winter School

Our PhD student Dawn Power attended the EASO Early Careers Network (ECN) Winter School in November. Dawn has shared what this opportunity and experience has given her:

Thirty-five lucky Early Career researchers and practitioners had the opportunity to participate in the EASO Winter School in Antalya. It's difficult to pick highlights as all speakers were phenomenal, however I particularly enjoyed sessions on Weight Stigma and Patient Perspectives by Dr. Ximena Ramos Salas and Dr. Seniz Unal and Sleep & Chronotype in obesity by Dr. Marta Garaulet. I was grateful to meet inspiring colleagues and to share preliminary results of our systematic review on Emotional Eating interventions. I have gained so much knowledge which I can apply to my own research and a network of supportive colleagues to keep in contact with. I would strongly recommend any early career researchers to apply next year!

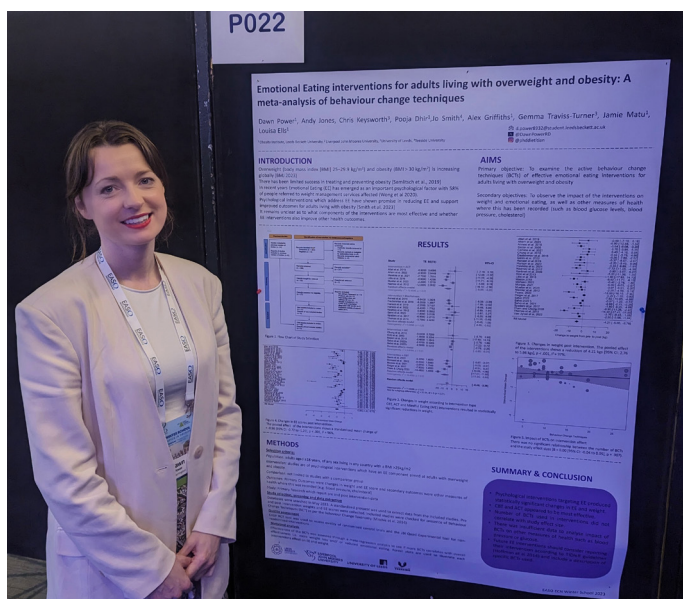


Image: Dawn Power presenting her first poster.

## How to Undertake Effective Patient and Public Engagement

In late November Professor Louisa Ells and Ken Clare were invited to present at an online webinar to the EASO Early Careers Network. The title was "How to Undertake Effective Patient and Public Engagement". The format was relaxed. Louisa and Ken worked well as a double act, providing the researcher and Public Contributor viewpoints. The audience were great and the discussion afterwards was lively.

You can watch the webinar online at: [EASO ECN eLearning Hub "PPIE in Obesity Research"](https://www.easo.org/ecn/elearning-hub/ppie-in-obesity-research/)

## Who are the EASO Early Career Network (ECN)

The European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO) invites all early career students, researchers and professionals interested in obesity to join the EASO Early Career Network (ECN). EASO ECN is a community promoting collaboration and sharing of knowledge on obesity. EASO ECN offers funded training and education opportunities to members by application, including the annual EASO ECN Winter School and free monthly online webinars focussed on skill development. Please follow the below links for more information.

Learn about EASO ECN: <https://easo.org/education/easo-early-career-network/>

Join EASO ECN here for FREE: <https://easo.org/easo-early-career-network/ecn-application-form/>

To engage with ECN activities and opportunities, follow on Twitter <https://twitter.com/EASOobesityECN> and join the ECN LinkedIn group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12656480/>

Have your ECN research promoted in the EASO newsletter! Read our first edition here: <https://easo.org/introducing-easo-early-career-network-member-elwira-gliwska/>



# ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, AND WEIGHT STATUS DURING AND AFTER PREGNANCY: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND META-ANALYSIS

Many women have reported difficulties with their mental health during and after pregnancy. There is also some evidence that suggests women living with excess weight may be more likely to be diagnosed with anxiety and/or depression than women of a healthy weight. We worked alongside public health colleagues at the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) to review the published literature in this area. We were particularly interested in whether anxiety and/or depression was worse in those living with excess weight around pregnancy than those living

with a healthy weight.

Following an extensive search for relevant research articles, we found 14 studies of interest. Using scientifically accepted techniques we assessed the quality of these studies and statistically analysed them in the form of a meta-analysis.

We found that during and after pregnancy, symptoms of depression were a lot higher in women with obesity, compared to those with a healthy weight. We also found this for trait anxiety, which is a sort of anxiety where people worry on a regular

basis rather than just in response to a stressful situation.

The findings of our research show that mental health should be considered when designing weight management programmes for pregnant women or women who have recently given birth. It may be useful for these services to try and identify individuals with anxiety and depression, and then signpost and/or provide extra support.

The published research article can be found at: <http://doi.org/10.1111/obr.13668>

## PUBLICATIONS

Maynard MJ, Orighoye O, Apekey T, Simpson E, van Dijk M, Atherton E, Blackshaw J and Ells L (2023) Improving adult behavioural weight management services for diverse UK Black Caribbean and Black African ethnic groups: a qualitative study of insights from potential service users and service providers. *Front. Public Health* 11:1239668. doi:10.3389/fpubh.2023.1239668 <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1239668/full>

Fallows, E, Ells, L, Anand V (2023) Semaglutide and the future of obesity care in the UK *The Lancet*, DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(23\)01083-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(23)01083-8)

Griffiths, Ells LJ et al (2022) The Impact of Allied Health Professionals on the Primary and Secondary Prevention of Obesity in Young Children: A Scoping Review" *Clinical Obesity* – in press

Griffiths C, Ells LJ et al (in press) A complex systems approach to obesity: A transdisciplinary framework for action *Perspectives of Public Health Special Edition*, "system approaches to obesity".

Jones AR, Mann KD, Cutler LR, Pearce MS, Tovée MJ, Ells LJ, Araujo-Soares V, Arnott B, Harris JM, Adamson AJ. (2023) A Randomised Control Trial Investigating the Efficacy of the MapMe Intervention on Parental Ability to Correctly Categorise Overweight in Their Child and the Impact on Child BMI Z-Score Change at 1 Year. *Children*; 10(9):1577. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children10091577>

Ojo, A.S., Nyanzi, L.A., Giles, E.L. et al. (2023). "I am not really into the government telling me what I need to eat": exploring dietary beliefs, knowledge, and practices among ethnically diverse communities in England. *BMC Public Health* 23, 800

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-15689-6>

Ojo A, Ells L et al (in press) The Efficacy of Sleep Lifestyle Interventions for the Management of Overweight or Obesity in Children: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis *BMC Health* – in press

Senior L, Maynard MJ, Apekey TA. (2023) Diet and Nutritional Status of West African and Caribbean Adults in the United Kingdom: Perspectives to Inform Community-Based Approaches to Healthy Eating. *MDPI AG, Sustainability*. 10.3390/su15086722 <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/15/8/6722>

Hannah C. Greatwood, Suzanne McGregor, Lauren C. Duckworth and Claire Griffiths (2023) Socio-ecological influences on adolescent dietary typologies. *Sage Journals*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02601060231186297>





# UPCOMING EVENTS

## **OBESITY MANAGEMENT: FROM STRATEGY TO PRACTICE**

**Date: Thursday 25 January 2024, 9:45–16:15 GMT**

Dr George Sanders, our Senior Research Fellow in Public Health & Obesity Institute Theme Lead for Weight Management & Wellbeing, will be talking about the current UK Obesity Strategy: Current policy and future directions. Including an insight into how the Obesity Institute at Leeds Beckett University is leading the way in translating real-world research into national policy and practice recommendations among people living with obesity.

George will be delivering his talk at 10:30-11:05. You can find out more about the MyNutriWeb event and register to attend, using link: <https://mynutriweb.com/obesity-management-from-strategy-to-practice/>

## **DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL WHOLE SYSTEMS APPROACH EVALUATION FRAMEWORK BY DR DUNCAN RADLEY**

**Date: Wednesday 31st January 2024, 13:00-14:00**

**Location: Lecture Theatre 3 in Carnegie School of Sport, Headingley Campus & Online**

Dr Duncan Radley will outline the programme of work undertaken by Leeds Beckett University, in partnership with Public Health Wales and wider system stakeholders, to develop and implement an evaluation framework that encompasses a national and local evaluation of the Health Weight Whole Systems Approach across Wales, and the interplay between the two.

The Obesity Institute at Leeds Beckett University brings together academics from a range of disciplines across the university with policy makers, practitioners, and people living with or at risk of obesity and their families and carers, to coproduce innovative person-centred advances in obesity locally, nationally and internationally.

Please register here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/594693864357?aff=oddtcreator>

## **MSc OBESITY WEBINAR**

**Date: Wednesday 28 February 2024, 13:00-14:00**

Join our webinar to explore the complexities of obesity. Our MSc Obesity program, developed in collaboration with those living with obesity & partners in policy & practice, ensures you gain the skills to make a change and enhance your career opportunities.

The webinar will feature a brief presentation about the course and its modules, insights from academic leads, and a Q&A session for any questions you may have.

Join us for our online webinar to find out everything you need to know about our new MSc Obesity, register here: <https://bit.ly/MScObesityWebinar>



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](mailto: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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