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**Inchpark Surgery Statement on Private Bariatric (Weight Loss) Surgery Follow-up**

NHS Lothian bariatric surgery services can be accessed via the NHS Lothian Weight Management Service (1), and patients must complete the necessary assessments to meet the criteria for surgery.

We are aware that some of our patients are opting to have bariatric surgery done privately (often overseas) and then hope to have their follow-up provided by the NHS.

British Obesity and Metabolic Surgery Society (BOMSS) guidelines have emphasised the importance of regular post-operative follow-up for a minimum of two years in a specialist bariatric surgical service (2). This means that GPs should not provide follow-up in the first two years after surgery, regardless of whether the patient has accessed surgery via the NHS or privately. NHS Lothian bariatric surgery services are currently declining to follow-up patients who access surgery privately.

A letter from the Scottish Government Chief Nursing Officer, Chief Medical Officer and National Clinical Director on the subject of overseas travel for private bariatric surgery in January 2023 stated:

- *'While the NHS in Scotland will always provide emergency care where necessary, all routine pre and post-operative care should be part of the package of care purchased by the individual patient.'*
- *'There will be no obligation on NHS Boards to provide such routine pre and post-operative care.'*
- *'In the event of a patient advising a healthcare professional of plans to travel overseas for privately arranged and purchased surgery, they should be advised firstly that this is not recommended, and secondly that there will be no obligation on their local NHS Board to provide routine pre and post-operative care. All care required should be provided within the package of care sold by the overseas provider.'*

In addition, a letter to GP practices from the Scottish Government Director of Primary Care and Chief Medical Officer for Scotland on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023 made it clear that:

- *'The Scottish Government would not expect GPs to be obliged to provide such routine associated management required as scans, blood tests, follow-up treatments [...] as required by the private sector.'*

Finally, in January 2024, the Lothian GP Subcommittee and Lothian Interface Group agreed that:

- *'Where the patient has received [bariatric] surgery privately or abroad, patients should be directed to a private provider for suitable follow up.'*

**Aftercare in this instance includes blood monitoring, blood pressure and weight checks and nutritional supplements (both tablets and injections). Suitable aftercare requirements are detailed and updated in the BOMSS post-bariatric surgery nutritional guidance for GPs (3) and we would urge anyone considering private bariatric surgery to take these requirements into account. This aftercare will not be undertaken by our practice and it will be the patient's responsibility to arrange for this to be carried out by a local private healthcare provider.**

We would not recommend travelling overseas for private bariatric surgery. We would suggest that anyone considering this reads the BOMSS statement on going abroad for weight loss surgery which outlines some of the risks in detail (4). If you would like support with losing weight then please visit the NHS Lothian Weight Management Service website (1) or book a consultation with your GP.

#### Resources

1. <https://services.nhslothian.scot/awmt2d/specialist-weight-management-support/>
2. <https://bomss.org/bomss-overview-of-gp-management-of-patients-post-bariatric-surgery/>
3. <https://bomss.org/bomss-post-bariatric-surgery-nutritional-guidance-for-gps/>
4. <https://bomss.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/BOMSS-Statement-on-Bariatric-Tourism-Jan-2023-v2.pdf>