

## **Position Statement from the Association for the Study of Obesity (ASO): Response to Decision by Joint Committee of the Hertfordshire Valleys and the East and North Hertfordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups to Restrict Access to Elective Surgery on the Basis of Body Mass Index**

The UK charity “Association for the Study of Obesity” (ASO) is dedicated to the prevention and treatment of obesity. The ASO accepts that economic pressures influence the funding of treatment in the modern NHS. It must also be acknowledged that as the annual Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) [Health at a Glance report](#) shows, the UK has the highest obesity rate in western Europe.

Recently, several criteria for rationing treatment have been proposed, including Body Mass Index (BMI). Unfortunately, body composition, as measured by BMI, is commonly utilised without consideration of an individual’s circumstances. The ASO does not accept the use of BMI as a broad means of health care rationing without considering the individualised risks and benefits of the proposed treatment. Obesity is caused by a complex interplay of factors including genetics, family, social and environmental circumstances.

The ASO considers the decision of the Hertfordshire Valleys and the East and North Hertfordshire CCGs to be discriminatory and believe this approach may inadvertently increase the stigma associated with obesity.

The ASO calls on the Secretary of State for Health Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt to intervene in order to reduce this discrimination against and stigmatisation of people with obesity and tackle the chronic underfunding of obesity services and research.

## **The Board of Trustees, UK Association for the Study of Obesity (ASO)**

### **Endorsed by:**

British Dietetic Association (BDA)

British Obesity and Metabolic Surgery Society (BOMSS)

European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO)

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