



# Weight loss surgery - Private vs NHS

## Introduction

It's a remarkable statistic that an additional 60,000 UK adults every year have a body mass index that passes 40. It is estimated that 2.6 million people in the country are eligible for weight loss surgery using the NICE guidelines, and the number is rising quickly.

Due to budget constraints, very few of those who would benefit from weight loss surgery are able to get their procedure (particularly gastric bands) on the NHS so most procedures are now done privately. Although it means meeting the upfront cost yourself there are lots of benefits in going private. It's also important to keep in mind that for many patients their weight loss procedure will fund itself in the years ahead through lower spending on food and meals, and in some cases on prescriptions.

The NHS criteria for weight loss surgery is to treat people with potentially life-threatening obesity when other treatments, such

as lifestyle changes, haven't worked.

The NICE guidelines for NHS weight loss surgery are:

- to have a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above.
- to have a BMI of 35 or above and a serious health condition that could be improved if you lose weight, such as type 2 diabetes or high blood pressure

The eligibility criteria for a private (self-funded) gastric band are different and allow for surgery from a BMI of 30 and upwards, depending on your weight loss history and general health.

Below we list the factors you should consider when deciding to go private for your weight loss procedure.

# 1

## No waiting lists or delays going private

We all know and understand that the NHS as a service is underfunded and stretched to their limits and long waiting lists and delays are part and parcel of the system. Even with a surgery date booked, it's not guaranteed to go ahead when other procedures and treatments are prioritised over weight loss surgery. We've no qualms with emergency procedures and life saving cancer treatments (for example) getting priority - it's just a shame that weight loss surgery (which can also be life saving) cannot be given the same focus.

When going private, with a company that specialises in weight loss surgery at multiple locations across the country, waiting lists aren't really an issue. **Eligible patients can usually go ahead with surgery within 2-3 weeks.**

## 2

### **A choice of dates for your chosen procedure, including weekends**

Not only are you not stuck on a waiting list for a date that could be cancelled, you actually get a choice of surgery dates when going private. This is much more convenient for patients as they can plan when to go ahead around their lives and can book time off work in advance.

This is also particularly helpful for weight loss surgery patients as they may not wish to let everyone know they're having a weight loss procedure and having a choice of dates for their procedure can give them the freedom to plan their surgery effectively.

## 3

### **Your choice of surgeon**

With an NHS procedure you are generally introduced to a surgeon at your consultation but it's not guaranteed that this will be the person performing your procedure, it's often one of his or her team.

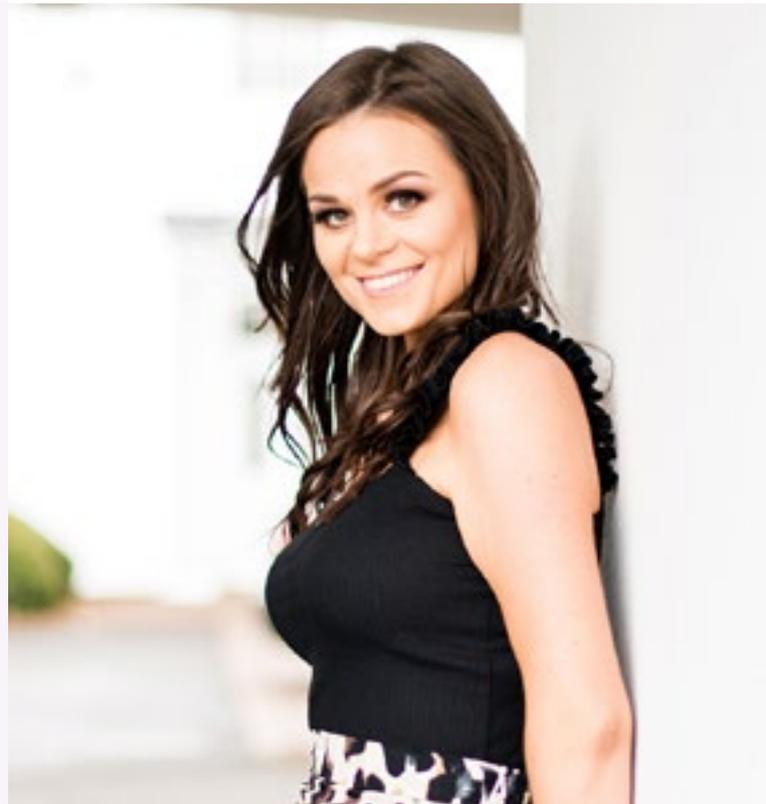
Going private gives you the choice to research and choose your surgeon and, upon meeting them at consultation, the choice to change your mind! This will be the person performing your procedure, giving you peace of mind that you're receiving the best treatment from an experienced surgeon.

## Sarah lost 7 stone with a gastric sleeve

Sarah, 31 from Portsmouth, was aware her weight was restricting her activity with her 2 young children and decided to do something about it.

After dropping to a 8-10 dress size, Sarah can now play with her children more and be sure she will be around for them growing up.

[Read more about the gastric sleeve](#)



## 4

### Your choice of hospital

Again, going private gives you a choice in all aspects of your procedure, including the hospital it is performed in. This could mean you have your procedure at a location closer to your home, which is what we advise for weight loss surgery.

The truth is that many NHS hospitals are world leading centres of excellence, fully equipped to deal with any eventuality, so the likelihood is that your private procedure will be performed in a private wing of an NHS hospital. This has the added benefit of supporting the NHS (who will be paid to use their facilities).

# 5

## Day case surgery (no overnight stay required)

This really relates to the gastric band procedure specifically. While the NHS may require a patient to stay overnight for a band (if they're lucky enough to get a band on the NHS!) private practises can complete a band procedure in one day (the procedure itself is practically a routine procedure now that takes less than an hour).

With a skilled surgeon that performs bariatric surgery regularly, recovery time can be minimal and patients can go home the same day. As with any procedure under general anaesthetic it's recommended that the patient is accompanied on their journey home, and driving themselves is a definite no-no!

# 6

## Aftercare from a team of specialists

This is a big factor for gastric band patients and it's also the reason why there are so few gastric bands performed in the NHS - the follow-up care required with a band is just too much of a drain on NHS resources to be a viable option. With private providers, a multi-disciplinary team of specialists is hired for the sole purpose of bariatric aftercare whereas an NHS outpatient scheme may have you seeing a nurse that covers many different types of procedures.

For other procedures such as gastric sleeve and bypass, there isn't such a need for follow-up appointments as the band but the option of continuous support is more readily available from a private provider.

# 7

## The cost of your procedure

Here is where the argument sways in the direction of the NHS. If you can get your weight loss procedure done on the NHS, for free, why wouldn't you? Regardless of all the reasons above, there is a strong argument to save several thousand pounds of your money but the fact is, many people feel that going private is a luxury reserved only for the super wealthy. The truth is that the market is fairly competitive for weight loss surgery so private providers are keen to make it more accessible to as many people as possible.

At Healthier Weight we believe the life-changing positive effects of weight loss surgery shouldn't be reserved for the elite, so we offer a range of finance packages tailored to suit you. They range from paying for the entire procedure with a monthly fee and low interest rate to an in-house deferred plan that's interest-free.

**Complete the form below to check your eligibility or call our team of specialists and book a no obligation consultation with your surgeon.**

**0800 313 4618**

[CLICK HERE TO CHECK YOUR ELIGIBILITY FOR FINANCE](#)

