

The Village Surgeries Group

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Dear Patient

If you are considering, or have already had private bariatric surgery in the UK or abroad, please be aware of how any follow up treatment will be dealt with by the NHS. This letter is based on guidance that has been provided to us by the British Medical Association¹ and it was developed by the Association of Cheshire and Merseyside Local Medical Committees.

The aftercare for weight loss surgery is of a specialist nature so for patients who have had NHS bariatric surgery, it is provided by our local weight loss surgery service, not their GP practice. However, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside does not commission or fund a service to provide aftercare for patients who have had weight loss surgery in the private sector or abroad. This means that we are unable to provide aftercare for weight loss surgery ourselves and we are unable to refer you for this elsewhere in the NHS. This includes follow up blood tests.

The NHS has published guidance on going abroad for medical treatment² and the British Obesity and Metabolic Surgery Society strongly advises UK residents to be cautious when considering weight loss surgery abroad³. If the service providing your weight loss surgery is not providing you with the necessary aftercare, it may be possible for you to purchase this from a UK private hospital or clinic.

We understand that access to weight loss surgery funded by the NHS is difficult because there are criteria to be met, in accordance with national guidance, before surgery can be considered. Also, we understand that patients do not make the decision to have surgery in the private sector or abroad lightly. Although NHS aftercare is not available to patients who have had surgery privately or abroad, please be assured that NHS emergency services are available should any emergency treatment be required because of any issues arising from your weight loss surgery.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Patient Experience Team:

- Telephone – 0800 132 996
- Email – enquires@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk
- Post – No.1 Lakeside, 920 Centre Park Square, Warrington, WA1 1QY

Yours

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¹ <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/gp-practices/managing-workload/general-practice-responsibility-in-responding-to-private-healthcare>

² <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/going-abroad-for-treatment/going-abroad-for-medical-treatment/>

³ <http://bomss.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/BOMSS-Statement-on-Bariatric-Tourism-Jan-2023-v2.pdf>