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**NHS**



# NHS DIGITAL WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

## General Practice Toolkit

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## NHS Digital Weight Management Programme: at a glance

### Welcome

**The new NHS Digital Weight Management Programme offers online access to weight management services to those living with obesity who also have either diabetes, or hypertension, or both.**

With three levels of support and a choice of providers, it is designed to offer service users a personalised level of intervention to support them to manage their weight and improve longer term health outcomes.

### About this guide

This pack has been designed for colleagues working in General Practice who are referring patients into the programme.

It contains important information about the programme, how to make referrals to the service and what you and service users can expect from their time on the programme.

We hope you find this booklet useful. If you have any questions about the programme, please contact [england.wmp-prevention@nhs.net](mailto:england.wmp-prevention@nhs.net).

Alternatively, please contact the NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit [mlcsu.digitalinnovations@nhs.net](mailto:mlcsu.digitalinnovations@nhs.net) if your query relates to the Referral Hub.





## Programme background

**The adult population living with overweight in England is 25.6 million (62%), of which 11.4 million adults (25%) are living with obesity.**

Obesity is a serious health concern that increases the risk of many other health conditions, including Type 2 Diabetes, cardiovascular disease, joint problems, mental health problems, and some cancers. There is also evidence to suggest that people living with obesity are at higher risk of more severe outcomes associated with COVID-19.

The NHS Digital Weight Management Programme offers online support to people living with obesity who also have diabetes or hypertension, or both, to help them to manage their weight.

The programme offers three different levels of support, including human coaching for groups who are less likely to complete behavioural and lifestyle change

programmes, with the aim of reducing health inequalities. This includes those of younger (working) age, people from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds, men, and people living in more deprived communities.

Emerging evidence from the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme suggests that some digital providers can perform as well as face to face services, with benefits in reaching a younger cohort and offering increased flexibility of access. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has also been a 25% rise in daily health app downloads, increasing from 4 to 5 million every day. This reflects the growing interest from the public in digital health.

Given this increasing use of remote healthcare, the importance and desirability of digital weight management interventions is clear. This programme will further contribute to the evidence base by helping us understand what features might make them most acceptable and effective for different population groups for Digital Weight Management interventions.

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## NHS commissioned services: focus on people in contact with health services

### Obesity services

**NHS services** beyond weight management support:

- CCG commissioned tier 3 services and bariatric surgery
- Low calorie diets for people living with Type 2 diabetes supporting diabetes remission where possible.

### Currently commissioned

#### High intensity offer

- NHS Diabetes Prevention programme. England-wide service providing face-to-face (currently remote) and digital products for people at high risk of diabetes\*
- 9 month programme, min. 16 hours contact over min. 13 sessions

### New offer

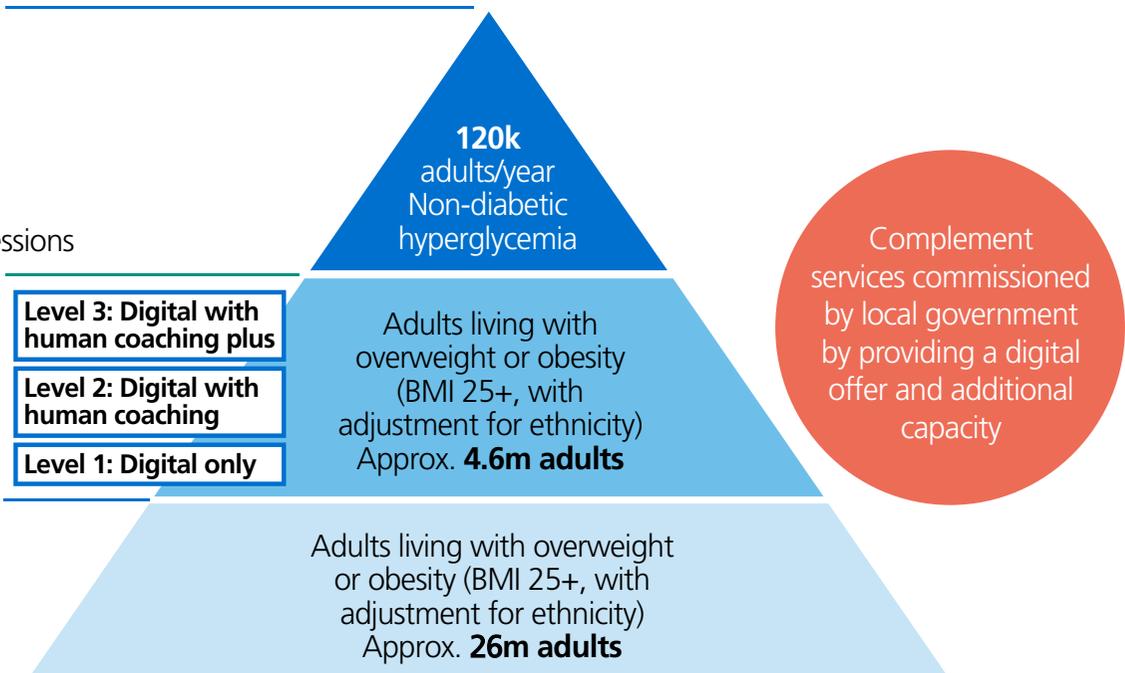
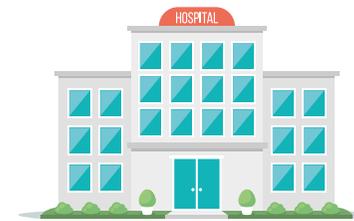
#### Intermediate offer

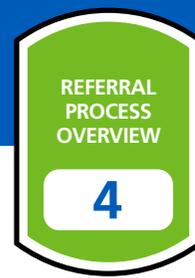
- Medium intensity intervention through NHS Digital Weight Management Programme. Supported digital or remote 12 week intervention, at three levels of

### NHS Choices

**Universal offer:** low intensity intervention

- Recently launched 'Better Health' NHS app based on the revised NHS Choices 12 week weight loss programme.





## Programme eligibility

### Inclusion criteria

Referrals to the NHS Digital Weight Management Programme are accepted for those who meet all of the following criteria:

- Over the age of 18
- Has a BMI of 30+ (adjusted to  $\geq 27.5$  for people from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds)
- Has a diagnosis of diabetes (type 1 or type 2) or hypertension or both.

### Exclusion criteria

An individual who meets any one or more of the following exclusion criteria is not eligible to access the service and will not be eligible for referral:

- Recorded as having moderate or severe frailty
- Is pregnant
- Has an active eating disorder
- People for whom a weight management programme is considered to pose greater risk of harm than benefit
- Has had bariatric surgery in the last two years.

For people aged over 80 years, the referrer will need to confirm on the referral form that a weight management programme is considered likely to pose greater benefit than harm.





## Referral process

The identification and referral of users to the new services will be dependent on the support of those working in General Practice.

An NHS England and Improvement commissioned front-end 'Referral Hub' will triage service users to one of three levels of intervention based on certain demographic features that are associated with greater likelihood of non-completion of a weight management programme (based on evidence from the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme)

Service users will have a choice of provider for a 12-week digital weight management service.

### The role of General Practice

**Step 1** – During a routine contact, the General Practice team may identify a patient as eligible for the NHS Digital Weight Management Programme.

**Step 2** - The General Practice team refers the patient into the programme.

### What the service user will need to do

Once referred, there is nothing more the General Practice team will need to do to support the referral process.

**Step 3** - The service user is contacted via a text message within two working days. This links to an automated process on the NHS Digital Weight Management Referral Hub which allows them to select a provider.

**Step 4** - Once in the Referral Hub, the service user will be asked to verify their date of birth and ethnicity to support their triage to the appropriate level of intervention.

**Step 5** - Once triaged, the service user will select their preferred programme from a choice of providers.

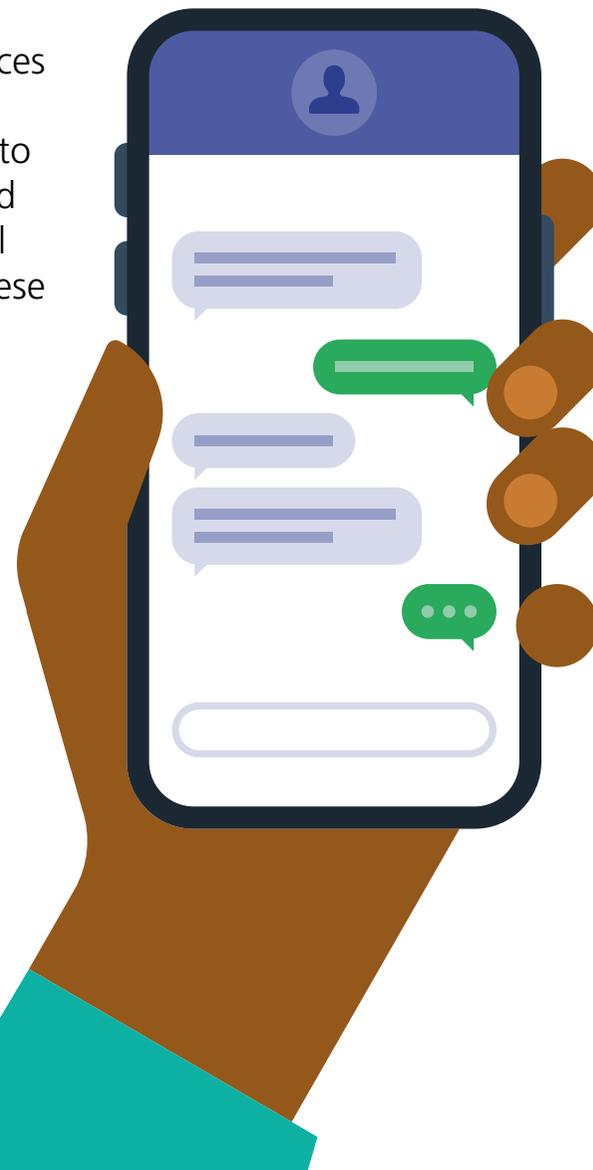


**Step 6** - The chosen provider will contact the service user within 10 working days to start their programme.

For service users who do not initially respond to the text message, they will be contacted by phone by the Referral Management Centre to take them through the triage process.

The referral templates provided by the NHS Digital Weight Programme are designed to suit the data extraction requirements of the programme. Therefore, CCGs, GP practices or any other third-party software providers should not amend them without prior agreement from the NHS Digital Weight Management Programme.

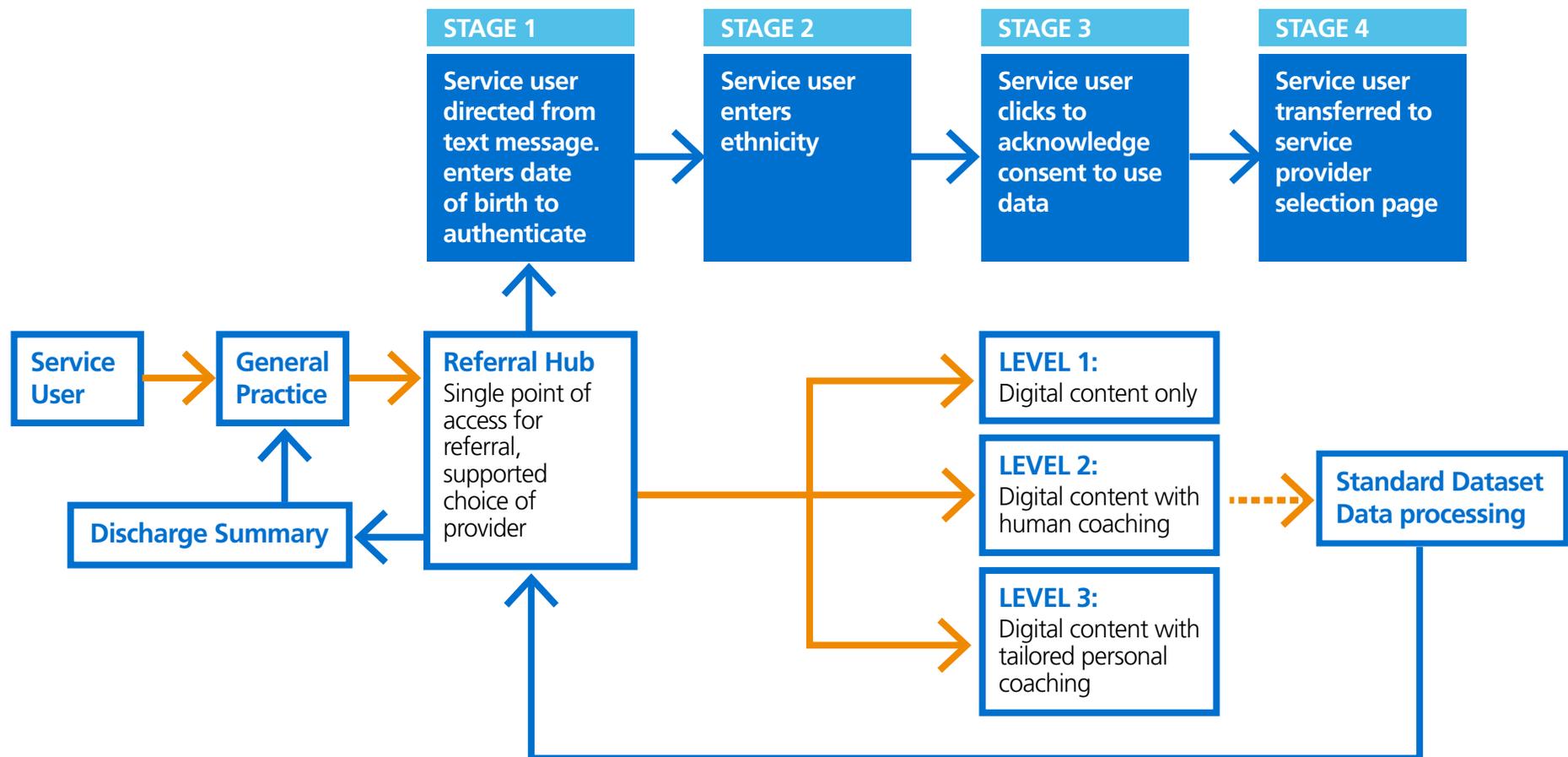
It is advisable that practices make contact with their local data quality teams to ensure support is at hand for uploading the clinical templates. Please use these teams as a first point of contact for any IT issues.





## Referral pathway

The diagram below outlines the full referral pathway:





## Triage process

Service users will be triaged to one of three levels of intervention based on identified characteristics that have been found to be associated with lower likelihood of completion of the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme. This includes: Younger Black, Asian and minority ethnic background communities, male gender and deprivation.

Service users will have a supported choice of provider for a 12-week, digital weight management service.

The 3 levels of service intervention are outlined on the right:

### LEVEL 1:

Access to digital content only. Intended for people with characteristics suggesting they are less likely to require coaching support and more likely to support their own health and wellbeing.

### LEVEL 2:

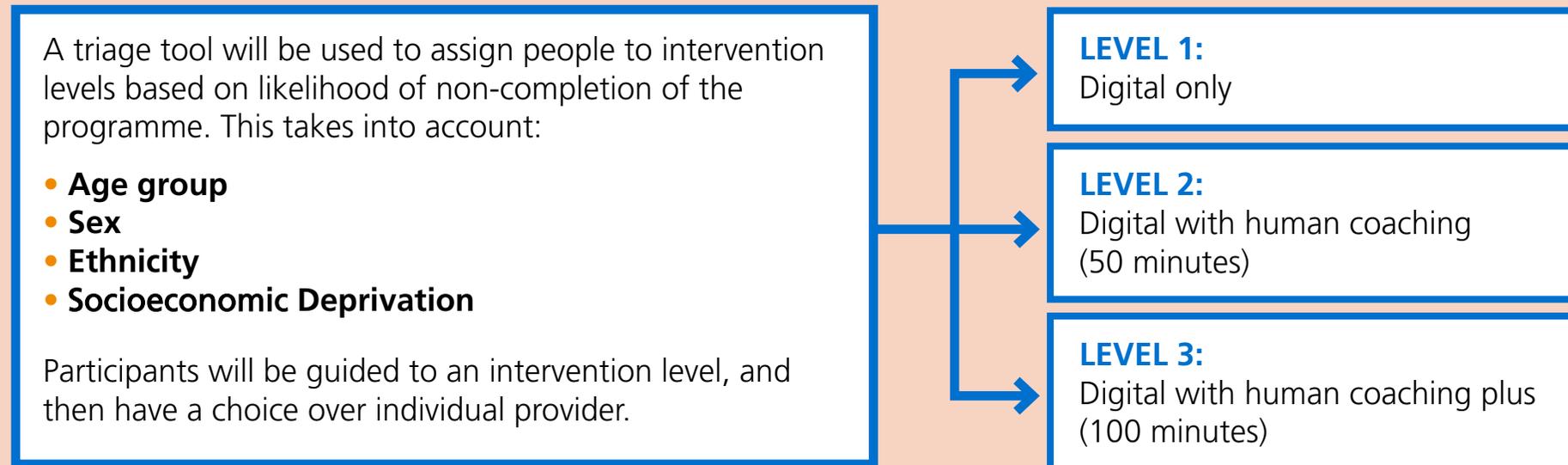
Access to digital content, plus access to a minimum of 50 minutes of human coaching. Intended for people with characteristics suggesting they may be less likely to successfully complete a weight management programme and who may benefit from additional human coaching to support them to complete the programme.

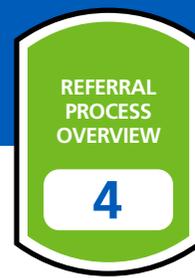
### LEVEL 3:

Access to digital content, plus access to a minimum of 100 minutes of human coaching, and additional features such as supported introduction to the programme, challenges and games. Intended for people with characteristics suggesting they may be least likely to successfully complete a weight management programme and who therefore require a more personalised and supported journey with more intensive human support.



The diagram below outlines the triage process used to assign service users to levels of intervention on the programme:





## Reaching eligible participants

There are several ways in which General Practices may choose to reach out to people who may be eligible for the programme in the local area, including:

- Opportunistic activity through annual reviews/ appointments with healthcare professionals
- Searching databases for people who may be eligible, confirming eligibility and then contacting them directly to discuss the programme. The NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit have developed a tool to search your practice IT system.
- Adding information on the practice website.

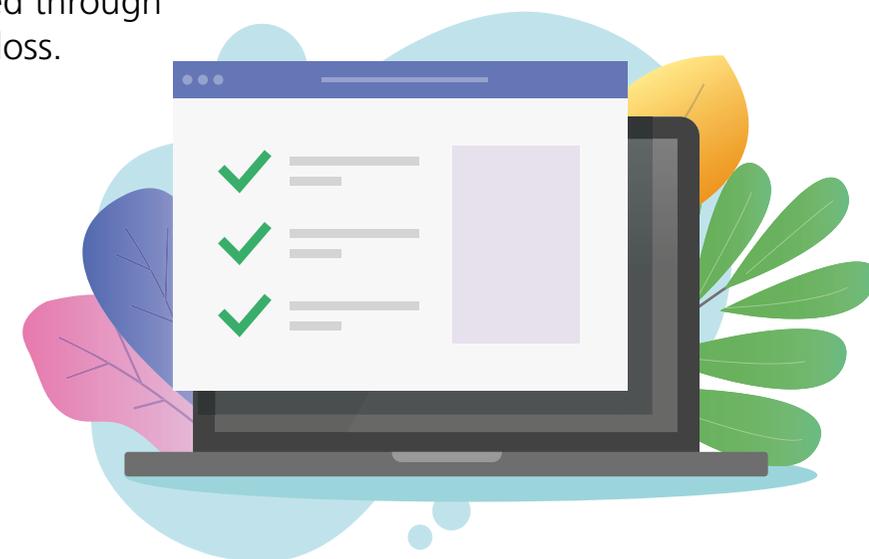
### Referral of identified eligible individuals

The NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit have created electronic referral forms which can be uploaded into your practice IT system e.g. EMIS, SystmOne, Vision. Practices can download the templates from the NHS England website, to start referring patients.

### Benefits of referral

As well as the benefits to your eligible population, there may be a number of benefits for your practice and local system:

1. Improved health and wellbeing of service users leading to reduced healthcare demand;
2. Potential improvements in blood pressure and glycaemic control for participants through weight loss.
3. Reductions in prescribing costs for conditions improved through weight loss.





## Promotional materials and literature

We have created a range of marketing materials to relay important information and keep participants engaged with the programme.

The table below shows the types of materials and resources available.

Process stage	Marketing materials	Audience	When/where to use
<b>Any time</b>	FAQs	Practice team	For internal use to find out more about the programme and to be able to answer questions of potential service users.
<b>Any time</b>	Poster	Practice population	In patient-facing areas in the practice
<b>Referral</b>	Service user leaflet	Patients offered referral	Given to participants when they are referred to the programme. Brief introduction to the programme and the referral process.

For further information, visit our website: [www.england.nhs.uk/digital-weight-management](http://www.england.nhs.uk/digital-weight-management)

For guidance on speaking to service users about weight management, you may find the following documents from Public Health England helpful: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-weight-management-a-guide-to-brief-interventions](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-weight-management-a-guide-to-brief-interventions)



## Key messages to service users

**The key messages below focus on raising awareness of the risks associated with obesity and how the NHS Digital Weight Management Programme will benefit those eligible.** They are designed for those working in General Practice to take and adapt where necessary.

- 62.3% of adults are living with overweight or obesity in England, of which 25% are living with obesity.
- Obesity is a serious health concern that increases the risk of many other health conditions, including Type 2 Diabetes, cardiovascular disease, joint problems, mental health problems, and some cancers.
- Evidence shows that people living with obesity are at higher risk of adverse outcomes from COVID-19, therefore it is more important than ever to support those living with obesity to lose weight.
- If you are living with obesity and have either diabetes or high blood pressure, or both, you could be eligible for the NHS Digital Weight Management Programme.
- Losing weight isn't easy, but it can be more achievable with support.
- The programme offers free, 12-week digital support through apps and websites to help you manage your weight and improve longer term health outcomes.
- With a range of providers to choose from, you'll get lots of support to help you get active and improve your diet as you work through the weeks.
- As a digital programme, it is designed to be accessible and easy to use, allowing you to complete the programme in your own time, at a pace that works for you.
- It can be tough to make changes but with our support you can take control of your health.
- Speak to your GP practice today and find out how the programme could benefit you.