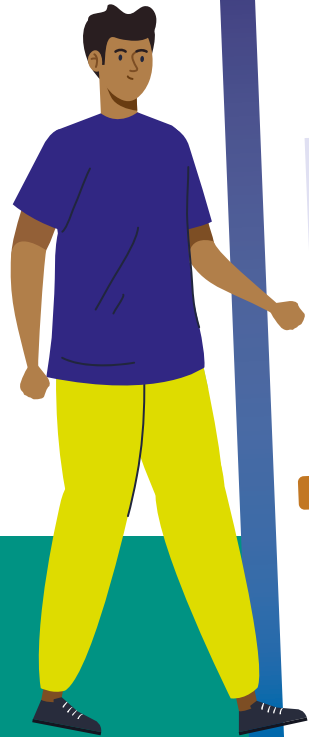




We are
safe and
healthy



NHS DIGITAL WEIGHT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME



Healthcare Professional Toolkit

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AT A GLANCE	PROGRAMME BACKGROUND	PROGRAMME ELIGIBILITY	REFERRAL PROCESS OVERVIEW	ACCESSIBILITY OF THE PROGRAMME	REACHING ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS	PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS & LITERATURE	KEY MESSAGES
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NHS Digital Weight Management Programme: at a glance

Welcome

The NHS Digital Weight Management Programme offers online access to weight management plans to those living with obesity who also have a diagnosis of diabetes, or hypertension, or both.

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

About this guide

This toolkit has been designed for healthcare professionals 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 the programme.

If you have any questions about the programme, please contact england.wmp-prevention@nhs.net.





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 a diagnosis of diabetes or hypertension, or both, to help them to manage their weight.

The programme offers three different levels of support, including human coaching for people who are less likely to complete behavioural and lifestyle change programmes. This includes people of younger (working) age, people from black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds, men, and people living in more deprived areas.

Emerging evidence from the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme suggests that some digital programmes can perform as well as face to face services, with benefits in reaching a younger cohort and offering increased flexibility of access. A recent review of the rising use of digital health applications shows there has been a 25% rise in daily health app downloads, increasing from 4 to 5 million every day¹.

Given the increasing use of digital healthcare, the importance and desirability of digital weight management interventions is clear. The NHS Digital Weight Management Programme will contribute to the evidence base by helping us understand what features might make a digital intervention most effective for different population groups.

¹ <https://www.mobihealthnews.com/news/emea/orcha-reports-explosion-adoption-digital-healthcare-covid-19>

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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, minimum 16 hours contact over minimum 13 sessions

NHS Digital Weight Management Programme

Intermediate offer

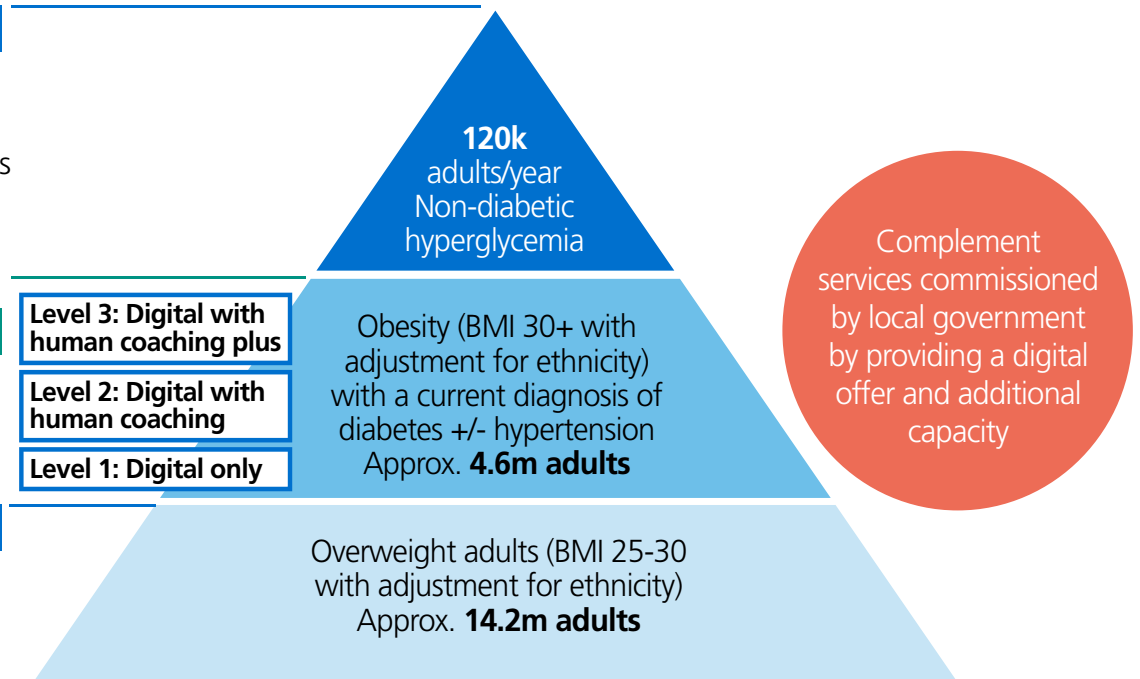
- Medium intensity intervention through 12-week digital intervention, at three levels of intensity.

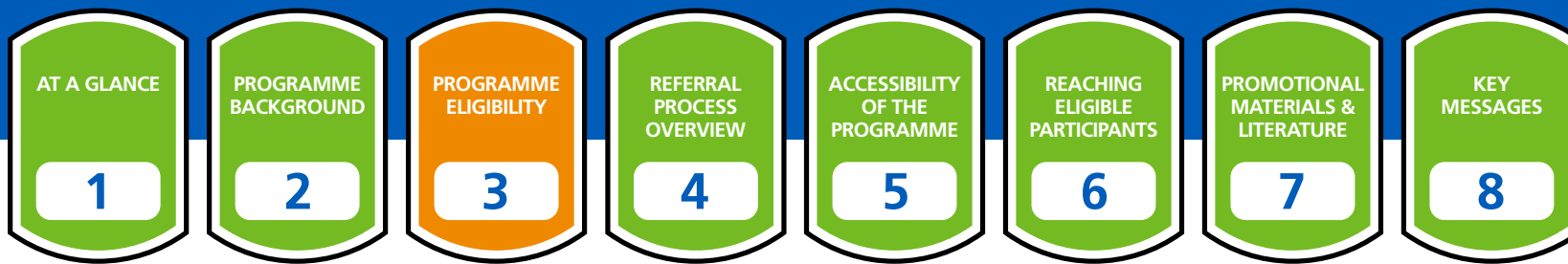
NHS Choices

Universal service: low intensity intervention

- 12 week NHS Weight Loss Plan app

*For those with non-diabetic hyperglycaemia: HbA1c 42-47mmol/mol, or fasting glucose 5.5-6.9mmol/l. There is no requirement for people referred to be living with overweight or obesity.





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 ≥ 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.

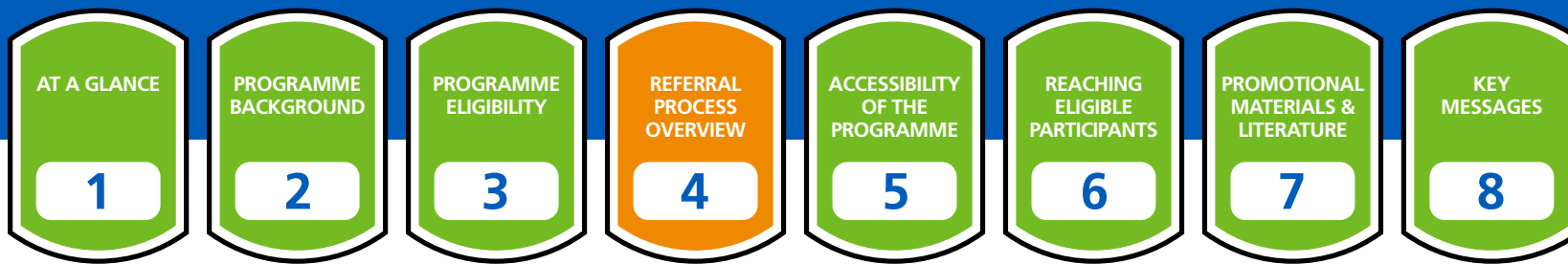
Exclusion criteria

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, a weight management programme must be considered likely to pose greater benefit than harm.





Referral process

Healthcare professionals who can make a referral into the NHS Digital Weight Management Programme should identify eligible patients.

An NHS England 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 noncompletion of a weight management programme (using evidence from the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme).

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

How to make a referral

During a routine contact, a healthcare professional may identify a patient as eligible and suitable for the NHS Digital Weight Management Programme. The patient needs to have access to a smartphone and an email address to be suitable for the Programme.

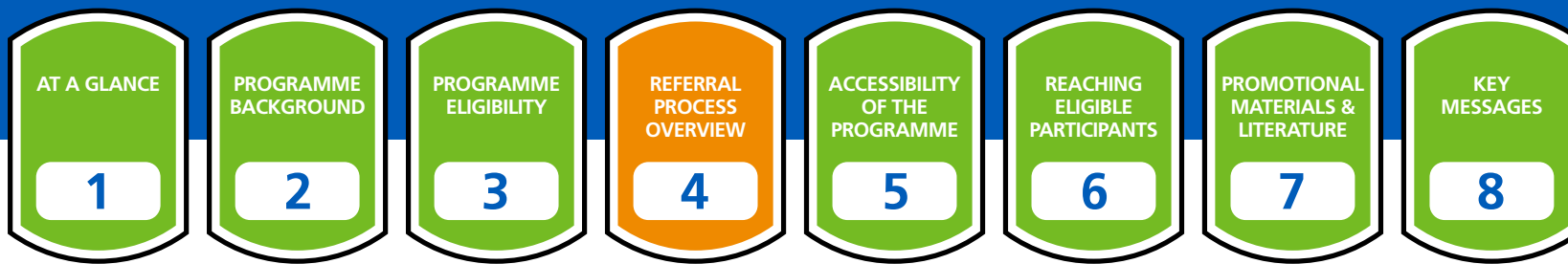
If you work in a General Practice:

All referrals are made through the National E-RS system. The NHS Digital Weight Management Programme referral templates provided Nationally by NHS England are designed to suit the data extraction requirements of the programme. Therefore, General Practices or any other third-party software providers should not amend them without prior agreement from NHS England.

It is advisable that General Practices contact their local data quality teams to support uploading of the referral template. Please use these teams as a first point of contact for any IT issues.

If you work in another healthcare setting:

Referrals are made using the online referral form, specific to your profession. You may wish to print off some referral forms from the Template Site to fill in whilst the patient is in front of you before transferring the information to the online form.



To download the referral forms and make a referral, visit our [website](#).

What the patient will need to do:

Step 1 – After a referral has been submitted, the patient is contacted within two working days via a text message with a link. The link will take the patient to the “Referral Hub” to complete the referral process.

If the patient does not respond to the first text message, they will receive a second text and a follow up phone call from the Referral Management Centre. If the Referral Management Centre can’t reach the patient, the referral will be closed after 6 weeks. The patient can be re-referred if the NHS Digital Weight Management Programme would be of benefit to them at a later point.

Step 2 - Once in the “Referral Hub”, the patient will be asked to verify their date of birth and ethnicity to support their triage to the appropriate level of intervention.

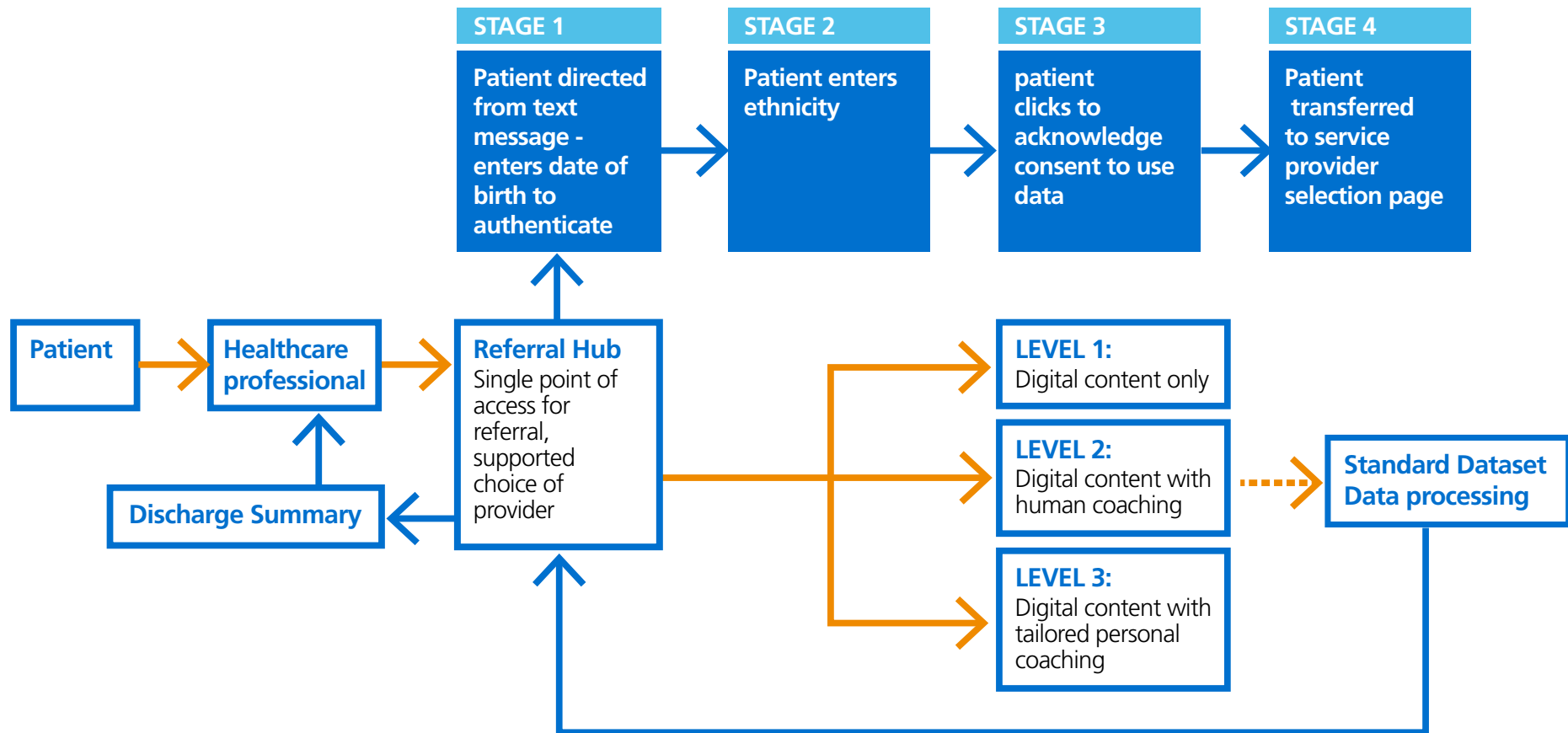
Step 3 - Once triaged, the patient will select their preferred weight management plan from a choice of providers. The patient must choose a plan within 6 weeks otherwise the referral will be closed and discharged back to the referrer.

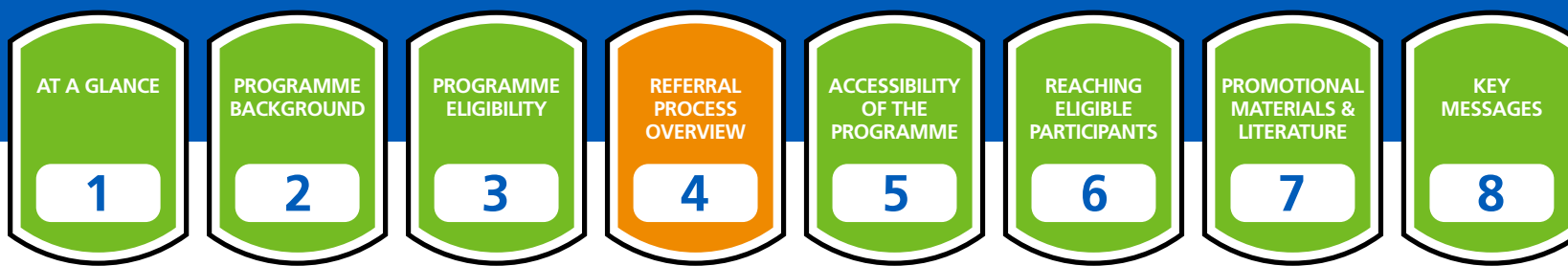
Step 4 - The chosen provider will contact the patient within 5 working days to start their programme. The patient must start their plan within 6 weeks otherwise the referral will be closed by the Provider and discharged back to the referrer.

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Referral pathway

The diagram below outlines the full referral pathway:





Triage process

Patients will be triaged to one of three levels of support based on characteristics that have been found to be associated with lower likelihood of completion of the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme. This includes: younger age, people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, male gender and living in more deprived areas.

Patients will have a supported choice of provider for a 12-week, digital weight management plan. The three levels of service intervention are outlined on the right:

LEVEL 1:

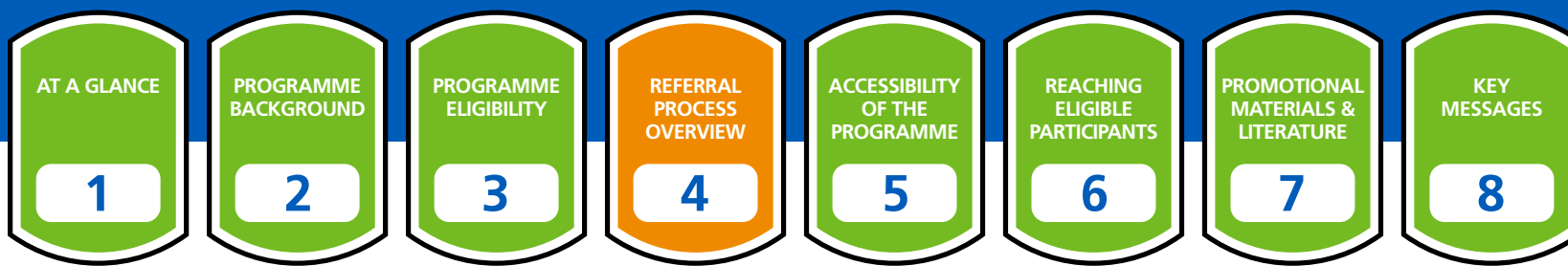
Access to digital content only. Intended for people with characteristics suggesting they are less likely to require coaching support and more likely to support their own health and wellbeing.

LEVEL 2:

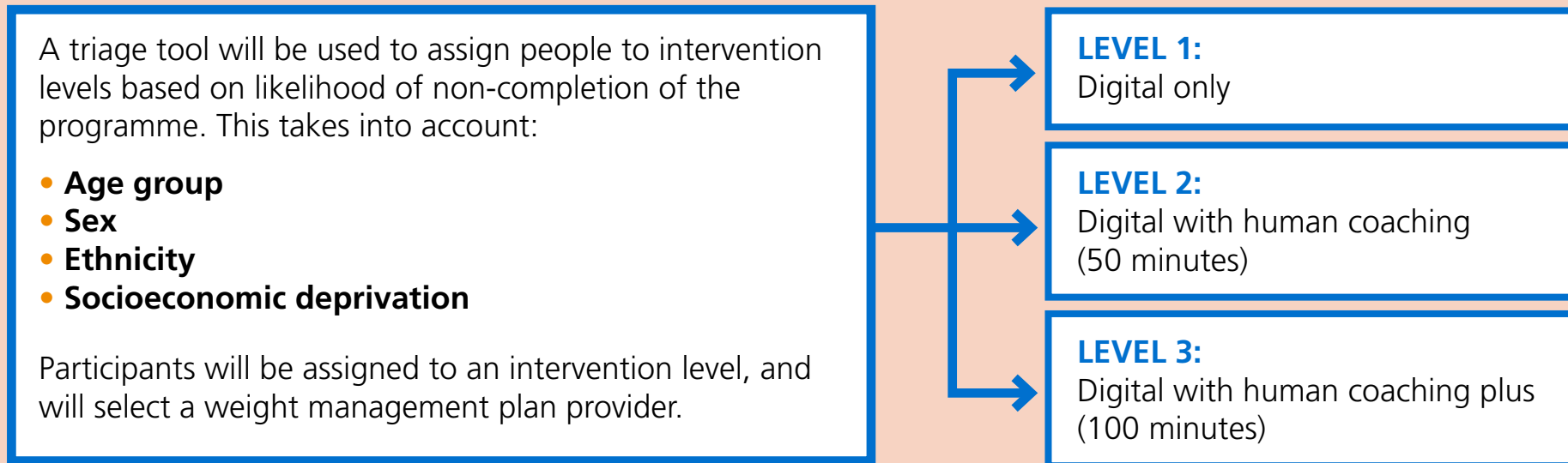
Access to digital content, plus access to up to 50 minutes of human coaching. Intended for people with characteristics suggesting they may be less likely to successfully complete a weight management programme and who may benefit from additional human coaching to support them to complete the programme.

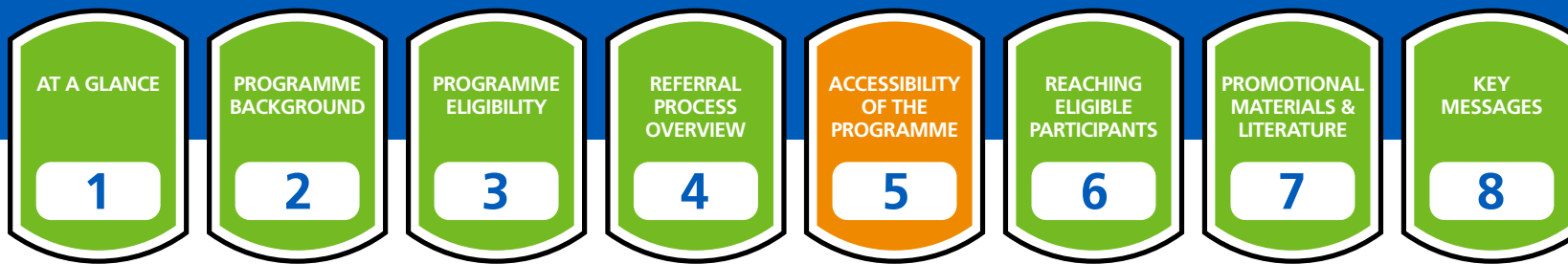
LEVEL 3:

Access to digital content, plus access to up to 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.



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





Accessibility of the NHS Digital Weight Management Programme

The companies which provide the NHS Digital Weight Management Programme are committed to making sure their website and apps are accessible and meet the needs of patients and service users.

Each of the contracted providers strive to meet the Government guidance on accessible communication formats and reach the UK Association for Accessible Formats recommended standards and best practice for quality accessible information based on user needs.

By following the web content accessibility guidelines international standard, each company aims to make their content more accessible to a wider range of people with disabilities, including accommodations for visual impairments, hearing impairments limited movement, speech disabilities, photosensitivity, and combinations of these.





Reaching eligible participants

There are several ways healthcare professionals may choose to reach out to people who may be eligible for the programme in their 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.
- Adding information on to patient-facing website website.

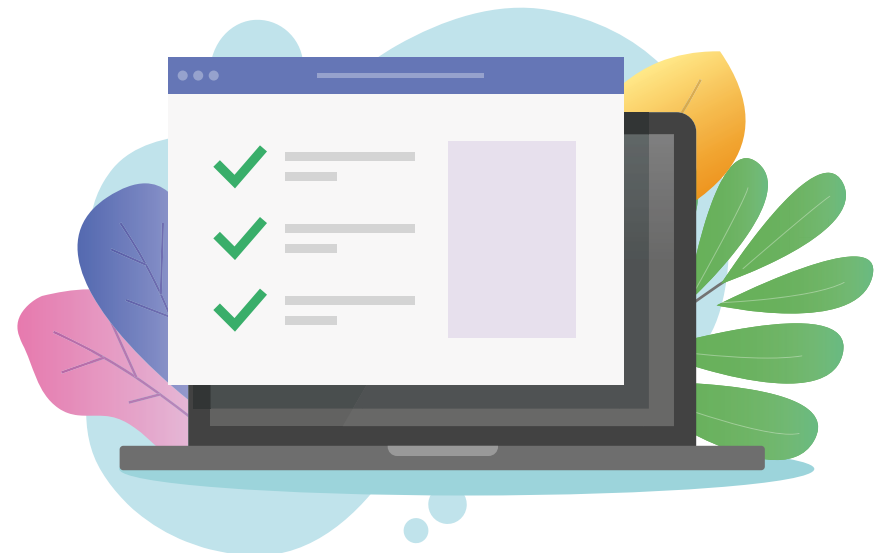
Referral of identified eligible individuals

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 you and local systems:

1. Improved health and wellbeing of patients 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

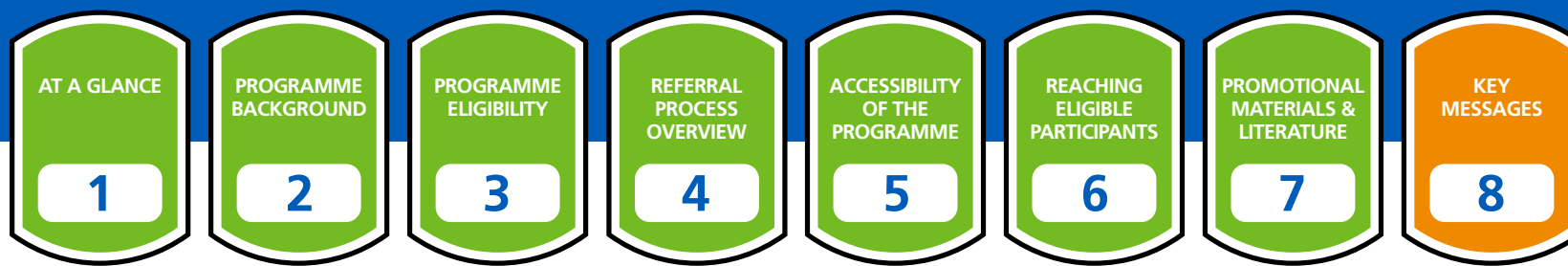
We have created a range of marketing materials to relay important information and keep patients engaged with the programme. The table below shows the types of materials and resources available.

Referral process stage	Marketing materials	Audience	When/where to use
Any time	FAQs	Healthcare professionals	For internal use to find out more about the programme and to be able to answer questions of potential patients.
Any time	Poster	Patients	In patient-facing areas to advertise the programme.
At point of referral	Patient leaflet	Patients offered referral	Given to patients when they are referred to the programme.
Any time	Screensaver	Patients	In patient-facing areas to advertise the programme.

For further information and to download these materials, visit our website: www.england.nhs.uk/digital-weight-management and sign up to the NHS Futures page: <https://future.nhs.uk/NHSpp/grouphome>

For guidance on speaking to service users about weight management, you should follow the principles outlined in the Obesity Language Matters Guide: <https://easo.org/talking-about-obesity-obesityuk-language-matters-guide/>

You may also find the following documents from Public Health England helpful: www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-weight-management-a-guide-to-briefinterventions



Key messages to patients

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 healthcare professionals to use.

- 62% of adults are living with overweight or obesity in England, of which 25% are living with obesity.¹
 - 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.²
 - 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 online support through apps and websites to help you manage your weight and improve longer term health outcomes.
 - With a range of plans 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 us today and find out how the programme could benefit you.

¹Source: Public Health England - Based on Active Lives Adult survey 2019-2020

²Source: Public Health England - Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID August 2020 update