

Slimming World *explained*

information for
health professionals



*delivering an effective, evidence-based
approach to healthy weight management*



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NICE obesity guidance: how Slimming World meets the standard

Slimming World supports the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence obesity guidance¹ and the opportunity that it offers health professionals to work with commercial weight management organisations.

The NICE guidance recognises the importance of providing regular and ongoing support for behavioural change – not only for losing weight but for maintaining a healthy weight. Slimming World pioneered referral from primary care to commercial weight management services in 2001 and is able to demonstrate how it meets the guidance criteria.

A multi-component programme

Slimming World combines a satisfying, sustainable healthy eating plan, a programme to help members gradually increase their physical activity levels, and facilitation of behaviour change through our unique group support system.

Focus on life-long lifestyle change and the prevention of future weight gain

Slimming World's focus is on supporting people to adopt healthy habits around eating and physical activity for the long term. Our weekly groups ensure members feel empowered and equipped with the necessary skills to develop lasting self-determined behaviour change. Members attend free of charge when they reach their personally chosen target weight to support maintenance of weight loss.

Developed by a multidisciplinary team

Over 55 years our programme has been continually reviewed and developed in line with latest thinking on nutrition, exercise and the psychology of behaviour change. We have an in-house team of registered nutritionists and dietitians, while a specialist advisor panel brings together experts in a range of disciplines including physical activity, psychology, adult health and behaviour change.

Staff are trained and receive regular development

A dedicated training team delivers specialist training in facilitating behaviour change for weight control via Slimming World's bespoke Academy. As well as an initial foundation training package, regular ongoing training, personal development and support is provided for all the Consultants who run Slimming World groups, with a strong focus on a deep understanding of the emotional and psychological aspects of living with overweight and obesity. A robust management structure helps ensure consistency between Slimming World groups with a firm emphasis on quality of service.

Programmes should last at least three months, and offer at least fortnightly sessions including a 'weigh-in'

Slimming World groups are open 52 weeks of the year and members attend

for as long as they wish. Groups include a confidential weigh-in followed by a support session to facilitate learning and behaviour change. Members continue to be supported in between groups by a series of 'lifelines' including personal support from the Consultant and other group members and online support from the member website and app, as part of their membership.

Ensure achievable goals for weight loss are agreed for different stages

At Slimming World, every achievement is recognised and praised, not just weight loss but new thinking and new decisions. Our award system helps members stay motivated throughout their journey, breaking down overall goals into mini targets and rewarding gradual changes in behaviour. All members set their own target weight and interim targets and there is never any pressure to reach an 'ideal' weight.

Ensure specific dietary targets are agreed, tailored to individual needs

Slimming World's healthy eating plan encourages members to eat plenty of highly satiating, low energy dense foods while controlling intake of high energy dense foods. It empowers members to make healthier food choices, satisfy their appetites and lose weight – without the need for calorie counting or obsessive weighing or measuring. No foods are banned, but energy dense foods, high in saturated fat and added sugar, are limited to support weight loss. Members are supported to tailor the plan to their individual tastes and requirements, and to achieve personally determined dietary changes.

Discuss how to reduce sedentary behaviour and incorporate activity into everyday life

Our active lifestyle programme is based on the understanding of the barriers that people living with overweight may face in becoming more active. Members are supported to take those first steps to becoming more active, and build up in small, steady increments, with the ultimate goal of building up to the recommended 150 minutes' moderate intensity activity a week. Practical advice

and sharing of ideas helps members reduce sedentary behaviour and make activity an intrinsic part of their day.

Use a variety of behaviour change methods

Our support system combines individual attention and group participation in a carefully structured forum. Through a process closely resembling motivational interviewing, Slimming World Consultants begin to understand members' individual motivators and goals. With guidance, members embark on a process of guided self-discovery – they become aware of their individual obstacles to healthy eating and activity and identify their own patterns of behaviour, and through carefully facilitated discussion within the group they are helped to develop new, personal strategies to overcome them.

Tailor programmes to support the needs of different groups

Slimming World groups are held within the heart of local communities, at a variety of times and different days of the week. Our flexible, non-prescriptive approach allows us to support the needs of different population groups. Our programme has been demonstrated to be equally effective for men, people with particular medical conditions and with higher starting BMIs, for example. We also provide tailored support and advice for groups including pregnant and breastfeeding women, families and members with medical conditions and food intolerances.

Adopt a respectful, non-judgemental approach

Genuine compassion and care is fundamental to our approach. Our support is based on the deep understanding of the complexities of weight, including the self-criticism, guilt and shame people can feel and the impact this can have on overall self-esteem and wellbeing. For many people, successful long-term weight loss can only be achieved by addressing these deeper emotional feelings and this support is only effective when it's delivered with genuine warmth, compassion, empathy, respect and understanding.

about SlimmingWorld

Founded in 1969, Slimming World is the UK's most advanced and effective weight management organisation. With thousands of weekly groups held across the UK and Ireland, we influence millions of people each year to eat more healthily and adopt a more active lifestyle.

1969

Margaret Miles-Bramwell OBE held the first Slimming World group in Alfreton



1988

We opened our 1,000th group. Just eight years later, our 5,000th group opened

1997

Our charitable foundation SMILES (Slimmers Making it a Little Easier for Someone) launched, which has since raised more than **£30 million** for charities including the NSPCC, Cancer Research UK and The Alzheimer's Society

We launched our first website

1998

Slimming World Magazine was launched and became the UK's top weight loss title within a year



2001

We pioneered the first NHS weight management referral scheme – still thriving to this day

2003

We launched our unique activity support programme (more on page 15)

2004

We launched LifelineOnline, our group members' website, and just months later, our digital service, Slimming World Online

2006

Family Affair, our approach to help families make healthy lifestyle changes together launched (more on page 18)



2009

Margaret Miles-Bramwell received the OBE for services to the community in Derbyshire and to the field of weight management

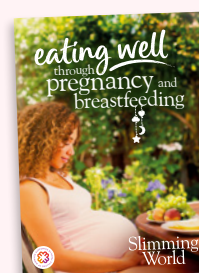
Our first groups opened in the Republic of Ireland

2010

Margaret collected her Honorary Master's Degree from the University of Derby in recognition of Slimming World's success in helping millions of people to lead healthier, happier lives

2012

We formalised our partnership with The Royal College of Midwives, who work with Slimming World to raise awareness of the importance of healthy weight management in pregnancy to improve the health of women and their babies (more on page 19)



2013

Our 10,000th group opened

Our in-house research team presented the world's largest ever data set on weight loss success (1.3 million members) at the European Congress on Obesity

2015

We launched Slimming World's Free Food meal range with Iceland, which is now the UK's top frozen food range

2018

Our Slim for Life programme launched to help target members maintain their new healthy weight – for good



2024

We launched Slimming World Kitchen – our super convenient recipe boxes delivered to your door

2025

Our beloved founder Margaret Miles-Bramwell died

2026

We celebrate 25 years of Slimming World on Referral, our weight management referral scheme (more on page 22)

our multi-component approach

Slimming World integrates three key principles to help people adopt a healthier lifestyle:

- 1 A warm, empowering **support system** in a group-based setting which supports members and facilitates behaviour change around eating and activity habits.
- 2 A satisfying eating plan – **Food Optimising** – which promotes healthy eating patterns for life.
- 3 An **active lifestyle programme** to help members increase physical activity levels at their own pace.

Our programme is a behaviour change programme. We create an environment that makes it easier for people to make healthy choices and changes, and we support them to make those changes. Unconditional, caring support is the key.



our online service

As an alternative to our group service, Slimming World also provides evidence-based weight management support through a convenient online programme. This programme is based on the same principles and philosophy as our groups, delivered via the Slimming World website and app. Tools to support members include an online community, virtual live events, goal setting and weighing-in functionalities, a planner to encourage members to think ahead, physical activity videos and a toolkit that helps members develop strategies and self-regulatory skills to overcome any challenges.

Better Health partnership

Slimming World partnered with Public Health England in their 'Better Health' campaign, with over 27,000 individuals joining Slimming World's online programme using the offer between July and December 2020. Over three months, participants achieved an average weight loss of 3%. High engagers, who recorded nine or more weights over the time period, showed even greater weight loss of 4.7%. Further analysis found the online programme helped participants to achieve weight loss regardless of their starting BMI or level of deprivation.²



group support to facilitate behaviour change

Unique to Slimming World is powerful group support, skillfully designed to meet the needs of members. With the guarantee of confidentiality, compassion, empathy and empowering adult-to-adult guidance, members make step-by-step changes to their diet and activity levels.

Individual groups very much reflect the needs of their particular community. Slimming World Consultants are themselves members of the local community and facilitate group discussion and the sharing of ideas relevant to the local population, the group demographic and individual circumstances, eg financial constraints or cultural preferences.

Groups are offered across a range of days and at different times of day, and are usually held in easily accessible venues such as church and school halls, community centres and social clubs (please see page 20 for more details about how Slimming World is accessible to all). This encourages a broad-based membership, including those people traditionally considered 'hard to reach' by health programmes. Our data shows Slimming World's membership comes from across all socioeconomic backgrounds, demonstrating that deprivation is not a major barrier to attendance.

the power of social connection

Studies have shown that being part of an encouraging group can boost the chances of achieving weight loss goals. That's why so many Slimming World members have achieved their dream weight with the support of their warm and friendly group.

In a survey involving over 1,100 members, 74% of people who joined a Slimming World group said they felt more confident and self-assured as a result. They made new friends (73%), felt more connected (68%) and 93% felt they were more committed to their weight loss.

More than 9 in 10 Slimming World members surveyed said feeling a sense of belonging and connectedness to others and feeling valued and cared for has been important to them in trying to and successfully losing weight over the past two years.



what happens in a Slimming World group?

As soon as a member walks through the doors of any Slimming World group, they can be assured of a warm welcome from their Consultant and fellow members – a group of really friendly people all at various stages of their weight loss journey.

Before they decide whether to join, their Consultant will explain Slimming World's programme and they'll be invited to observe a group session – and join in if they wish. If they decide to join, they'll be weighed and enrolled by the Consultant at the end of the group.

Our group support system combines individual attention and group participation in a carefully structured forum. Group discussions range from practical sharing of tips and ideas to a deeper understanding of each individual's danger zones and slimming pitfalls. On a practical level, there is strong emphasis on sharing favourite recipe ideas and discussing local shops' special offers on healthy foods. There is also a focus on basic cooking skills rather than reliance on convenience foods, and general cooking tips are shared. Our advice and literature take cost, personal preferences, cooking ability and time constraints into consideration.

For those in need of a deeper level of support, our Consultants have a number of methods and tools to help members become aware of individual obstacles and barriers to change, including the inevitable dips in their personal motivation and commitment. Through carefully facilitated discussion, members are supported to develop personal strategies to overcome them.

All sessions last around one hour, with additional support provided between groups in the form of a series of 'lifelines':

- personal support as needed from the Consultant
- support from other members in the group, for example, in the group's private Facebook page, or direct messages between 'buddies'
- free online support and resources on the Slimming World member website and app
- *Slimming World Magazine* and recipe books.

first-class training first-class service

- All Slimming World Consultants have been successful members themselves. They are carefully selected to ensure they have the necessary qualities to empathise, empower and support people in managing their weight.
- Slimming World has a dedicated training team, supported by a team of registered nutritionists and dietitians, which delivers tailored training in the dietary aspects of weight loss, facilitating behaviour change and the importance of physical activity.
- Ongoing training is provided for all Consultants. There is also a strong management structure to ensure that the quality of groups is maintained; this is monitored by regular development visits and weekly support from a manager. Measures of success include weight losses, number of members achieving their target weight and member retention.

“*Slimming World groups have the expertise to help in behaviour change. They are another brick in the wall of social support necessary to tackle obesity in the UK*”

Andrew Hill, Professor of Medical Psychology School of Medicine, Leeds University

our research

An audit of 1.1 million Slimming World group members³ found that in their first three months, Slimming World members, on average:

- **lost 5% of their body weight**
- **reduced their BMI by 1.6kg/m²**

Furthermore, those members who attended at least 75% of possible sessions on average:

- **lost 7kg or 7.7% of their body weight**

The data also highlights how members joining with higher BMIs lose slightly more weight resulting in similar percent weight loss across all BMI groups, indicating that our programme is as effective for those with high BMIs as it is for those who are moderately overweight.

In the longer term, data from members attending at least 75% of possible sessions in the first year shows how these members on average:

- **lost 13.8kg or 14.1% of their body weight**
- **reduced their BMI by 5.1kg/m²**

individual motivation and *group support*

Slimming World's unique group support system is a complex process of individual support in a powerfully motivating group setting, made simple for group members. It avoids any criticism, control or judgement to help individuals overcome their own personal barriers to change and to avoid relapse.

Rooted in the psychology of people living with overweight, our support system is designed to increase the confidence and self-esteem of our members, while equipping them with tools to develop lasting self-determined behaviour change.

Genuine compassion and care is fundamental to our approach. Our support is based on the deep understanding of the complexities of weight, including the self-criticism, guilt and shame people can feel and the impact this can have on overall self-esteem and wellbeing. For many people, successful long-term weight loss can

only be achieved by addressing these deeper emotional feelings and this support is only effective when it is delivered with genuine warmth, compassion, empathy, respect and understanding.

During the group, Consultants guide members through the phases of commitment to change: through psychological commitment and behavioural commitment and reinforce these consistently until behaviour becomes intrinsic, ie it has become important to them and they are no longer dependent on reward or praise.



Each week, members receive:

- 1 Praise and a positive spotlight if they've lost weight, achieved a weight loss or activity award or reached their target weight. Members who've maintained their target weight are made to feel special and acknowledged, and are a great example to the rest of the group of how weight loss is sustainable.
- 2 A knowledge-packed, uplifting learning and sharing group discussion to feel inspired, motivated and supported, on an individual level where needed.

Members adapt the discussion to make it relevant for their situation and use it to help them form their own plan.

- 3 A positive, confidence-building conclusion, so that they leave group with an individual plan for the week ahead, to overcome any barriers, decide on mindset and behaviour changes, form new habits and achieve their goals.

Beyond the group input, Consultants provide a deeper level of support as and when needed with a Motivational Toolkit including food diaries, 'for and against' evaluations, self-monitoring of emotions and visualisation techniques. This helps to address personal motivation and commitment to change depending on the individual member's circumstances.

case study

With the support of her group, target member Kelly lost 60kg (more than 9st).

“Before Slimming World, my weight – and love of takeaways – was taking a serious toll on my health. I was breathless, wheezing and struggling to climb stairs. When I joined my group, the support was incredible. I learned how to create healthy versions of the dishes I love, like my mum's Jamaican jerk chicken, rice and peas – swapping butter and full-fat coconut milk for lighter alternatives and making my own marinades. Slimming World's Slim for Life programme has helped me make the transition from losing weight to maintaining, and I'm determined that, this time, the weight has gone for good. My breathlessness has completely gone, and I feel confident, energetic and able to enjoy life again.”



Kelly before



rewarding changes and celebrating success

- Members' weights are kept **confidential**.
- Members choose their own **Personal Achievement Targets** for weight loss – both short term and long term – when, and if, they feel ready to do so.
- Members are initially encouraged to focus on losing and maintaining a **10% loss** of body weight, highlighting the health benefits of modest amounts of weight loss.
- Members are supported in **maintaining their weight loss** by the offer of free lifetime membership when personal targets are reached, supported by a weight loss maintenance plan, *Slim for Life*. Based on Slimming World's healthy eating plan, *Slim for Life* has slightly loosened guidelines to support members in holding onto the new patterns and habits they've formed, while re-balancing their calorie intake to one that shifts from them losing weight to sustaining their weight.
- Goal setting and rewarding success is vital. Each weight loss and activity goal achieved is celebrated – helping members stay motivated, and breaking their overall goal (which can seem unattainable) into mini targets, rewarding changes in behaviour.
- Every achievement is recognised and praised by the group, including new thinking and new decisions. Members who have not lost weight get support within the group setting by sharing and learning from people who have gone through similar situations and by receiving praise for their continued commitment.



guided self-discovery

Our support system combines individual attention and group participation in a forum where members can discuss their experiences, identify their own patterns of behaviour and, with support from their group Consultant and each other, discover new ways of overcoming barriers to change.

It's tailored to meet the needs of individuals, based on the recognition that everyone is different. Their psychological commitment to change has been shaped by a complex variety of individual factors including weight, body shape, lifestyle, dieting history, opinions on food, habits, income, family background and personality, especially the self belief that they're able to make the changes needed.

For some people, perhaps those who don't have very much weight to lose, the peer support and group discussion around food and the sharing of practical advice on healthy eating may be just the support they need to switch to a healthier way of life. For those who have more deep-seated challenges around food, more deeply ingrained patterns of self sabotage and low self-esteem, a deeper level of motivational support is needed and given.

Based on the process of behaviour change and using techniques such as motivational interviewing,

Slimming World Consultants understand each member's individual motivators and personal goals. With gentle guidance members embark on a process of guided self-discovery, they become aware of their own individual obstacles to healthy eating and activity and develop personal strategies to overcome them. Public recognition and unconditional support while they work through this process reinforce their desire to change. Consultants are trained to remain highly attentive, responding to the member's body language, tone of voice and subtle self-criticism to ensure they set realistic goals and identify changes they can commit to.

Slimming World's support system is unique. It enables the Consultant to facilitate long-term behaviour change from a genuinely caring and empathetic position, without judgement, criticism or desire to control.



a healthy, satisfying eating plan

Food Optimising is Slimming World's healthy eating plan. Based on the principles of energy density and satiety, Food Optimising empowers members to make healthier food choices, satisfy their appetites and lose weight – without calorie counting or obsessive weighing and measuring.

Food Optimising is easy to follow, focusing on three main components:

- 1** The concept of **Free Foods** promotes consumption of plenty of **low energy dense** and **highly satiating** foods, eg pasta, grains, fish, lean meat, poultry, eggs, plant-based proteins, vegetables and fruit, which can be eaten without restriction. Members are encouraged to eat these foods to satisfy their appetite while **reducing overall energy intake**. With Free Foods members don't have to monitor every mouthful – so commitment is easy to establish and sustain.
- 2** **Healthy Extras** help provide a good overall balance of nutrients in addition to those obtained from Free Foods, with particular emphasis on foods rich in calcium, fibre and healthy fats, eg milk, cheese, high-fibre cereals, wholemeal bread, nuts, seeds and avocado.
- 3** **Swips** (from Slimming World's Individual Picks) are the way members can enjoy the foods that many diets ban – without a shred of guilt! Counting Swips helps members naturally limit consumption of saturated fats, added sugar and alcohol, ie those foods or drinks with a high energy density and poor ability to satisfy hunger.

The **synergy** between **Free Foods**, **Healthy Extras** and **Swips** makes Food Optimising effective and easy to live with **long term**.



the science behind Food Optimising

Research has shown that the nature and composition of the foods we eat, dietary macronutrients and energy density, impact on our sense of satisfaction and fullness (satiety)⁴. Encouraging a higher intake of more satiating foods will limit energy intake and result in weight loss. Slimming World has been actively involved in this field of research and, along with the Scottish Office, sponsored research conducted by Professor James Stubbs at the Rowett Research Institute. There is now a robust evidence base which shows that foods higher in protein and carbohydrates are far more satiating than foods rich in fat.^{5,6}

Research shows that people feel full due to the amount of food they eat, not the number of calories they take in. Choosing low energy dense foods can increase the volume of food eaten, while reducing energy intake, and thus satisfying appetite.⁷

In a satiety study led by the University of Leeds and published in the Journal of Nutrition, they found that participants who consumed low energy dense meals (based on Slimming World's recipes) felt significantly more full and less hungry than those eating high energy dense meals, despite consuming the same number of calories. Also, those who followed a plan based around Slimming World meals for 14 weeks, lost

significantly more weight than those calorie-counting over the same time period (6.2% body weight compared to 3.8%). Those following the Slimming World plan reported increased feelings of control around their food choices and a greater confidence in their ability to stick to their weight loss plan.⁸

Since its inception in 1969, Food Optimising has always successfully embraced the scientific principles of appetite regulation and energy density in a practical way to regulate energy intake, allowing members to eat unlimited amounts of highly satisfying foods, which will naturally help limit calorie intake without the chore of counting or feeling deprived.



“Food Optimising incorporates scientific understanding of how foods affect our appetite and translates these principles into a way of eating that is practical for use in today's world, so members can lose weight without restriction or deprivation.”

**James Stubbs, Professor of Appetite Control
and Energy Balance, University of Leeds**



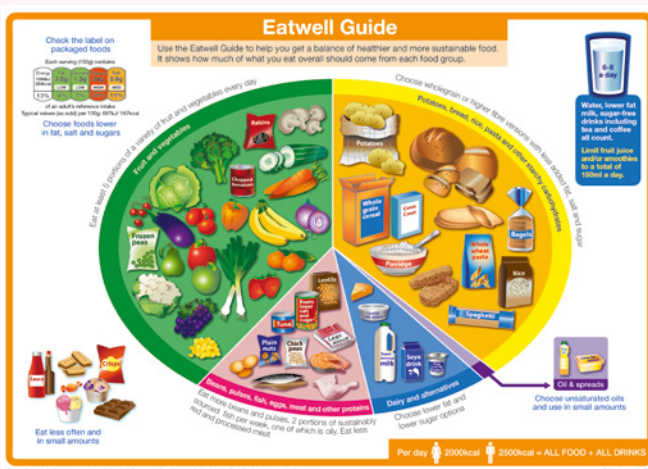
a *balanced* approach

Through the structure of Free Foods, Healthy Extras and Swips, Food Optimising provides a flexible and practical weight loss plan while also encouraging a balanced approach in line with current healthy eating guidelines.

Food Optimising promotes a reduction in fat, particularly saturated fat, and the inclusion of at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day, alongside starchy carbohydrates and lean protein-rich foods to satisfy the appetite. Measured portions of fibre, healthy fat and calcium-rich foods are included on a daily basis.

All major food groups are encouraged in line with the Eatwell Guide and health notes guide members in following current Government recommendations on healthy eating.

Around 88% of the Eatwell Guide is made up of a combination of fruit and vegetables, starchy carbohydrates like rice, pasta and potatoes, and lean meat, fish and pulses – all of which are Free Foods within Food Optimising. A smaller section of the daily guide is for milk and dairy. Food Optimising classifies milk and cheese as Healthy Extras, and encourages those following the plan to enjoy daily measured portions as they are good for overall health. The smallest purple section and those foods outside of the main image are foods that are high in fat and/or sugar – these are Slimming World's controlled Swips.



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh Government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland. Available at nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx



our research

Various research, including that conducted by the British Nutrition Foundation^{9, 10}, has found that Slimming World members consume a diet that more closely meets UK dietary guidelines than the average UK adult. On average, members:

- eat more fibre than the general population and are more likely to meet the recommended daily intake
- consume less sugar, fat and saturated fat than the general population
- have less salt than the general population (in line with the recommendation of no more than 6g/day)
- eat more oily fish than the general population
- cook from scratch more often since joining and more frequently than the general population
- now have takeaways/fast food less often
- reduce their units of alcohol soon after joining and meet the recommended guidelines of <14 units of alcohol per week.

realistic and flexible Food Optimising

- ✓ takes into account individual needs and preferences
- ✓ adapts to all lifestyles, cultures and budgets, and is suitable for all the family
- ✓ encourages members to feel free and relaxed about food, eliminating the distress caused by feelings of guilt, hunger, deprivation and loss of control
- ✓ enables members to take control of their own health and lifestyle for the long term
- ✓ doesn't ban foods or food groups
- ✓ doesn't use expensive or specialist 'diet' products.

supporting an active lifestyle

Slimming World's active lifestyle programme complements our Food Optimising healthy eating plan by helping members improve their overall health and wellbeing while aiding long-term weight management.

The programme was developed in collaboration with Ken Fox, Emeritus Professor of Exercise and Health Sciences, University of Bristol. It uses well-established psychological and scientific principles of behaviour change to help members find their own personal, enjoyable and sustainable ways of gradually increasing activity so that it becomes a regular part of their daily routine.

The unique programme is in line with Government recommendations, encouraging members to build up to 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity across the week, and is suitable for everyone regardless of weight or fitness level.

Members are encouraged to engage with a range of different types of activity, from our 5 active habits, which aim to support overall health:

- 1. reduce sedentary time**
- 2. everyday movement**
- 3. balance and flexibility**
- 4. moderate cardio activity**
- 5. strength**

They highlight the importance of a range of different types of physical activity, and help members to find active habits that they enjoy and that work within their own lifestyles.

The route through the programme is based on the Commitment Model, with the understanding that members bring with them a whole host of individual factors, both psychological and physical, that may influence present and future exercise behaviours.

Within the group – and through the literature, website and app tools and features, *Slimming World Magazine* articles and more – members are supported to:

- ✓ **overturn misconceptions**
- ✓ **build knowledge**
- ✓ **understand the major physical and mental health benefits**
- ✓ **build confidence to get started**
- ✓ **set goals**
- ✓ **track their progress**
- ✓ **identify and avoid (or develop strategies to overcome danger areas and barriers)**

To create the deeply rooted routines and patterns that indicate an intrinsically active lifestyle.

“ Slimming World has taken the ‘threat’ out of activity and devised a programme that can only have a very positive impact on the health, fitness and weight of members. This approach addresses psychological, then behavioural, and ultimately intrinsic commitment to activity. ”

Ken Fox, Emeritus Professor of Exercise and Health Sciences, University of Bristol



steps to *success*

In group, members are encouraged to work towards awards, and record their actions on a FITT log (measuring Frequency, Intensity, Time and the Type of activity, based on the 5 active habits mentioned above).

The power of group sharing and support is used to inspire and encourage members to move from a sedentary to an active lifestyle, no matter where their starting point.

Discussing activity in group helps address concerns and worries that members may have. It empowers them to become more active and experience the benefits of moving more to their physical, as well as mental and emotional, health and wellbeing.

stage-by-stage encouragement and rewards

Slimming World's active lifestyle programme enables members to build their activity levels at their own pace and rewards the incremental introduction of daily exercise.

- 1 First, aim to do a bit more than you usually do – even if it's just a few minutes a day – and then build new active habits into your day, like taking the stairs instead of the lift. **Celebrate getting going with your Magic Mover award!**
- 2 Increase your activity levels in small, steady steps you can build on over time. For the very best benefits, introduce some strength-building activity as soon as you feel able to.
- 3 Frequency is key! 10 minutes a day for 3 or more days of the week is much better than doing it all on one day.

Bronze award

- 4 **45 minutes** of moderate intensity activity each week, in bursts of **at least 5 minutes**, spread **over 3 or more days, for 4 weeks**. For the biggest long-term benefits, include at least **one strength-building session** each week.
- 5 Make it a habit before moving on.
- 6 When you're comfortable with this and it's become part of your routine, gradually increase the amount you do each day.

Silver award

- 7 **90 minutes** of moderate intensity activity each week, in bursts of **at least 10 minutes**, spread **over 3 or more days, for 4 weeks**. For the biggest long-term benefits, include **two strength-building sessions** each week.
- 8 Get used to fitting this into your routine before you increase the amount you do.

Gold award

- 9 **150 minutes** of moderate intensity activity each week, in bursts of **at least 10 minutes**, spread **over 5 or more days, for 8 weeks**. Include **strength-building sessions on at least two days** each week.

Platinum award

- 10 When Gold level activity is an intrinsic part of your life! Add vigorous activities like cycling or running (if you're not already) to raise your fitness level further.



encouraging behaviour *change*

Slimming World's active lifestyle programme helps facilitate behaviour change towards becoming more active by:

- ✓ taking the threat out of activity by removing psychological barriers and redefining what counts as activity
- ✓ building confidence and expertise
- ✓ motivating members to commit to a plan
- ✓ providing ideas and solutions to help members increase activity levels
- ✓ developing personal 'foot out of the door' strategies
- ✓ supporting members to turn new skills into a routine
- ✓ celebrating when members reach new milestones
- ✓ continuing to support members until active living becomes a lifestyle

case study

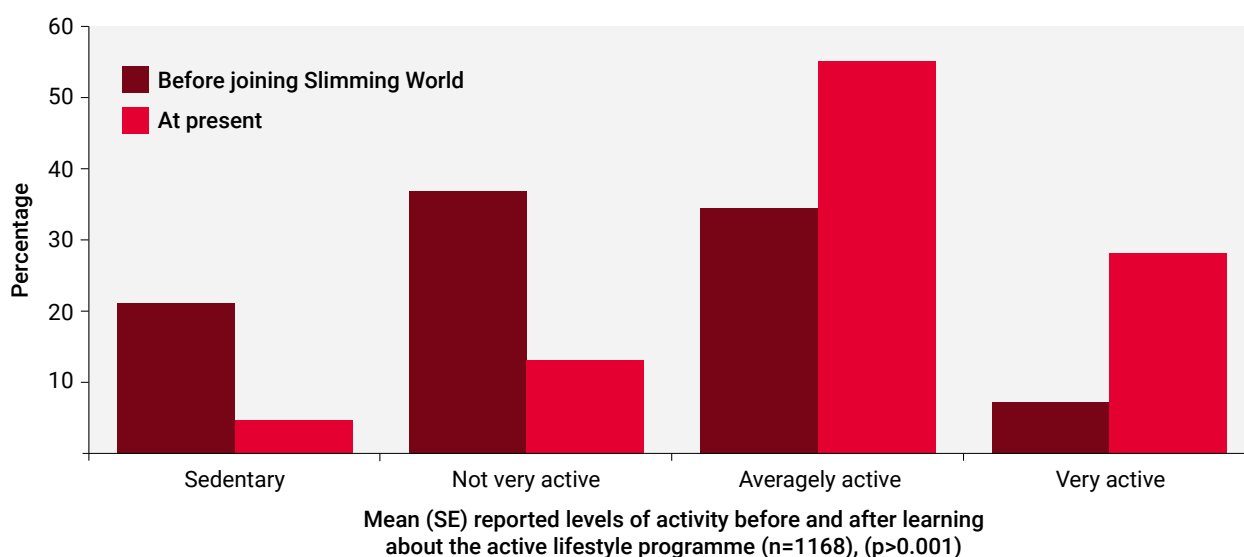
Dan lost 44kg (almost 7st) with support from his group in Swindon.

“ I was living a sedentary lifestyle and my weight steadily rose over the years. After joining Slimming World, I was straight on the case with Food Optimising and I continued to build up my activity. In group, I soaked up all the ideas and knowledge, helping me build new, healthy, active habits. My clothes are looser, I've rekindled my love of climbing and I've lost 10 inches off my waist. I have so much more energy and my self-esteem has soared! ”



our research

The effect of Slimming World's active lifestyle programme on members



Members report a number of benefits from participation in activity such as having more energy (37% of respondents), enjoying exercise now (33%), improved shape and posture (31%), being more mobile in daily life (29%), improved mood (25%), being calmer and less stressed (25%) and being able to sleep better (22%).¹¹ Further research shows members increase the time spent active and this is maintained over time.¹²

suitable for everyone

Because Food Optimising is practical, flexible and based on healthy everyday foods, it's suitable for people from all cultural and economic backgrounds, people who have disabilities, pregnant women and breastfeeding mums, and people with health conditions such as diabetes.

family affair

Family influence is a key factor in children's eating habits and exercise routines. We encourage the whole family to make healthy lifestyle changes and we help parents to support their children in making these changes too.

We have resources for parents and guardians to help them in helping their children to make healthier lifestyle choices. The Family Affair booklet complements all the ideas, shared experiences and support members receive each week, and a host of member resources available online tackles some of the trickier topics around families and children, weight and activity for children of all ages.



pregnancy and post-natal support

Slimming World is the only national weight management organisation in the UK to provide healthy lifestyle support to pregnant and breastfeeding members. Our aim is not to encourage weight loss or dieting during pregnancy but to support members to eat a healthy diet and prevent excess weight gain.

We worked in collaboration with The Royal College of Midwives to develop our policy on the best way to support our members during pregnancy. The RCM is pleased that Slimming World is able to offer this support, and importantly, to help women avoid excess weight gain, which can result in an increased chance of problems during pregnancy and birth. We work closely with The RCM, as Alliance partners, to continue to raise awareness of the best kind of weight management in pregnancy, ultimately to improve the health of women and their babies.

Slimming World encourages and helps women to lose weight before conceiving, supports members in eating healthily and remaining physically active during their pregnancy and encourages mothers to breastfeed and manage weight healthily following birth.

During a member's pregnancy our support focuses on healthy lifestyle behaviours rather than weight loss. Food Optimising enables members to follow a healthy, balanced diet without calorie restriction, and our active lifestyle programme encourages and supports members in finding their own personal and enjoyable way of building regular physical activity into daily life.

Women are best advised by their health care team and are required to let their midwife know they're attending group while they're pregnant. Slimming World does not advise on weight change during a member's pregnancy but will support the member in following a healthy lifestyle and achieving any goals or recommendations suggested by their health care team.

Slimming World recommends breastfeeding mums consume a varied, healthy diet to supply all the extra nutrients needed. We advise that they make additional choices from the Healthy Extras section and enjoy Free Foods which are rich in calcium rather than increasing their intake of high fat/sugary foods to supply the additional energy and nutrient needs.

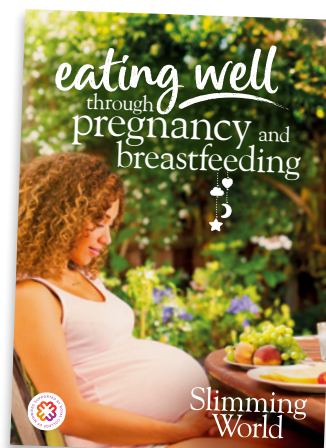
Slimming World and The RCM have worked together to develop a resource full of advice and health tips for women pre-natally, during pregnancy and post-natally. The website, developed in partnership, provides clear information to improve the health of women and to help them pass on healthy habits to their families. Visit slimmingworld.co.uk/mums to find out more.



our research

Women who had a BMI over 30 during pregnancy, or who had excess gestational weight gain, and attended Slimming World during and after their pregnancy, were more likely to have babies born in the healthy weight range, have improved breastfeeding rates and had healthier diets at 12 months post-natally.¹³ Additional research shows that women who attended Slimming World post-natally had greater weight loss at six and 12 months compared to women offered 'standard care'.¹⁴

A booklet detailing the current recommendations for healthy eating and food safety during pregnancy and explaining Food Optimising while breastfeeding is available free of charge to members in group.



making our support accessible

Ensuring our groups are accessible to everybody is fundamental. We truly care about giving every member whatever help they need to lose weight and live a healthier life.

We know that members who have disabilities may need extra support to fully join and take part in our groups and we currently provide a range of materials to help them do this. We have worked with a number of specialist advice groups including Action on Hearing Loss and the RNIB to explore whether there's more we can do.

For members who are blind or partially sighted:

- An accessible version of *Essentially Slimming World* – our members' handbook – is available for free through our *book reader* app
- Accessible versions of all our recipe books can be bought, which are then 'read out' using *Slimming World's book reader* app
- Large print, audio CD or braille versions of the New Member Pack and *Slim for Life* target member book are available free of charge
- Audio CD and braille versions of some recipe books are also available (for the standard book price)
- We're continually working to increase the accessibility and usability of our websites. The Slimming World website can be used with a screen reader, screen magnifier or other access technology. It can be viewed on different screen sizes and the size of the text can be changed

For members who are deaf or hard of hearing:

- A New Member Talk video is available on the member website, with subtitles and a full transcript

- Some venues have audio loops, to enable hearing-aid wearers to hear better
- Some Slimming World groups have linked with local charities and arranged for a sign language interpreter to come to group and sign for members

For members who have a learning disability:

- A package of 'easy read' materials which use large text, short sentences, plenty of pictures and a simple layout. They include:
 - 'Your Slimming World success starts here – an easy read guide for members and their supporters' (including guidance for carers)
 - an A3 poster guide to Food Optimising
 - A4 copies of food diaries and FITT logs, with more space to write/draw



For non-English-speaking members:

- To help improve access to our group support, non-English-speaking members are welcome to bring along a translator if they feel this would be beneficial.

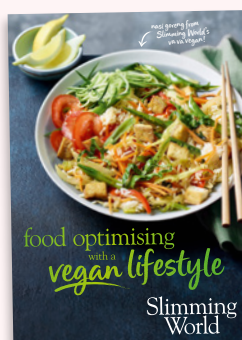
A successful partnership with Berkshire East primary care trust first showed Slimming World is effective for people with learning disabilities¹⁵. In 2018 Slimming World developed, in collaboration with the University of Sheffield, 'Easy Read' resources for people with a learning disability or difficulty¹⁶. The suite of resources includes an Easy Read version of our New Member Pack and adapted food diaries. Designed using Department of Health Easy Read guidelines, they feature large text on a plain background with lots of clear visuals. Anyone with learning difficulties or disabilities who wishes to attend a Slimming World group is welcome to bring along a carer free of charge for additional help and support.

individual dietary needs

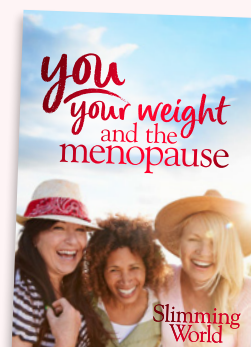
Food Optimising caters for members with special dietary requirements or conditions affected by diet, including diabetes, coeliac disease, lactose intolerance and IBS.

The generosity and flexibility of Food Optimising, along with its focus on basic, everyday foods, means that it's suitable for practically every dietary requirement or preference.

Consultants and members have access to a variety of health factsheets to help them incorporate their dietary needs into Food Optimising, including support for members following a vegetarian or vegan diet, with food allergies and intolerances and support for those with gut or digestive disorders.



We also have additional resources for members going through the menopause, to support them to reach their nutrient recommendations while following Food Optimising, and achieving their weight loss goals.



diabetes and our research

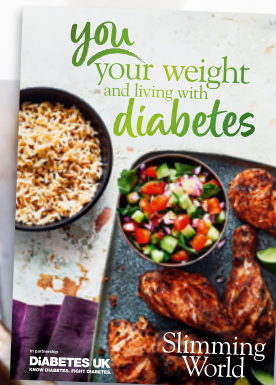
Slimming World's healthy eating plan, Food Optimising, is easily tailored to suit the individual dietary needs for those living with all types of diabetes. Members living with diabetes are advised to follow the recommendations given by their diabetes health care team and supported to incorporate their individual advice into the plan. Following our diabetes policy, members are provided with a diabetes member booklet 'You, your weight and living with diabetes'. We also have a range of online resources available to members, including an example low carbohydrate eating plan and tips on recipe swaps.

Research has found that members of Slimming World living with type 2 diabetes significantly reduce their weight, improve their HbA1c levels and that improvements are correlated to weight loss.^{17, 18}

A mixed-methods study evaluated the impact of Slimming World on weight, glycaemic control and mental-health related quality of life in adults living with type 1 and type 2 diabetes.¹⁹ This evaluation found that Slimming World support was linked to reduced weight and Body Mass Index in adults living with type 1 and type 2 diabetes who had either self-referred or been recommended by a health care professional, to attend the weekly community-based group sessions or the digital programme.

This study reported that:

- 62.3% of study participants, members of Slimming World, achieved a weight loss $\geq 10\%$ and were 7.3 times more likely to achieve a HbA1c level of $\leq 48\text{mmol/mol}$ compared to those achieving smaller weight losses
- members referred by a health care professional reported greater improvements
- 33.9% of those with type 2 diabetes reported their diabetes had gone into remission following the lifestyle changes made through membership at Slimming World. This increased to over 50% in those achieving $\geq 10\%$ weight loss
- 80% of members reported an improved quality of life
- 88% of those living with type 1 diabetes reported improvements in their blood glucose levels.



Slimming World on Referral... a powerful practical *partnership*

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has recognised the effectiveness of Slimming World's approach. For many years we've worked in partnership with the NHS, local authorities and workplaces to provide evidence-based, cost-effective weight loss support enabling health professionals to refer patients to a local Slimming World group for weekly weight management support, at no cost to the referral member.

Slimming World pioneered this NHS partnership programme with Greater and Central Derby Primary Care Trusts in 2001.

The initial research study investigated the feasibility, practicalities and cost-effectiveness of referring patients from Primary Care into Slimming World groups. As well as helping patients lose weight (average weight loss of those completing 12 weeks was 6.4%), and significant improvements in mental wellbeing were reported after 12 weeks. Over 70% of those completing the free 12 weeks went on to pay for their own continued membership (average weight loss in those completing 24 weeks was 11.3%).²⁰

Slimming World on Referral is now an established component of obesity care pathways in many areas of the UK. The majority of these are commissioned by Local Authority public health teams, although others are funded by Clinical Commissioning Groups, or individual practices.



how does Slimming World on Referral work?

Slimming World on Referral is a long-established partnership scheme between commissioners and Slimming World, providing people who would like to lose weight with effective, long-lasting, community-based weight management.

Working with us would provide access to 12-week blocks of membership to Slimming World groups for your service users, at no cost to them. In addition, there is so much more subsidised within the cost of the referral programme, including:

- Service user triage, carried out by our specially trained Contact Team. This includes a readiness to change assessment, eligibility check and group selection.
- Post-service evaluation, and longer-term follow-ups where required.
- Overview sessions for referring parties, to give them confidence in the service they're referring into.
- Scheme administration, data collection and regular reporting.
- Review meetings, with your Account Manager, to discuss outcomes and progress.
- After 12 weeks, patients have the option to carry on attending their Slimming World group as self-funding members. However, where appropriate, service users can be offered further 12-week periods of attendance under the referral programme. In this way, provision of subsidised support can be targeted long-term towards people on a lower income, while other patients are able to continue at their own cost.
- Slimming World on Referral service users, like all Slimming World members, are awarded lifetime membership once they reach their personal target weight. They can then continue to meet with their group every week, free of charge, while they remain +/- 3lbs of their target.

our research

A study involving 27,000 patients referred by the NHS to Slimming World²¹ shows:

- 26.9% of patients had a start BMI >40kg/m²
- Patients attended on average 8.8 weekly sessions over the referral period
- Average overall weight loss was 5.6%
- 55.8% completed the programme, attending 10 out of the 12 weeks
- Completers achieved a mean weight loss of 7.5%
- 76.7% of completers lost 5% or more of their body weight
- Non-completers achieved a weight loss of 3.3%



A sample of these patients (n=6143) were also provided with surveys to evaluate their experiences, changes in dietary behaviours and satisfaction of the referral service:

- 83.3% of patients referred to Slimming World reported they planned to continue attending a Slimming World group after completing their referral
- 93.6% reported they felt better about themselves after participating in the referral
- 96.4% reported their Consultant was supportive
- 97.7% of patients reported being satisfied with the service Slimming World provided



Patients also reported many positive changes in dietary behaviours since finishing their referral. These included:

- 58.3% of patients cooking meals from scratch more often
- 67.6% reporting they were meeting the five or more portions of fruits and vegetables recommendation more often
- 66.8% eating fewer processed foods
- 58.9% having fast food and takeaways less often
- 79.1% eating unhealthy snack foods at home and work less often

benefits for you

Support to raise the topic

Slimming World is a recognised and trusted brand, which helps you raise the topic of weight loss with your patients and helps them to feel they're in safe hands.

Achieve your targets

Your targets for weight management can be met through Slimming World on Referral. Health improvement targets encourage an initial 5-10% decrease in body weight in 3-6 months. This is achieved in a significant percentage of patients referred.²¹

Build an audit

Slimming World on Referral provides an evidence base of patient attendance and weight loss. Health practitioners participating in the Slimming World on Referral scheme will receive regular audits free of charge from Slimming World.

Gain time

Slimming World on Referral should help you see less of your patients in every sense. In the long term, the health benefits of weight loss make such a difference in the lives of group members that they should be less frequent visitors to the health service.

Long-term financial benefits

Referred patients benefit from noticeable improvements in health and wellbeing. Many Slimming World members report that they require less medication, including antihypertensive medication and diabetes treatment, and some no longer require any medication at all once they have lost weight successfully. An independent cost effective analysis shows that referral to Slimming World provides value for money against the standards set by NICE.²²

“In Norfolk, the local population have embraced the Slimming World scheme and are supported holistically to manage their weight, physical activity and wellbeing. Our relationship with Slimming World promotes a shared objective to support people with their needs, through strong signposting and awareness of local services. Having the Slimming World scheme in place is important for Norfolk and contributes to community connectiveness.”

Norfolk City Council, which commissions a Slimming World on Referral scheme

next steps

To find out if a funded scheme is available in your area, or to discuss availability and eligibility criteria, please email the Partnerships team on slimmingworld.onreferral@slimmingworld.co.uk.

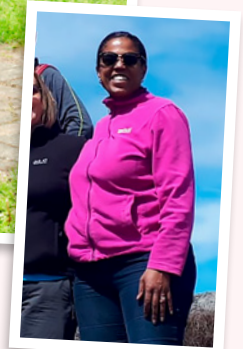
case studies

Michelle lost 18kg (more than 2st) with the support of her local Slimming World group in Warwickshire.

“ I’d made a few attempts to lose weight on my own in the past, but without any real success. I’d been diagnosed with prediabetes, and my doctor offered me a funded 12-week referral to Slimming World. I walked into my local group and the Consultant reassured me that my referral was private and no one would know unless I chose to tell them. When I reached my target weight, the health benefits were huge – prediabetes was no longer a risk and I’m fitter than I’ve been in years. ”



Michelle before →



Kheira lost 47kg (more than 7st) with the support of her Slimming World group, and she’s maintained that weight loss for more than a year.

“ When I joined Slimming World, my health was in crisis. Years of arthritis left me in constant pain, and I was in a cycle of ready meals and exhaustion. I was struggling with sleep apnoea and had recently been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes – putting me at risk of a heart attack. My GP referred me for a fully-funded 12-week Slimming World membership, and it changed everything.

The Food Optimising plan was simple and sustainable, and the support from my group gave me back my confidence. It wasn’t all plain sailing, but my group was always there for me. I’m now at target following the Slim for Life programme, my type 2 diabetes is in remission (something I never thought possible), and I sleep much better. While I still manage my health, I’m no longer hiding from life. ”



Kheira before →



our health and wellbeing policies

Members' health and wellbeing is of great importance to us, and to keep our members safe and sound we have a number of health policies in place:

- **Lowest acceptable target weight** – to prevent members trying to aim for a weight that could be unsafe/unhealthy, we set a lowest possible target weight at a BMI 20.
- **Pregnancy policy** – if a member wishes to continue during their pregnancy we ask them to let their midwife or health care team know and keep them informed throughout. Members' weight changes and food choices are monitored closely with systems in place to signpost to their health care team where needed.
- **Diabetes** – we ask members with diabetes to keep in regular contact with their health care team and follow any personal/specific dietary advice.
- **Eating disorders** – anyone with a history of or current eating disorder should speak to their health care team to ensure it's safe for them to consider joining a weight loss organisation.
- **People who have had weight loss surgery or who take weight loss medications** – are provided with additional guidance to support a healthy, nutritionally-balanced diet alongside the essential wrap around support, like every other member.



Slimming World and weight loss medications

At Slimming World, we know that the key to achieving a long-lasting weight loss result is having the tools and ongoing support to make healthy lifestyle changes that last. We also recognise that the new generation of drugs are an important innovation.

Research has shown that the GLP-1 medications do aid weight loss, but they're not a magic bullet, and they certainly aren't for everyone. Some people aren't medically eligible to take them, and there are many people who don't want to use a weight loss medication.

Deciding to lose weight – whether that's with medication, surgery, a slimming club or any other method – takes courage, determination and commitment, and we're passionate about helping anyone who's struggling with their weight and needs the support, expertise and motivation to make lasting changes to their lifestyle.

People taking weight loss medications are warmly welcomed to our groups – with absolutely no judgement. We ensure they're getting the additional guidance needed to support a healthy, nutritionally-balanced diet and to reduce the risk of losing lean muscle, associated with rapid weight loss through taking GLP-1 medication.

long-term changes are still essential

There's growing acknowledgement that, even with weight loss medications, long-term changes around food, drink and activity are still essential for weight maintenance.

A recent study** from the University of Oxford highlighted that when people stop taking weight loss medication, if they don't maintain a healthy lifestyle, they typically regain some of the weight they lost within a year – with full weight regain expected in under two years.

As the UK's leading weight management organisation, specialising in behaviour change, we're in a unique position to offer ongoing support to people taking these medications, for lasting results.

**West et al, 2026. BMJ

our scientific advisors

Slimming World is delighted to work with specialist advisors including:

Professor James Stubbs Professor of Appetite and Energy Balance School of Psychology, University of Leeds

Professor Ken Fox Emeritus Professor of Exercise and Health Sciences, University of Bristol

Professor Andrew Hill Chartered Psychologist and Professor of Medical Psychology School of Medicine, University of Leeds

Dr Jacquie Lavin, MMed Sci, RNutr Special Advisor on the Science of Weight Management

Slimming World's Nutrition, Health and Research Team

The Slimming World team is led by Carolyn Pallister, registered dietitian with 20 years' experience in weight management. The team includes professionals from a range of scientific backgrounds, including nutrition, dietetics, research, psychology and data analytics. Working together, we ensure that the Slimming World plan develops in line with the latest advances and understanding in nutrition, health and weight.

We have a dedicated research function who drive forward our active research programme. This includes studies carried out in-house, as well as in partnership with university collaborators. We also support externally-led research by providing expertise and insights; access to our members; or referrals for people taking part in the research to our groups or online service.



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scan or click the QR code
for more information

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For further information on Slimming World's research, please visit slimmingworld.co.uk/health where you can view our full **Research Portfolio**.

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