

Obesity Health Alliance

Terms of Reference for Lived Experience Focus Group

The Obesity Health Alliance (OHA) is a policy coalition of over 40 organisations, whose goal is to work together to prevent obesity-related ill-health. We do this by calling on Government to implement evidence based population level policies that help address the wider environmental factors that lead to excess bodyweight.

The Lived Experience Focus Group will consult on the Independent Healthy Weight Strategy which aims to bring together health non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the research community to identify and prioritise a set of interventions that will reduce obesity prevalence across the whole population. The strategy will provide a clear blueprint for action to reduce obesity by setting the agenda for research priorities and providing a framework for the public health community to work collectively to influence Government policy development in the future.

What is the focus group? What will it do?

The focus group is made up of people with lived experience of overweight and obesity and/ or obesity related disease. The aim of the focus group is to:

- Review and feedback on the OHA Independent Healthy Weight Strategy.
 - Provide insight on the impact of living with overweight and obesity and ensure this is reflected in the strategy
 - Provide insight on the framework, vision and direction of the strategy.
 - Provide views on the strategy recommendations and how they may impact people at risk of, or those living with overweight and obesity.
 - Ensure that vision and language are respectful and non-stigmatising to people with overweight and obesity
- The focus group may be required to feedback on other OHA activity at a later stage subject to a review after the initial meetings.

Who can be in the focus group?

The maximum number of participants in this focus group is 12, and the minimum number is 8. As places are limited, we ask potential focus group members to consider carefully whether they can commit to being involved.

How often will focus group members be asked to provide feedback and insight?

The focus group will be asked to provide feedback and insight on the Independent Healthy Weight Strategy, in the form of two meetings.

- The first meeting in mid-2020 will focus on the focus group providing input and insight to the vision, framework and direction of the Independent Healthy Weight Strategy.
- The second meeting in 2021, will focus on gaining insight of the focus group on the policy recommendations that has come out of this work to understand how these may impact people living with obesity.
- We may ask for supplementary feedback outside of these meetings in a variety of formats: via email, via teleconference, or at a face-to-face group meeting. The OHA will cover travel expenses for focus group members.

How will the focus group run?

Once formed, the group, will agree how it wishes to conduct its discussions in a fair and open manner.

The following examples demonstrate the types of questions the focus group might be asked:

- What do you want policy makers to know about what it is like to live with obesity?
- Is the content, language or imagery included in the strategy any way stigmatising to people with overweight and obesity?
- Would a policy recommendation have an impact on you, and if so, what would that impact be?
- In your opinion, how should the OHA reflect the lived experience of overweight and obesity in the strategy?

All associated materials and questions will be shared via email with group members at least 10 days before a meeting or required feedback date. The conversation will be chaired by an independent facilitator with expertise in patient involvement. The conversation will focus on what people affected by overweight and obesity think, not what the OHA thinks.

What will we do with the feedback and insight?

After the meeting, OHA staff will produce notes clearly stating all the feedback provided by the focus group. These notes will be anonymised, and shared with members of the Independent Healthy Weight Strategy 'expert group' to consider in the formation of the strategy.

While we want to hear all our focus group members' opinions, there will be times when even the best of ideas can't be made into a reality. If we can't use a piece of feedback, we will clearly communicate why with the focus group.

For feedback that is used, the focus group will be kept updated on how their feedback has been used, and the impact of it.

Once the strategy is finalised, members of the group will receive copies and might be asked to help with its dissemination, including talking to Government and other stakeholders, if they choose to.

Are there any ground rules for the focus group?

There are no right and wrong answers, and we ask all focus group members to respect the opinions and experiences of other focus group members.

We ask that focus group members let us know if they can't make a meeting. We ask that members are able to use online conferencing software such as Zoom, at least for the first meeting. Instructions for this will be sent out prior to the meeting.

OHA contact: Caroline Cerny, Alliance Lead, caroline.cerny@obesityhealthalliance.org.uk / (0)20 7424 1114