



UK Coalition for People living with Obesity

NEWSLETTER

July 2026



Over the past six months, UKCPO has continued to grow, connect and strengthen the voice of people living with obesity across the UK. From bringing our community together at our National Meeting and expanding peer support, to sharing lived experience at national and international events, it has been an incredibly busy period. Our members remain at the heart of everything we do, helping to shape conversations, challenge stigma and advocate for meaningful change. In this latest newsletter, we look back at just some of the activities, achievements and moments that have brought our community together over the past six months.

Andrew

UKCPO Attends Training Session in Dublin

On Thursday 26th March 2026, we were pleased to be represented at the Irish Coalition of People Living with Obesity (ICPO) Stigma Awareness Evening, marking the launch of their World Obesity Day 2026 campaign.

Helen joined around 50 attendees for an insightful evening featuring expert speakers, including Dr Jean O'Connell, Dr Michael Crotty, Dr Cathy Breen, Dr Fiona Curran, Dr Leona Ryan and Dr Fiona Quigley. The panel highlighted the realities of living with obesity, supported by research on weight stigma and approaches to reducing it.

The event also included powerful personal stories from individuals sharing their lived experiences of stigma, emphasising the need for continued awareness, understanding and change.

A valuable and inspiring evening connecting with others committed to addressing obesity stigma.



**8 Billion
Reasons to Act
on Obesity**

UKCPO National Meeting: Bringing Lived Experience Together

On 7 March 2026, the UK Coalition for People living with Obesity (UKCPO) welcomed more than 70 people to Liverpool for its National Meeting. The event brought together people living with obesity for a day of learning, shared experiences and connection, creating a supportive space where people could speak openly and be heard without judgement.

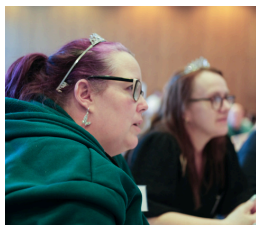
The programme explored issues that matter directly to the UKCPO community. Dr Jennifer James highlighted the value of everyday movement and recognising progress beyond the number on the scales.

Zaher Toumi explored the future of obesity treatment and the importance of personalised, long-term care, while Professor Yitka Graham examined the impact of weight stigma across healthcare and wider society. Powerful patient stories were also shared throughout the day, ensuring lived experience remained

at the heart of every discussion.

In the afternoon, Professor Louisa Ells led an interactive session focused on policy, research and obesity services. Attendees shared their priorities for change, including greater recognition of obesity as a disease, reducing weight stigma, improving access to lifelong care and psychological support, and ensuring people with lived experience are meaningfully involved in research and decision-making.

Beyond the formal programme, the National Meeting demonstrated the importance of community and peer support. New friendships were formed, experiences shared and connections strengthened. For UKCPO, the meeting reinforced a simple but powerful principle: people living with obesity must be at the centre of the conversations and decisions that affect their lives.





UKCPO was proud to be represented at the European Congress on Obesity (ECO 2026) in Istanbul, with Jimmy joining patient advocates from across Europe as part of the ECPO delegation.

Through UKCPO's close collaboration with ECPO, Jimmy attended sessions and supported the ECPO booth, speaking with healthcare professionals, researchers and advocates about people-first language and the importance of involving people living with obesity in meaningful conversations.

Marking his third ECO, Jimmy reflected on the growing recognition of lived experience in obesity advocacy and encouraged other UKCPO members to take opportunities to represent the community at national and international events.

Our collaboration with ECPO continues to help UKCPO members share their voices, build connections and ensure lived experience is heard across Europe.

Membership System

We are continuing to grown on the new UKCPO website alongside our updated membership system. This new platform gives members early access to resources, information, and updates before they are shared more widely. It is an

important step in strengthening how we support people living with obesity, by making trusted information easier to find and by keeping our members informed and connected.. Make sure that you have signed up if you already haven't done.



The United Kingdom Coalition for People Living with Obesity, is an organization dedicated to support people living with obesity in the United Kingdom.

We offer reliable resources, expert advice, and educational materials to help individuals and healthcare professionals better understand obesity and its impact.

5 Obesity Facts

An update from the Leeds Beckett University

Obesity Institute

Academic partner of UKCPO.

Louisa Ells



Firstly, it was such a huge honour and privilege to join UKCPO members at the UKCPO annual meeting in Liverpool back in March. We've been reflecting on what members told us research needs to be doing, so I thought it would be useful to provide a quick update on progress. You asked us, how does obesity affect children, and we are delighted to share some learning from our study examining the NHS complications in excess weight (CEW) clinics (which we have just presented at the European Congress on Obesity). Our findings show that CEW services are providing multi-disciplinary joined up care that is tailored to the needs of the young people and families attending. As a result, they are reaching young people with high levels of medical, neurodevelopmental and psychological need, from a range of different backgrounds. We also found the clinics are successfully supporting young people with their weight management journey, which is resulting in improved quality of life over time. (more information is on: [ECO 2026: New Insights into the Complications of Excess Weight services for Children and Young People — ENHANCE Research Study](#))

We also remain committed and passionate about ensuring the voices of lived experience underpin all the research we, and other researchers, do. As such, we continue to grow our Obesity Voices Hub ([Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement \(PPIE\) Hub | Obesity Institute | Leeds Beckett University](#)), where we have a growing membership of over 300 who are championing 'nothing about us, without us' throughout obesity research in the UK. We have also been supporting some of our truly amazing and inspiring young people and families to share their experiences with members of parliament to help improve the future of weight management support for children and young people.

You also asked us to look into the long term effects of the new weight loss medications, we are therefore developing a growing programme of work to help answer this, which we can share in the next update. But if you'd like to know more or would like to support us in developing this work please get in contact: obesityinstitute@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

In-Person Support Groups

Liverpool Face to Face Support Group

Many thanks to everyone who attends our Liverpool Face to Face support group. It is wonderful to see so many people and spend time together offering peer support in a warm, friendly and welcoming environment. Our Liverpool meeting runs on the 3rd Monday of every month and is facilitated by Jimmy, Helen, Lorna and Ken. There is ample parking available, along with tea and coffee, making it a great opportunity to connect with like minded people, share experiences and support one another.



Save the Date

Monday 20th July 2026
Bridge Chapel, Liverpool
7.00pm–9.00pm

Leeds Face to Face Support Group

Our new Leeds group has been a real success. Kirsty and Phil have done a fantastic job running the group, and it has been fantastic to see another supportive space where like minded people can come together to share experiences in a safe and welcoming space.



Save the Date

Tuesday 28th July 2026
The Villiage Hall, Church Lane Swillington
7.00pm–9.00pm

A very warm welcome to our new Summer student Placement

Yasmin Stamford

Yasmin is currently completing an MSc in Nutrition at Leeds Beckett University, building on a degree in Psychology and a long-standing passion for nutrition and supporting others. This summer Yasmin will be on placement with UKCPO to gain experience and learn more about the positive impact the organisation has on people living with obesity, while contributing my nutrition knowledge to support members and raise awareness of UKCPO's work. Part of what drew Yasmin to UKCPO is its focus on lived experience.



I have a tumultuous relationship with food that I am actively working on, which helps me empathise with the real-world challenges faced by people living with obesity. I hope to learn directly from members about their struggles and how the organisation supports them. My main aims during this placement are to reduce misinformation and challenge weight stigma by promoting body positivity and celebrating health in all its forms rather than focusing on body shape or size. I look forward to contributing to UKCPO's mission and learning from members so I can help challenge stigma, correct misinformation and promote evidence-based conversations about nutrition and health

Look out for Yasmin appearing on our weekly Zoom meetings



Nutrition Corner

It's All About Balance

I have one major rule when it comes to food – no restrictions! A healthy lifestyle is built on balance, not deprivation, and I refuse to cut entire food groups out of my diet. Instead, I follow the 80–20 approach: 80% whole foods that are nutrient-dense and 20% foods you simply enjoy. Whether it's a takeaway or a slice of cake, allowing yourself these foods in moderation is not only realistic, but it's healthier in the long run!

Research consistently shows that the more we restrict certain foods, the more we crave them. Rather than eliminating anything, I focus on reducing foods high in saturated fats, refined sugars and ultra-processed ingredients, while still making space for them when I want them.

Sustainability is the real key to healthy eating, especially for anyone trying to lose weight. Fad diets may work temporarily, but the results rarely last. Highly restrictive diets can increase “food noise”, trigger intense cravings and lead to binge-restrict cycles that feel impossible to escape.

Instead of yo-yo dieting, I encourage people to think about long-term lifestyle change. Prioritise whole foods, build balanced meals and allow yourself the less-nutritious options in smaller portions or less frequently. One of my favourite approaches is: “Have what you want, add what you need.” If you're craving chocolate, have some. But instead of eating a whole bar, try a couple of squares alongside Greek yogurt and berries. You can satisfy the craving for fewer calories and a larger portion of food, whilst also adding fibre and protein, which help keep you fuller for longer.

It is important to know, eating more than you intended is not a failure. You don't need to feel guilty and skip meals or “work off” what you ate. Just return to your usual routine. One day, one weekend or even one week of indulgence will not undo your progress, what matters is the pattern you follow most of the time. Healthy eating is not about perfection. It's about balance and habits you can maintain for life.

‘This is not professional advice these are tips that help me stick to a balanced diet but they may not work for everyone’. Yasmin Stamford

5 EASY WAYS TO INCREASE DAILY MOVEMENT

- 1** Take walking breaks -A few short walks a day can add up to hundreds of steps. This can just be around the house
- 2** Use the stairs: Choose stairs over lifts if possible as one or two flights a day can help with fitness and leg strength
- 3** Park further away in the car park or get off one bus stop earlier.
- 4** Move whilst you wait: Try marching on the spot while the kettle boils- small bursts of movement throughout the day makes a difference..
- 5** Make social movement- Arrange a walk with a family member/ friend: Social activities can make movement more enjoyable.



Announcements

Guest speakers are starting again on our Wednesday night general support Zoom group so keep your eyes peeled on our facebook pages for updates.

You asked and we heard!

We now have a Facebook recipe page. The views, opinions, recipes and advice shared are those of individual members, not UKCPO and should not be considered medical, nutritional or professional advice but is a great way of our community sharing receipts, meals ideas, cooking tips and food inspiration.