

Browne Jacobson advises Office for Life Sciences on £85m programme to tackle obesity

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Browne Jacobson has supported a key unit within the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology in setting up an £85m health innovation programme that will test new ways to support NHS patients living with obesity.

The UK and Ireland law firm advised the Office for Life Sciences (OLS) in establishing the Obesity Pathway Innovation Programme, in collaboration with pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly and Company.

The programme, which also features Innovate UK as a delivery partner, will enable access to holistic weight management care more easily, wherever people live, through new routes like digital platforms, local community-based access and pharmacies.

It aims to make it easier for patients living with obesity to access holistic care to improve their health – easing pressure on the NHS and GPs.

Carly Caton, Partner at Browne Jacobson, and Viney Jhalley, Associate, advised OLS on legal agreements for the programme.

Alex Kynoch, Partner, and Karl Edwards, Senior Associate, provided OLS with subsidy control advice in relation to the government's £50m investment as part of the £85m package. They also supported the department on its interaction with Innovate UK, a non-departmental government body.

Carly said: *"We are proud to have played a role in establishing the Obesity Pathway Innovation Programme, which has exciting potential to bring forward innovative new care pathways for obesity – an issue that costs the NHS £11bn per year."*

"This is part of the government's mission, outlined in the 10-Year Health Plan, to transform the UK healthcare system from a predominantly curative system that prioritises disease treatment to a preventative model, characterised by early interventions."

"Supporting people to live healthier lives is clearly fundamental to this ambition and it's exactly the type of project at the forefront of society's most significant issues that our team wants to drive forward."

The scheme, which forms part of the national Obesity Healthcare Goals Programme, will be open to proposals from healthcare stakeholders across the UK when the funding competition launches on 8 September.

Funding will be provided to applicants that successfully demonstrate they can deliver innovative obesity care models that underpin comprehensive, holistic weight management support. This will include a range of wraparound services and potentially obesity treatments, as clinically appropriate, or support through digital tools.

Eligible patients in participating areas could be able to access innovative services as early as summer 2026.

Will Mullins, Deputy Director in OLS, said: *"This programme represents an exciting opportunity to transform obesity care in the UK."*

"By working collaboratively across the government and with Lilly, we're developing innovative solutions that could help NHS patients access the support they need to manage their weight effectively."

"Browne Jacobson's work to support OLS has helped underpin an exciting industry partnership that stands to drive meaningful improvements in public health."

The Office for Life Sciences sits between the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), and Department for Business and Trade (DBT). Its remit is to drive policy and delivery in the life sciences sector, supporting the government's ambitions on both economic growth and improved healthcare.

Browne Jacobson's health and life sciences practice advises a growing number of organisations that provide products and services such as medical devices, diagnostics, pharmaceuticals, HealthTech and laboratory software.

These range from start-ups to globally-recognised names, including Bionical Solutions, Sygnature Discovery, CARE Fertility, Riverside Medical, Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority.

The firm also advises a number of central government departments, including the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Department of Work and Pensions, Ministry of Justice, Cabinet Office, and Crown Prosecution Service, via the Crown Commercial Service legal services framework.

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