# WeightWatchers faces decline as weight-loss medications rise in popularity



WeightWatchers, a well-established name in the diet and health industry, is facing significant challenges as the demand for weight-loss medications rises sharply. Founded in 1963, the company, now known as WW International, has witnessed a dramatic fall in revenues and share prices amid a growing preference for pharmaceutical solutions over traditional weight-loss programmes.

Recent figures indicate that one in seven individuals in the UK have either used weight-loss injections, such as Wegovy, or know someone who has. The surge in popularity of these drugs has correlated with a decline in WeightWatchers’ financial health, with revenues reported to have decreased by over £79 million to approximately £600 million in 2024. In the last year alone, the company’s share price has plummeted by 90%, indicating deep investor concerns regarding its future viability.

Adding to the company's troubles, Oprah Winfrey, a long-time board member and notable celebrity partner, stepped down, stating her use of weight-loss drugs as a contributing factor. This development further exemplifies the shifting tide in consumer behaviour, as many are increasingly turning to injectable treatments that can regulate appetite and cravings, laying further strain on traditional diet-based approaches.

Compounding these financial woes, WeightWatchers carries approximately £1 billion in loans and bonds set to mature in 2028 and 2029. Speculation surrounding the company’s future has intensified, with reports suggesting that bankruptcy could be on the horizon if they cannot successfully renegotiate their debts. A source noted, “A number of options are being considered, negotiations are ongoing with lenders and bondholders.”

As the market for weight-loss drugs is projected to reach £81.3 billion by 2030, the viability of conventional weight-loss plans is increasingly under scrutiny. Currently, an estimated 500,000 individuals in the UK are reportedly using medications like Wegovy, which have been shown to deliver "amazing results" in managing weight and improving overall health.

In response to the trend, private health insurer Vitality has made moves to include discounted weight-loss treatments, such as Wegovy and Mounjaro, in its health cover plans. This initiative, introduced in February, offers a 20% discount for clients with a BMI over 35, thus allowing access to these treatments typically available only through specialist NHS clinics.

Dr Katie Tryon, chief commercial director at Vitality, highlighted the relation between obesity and workplace productivity, stating, “Over the last 10 years, we have seen obesity increasingly becoming an issue within the working environment.” She noted the potential for medication to be a useful tool for improving health and reducing the burden of obesity-related illnesses, which include conditions such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

This shift in the health landscape indicates a transformation in how obesity and weight management are approached, with traditional companies like WeightWatchers facing an uncertain future amidst the rising efficacy and popularity of weight-loss medications.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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2. <https://www.investing.com/news/transcripts/earnings-call-transcript-ww-international-q3-2024-sees-revenue-decline-93CH-3801991> - This earnings call transcript corroborates the decline in WeightWatchers' revenue and subscriber numbers, emphasizing the growth in clinical subscriptions as a strategic direction for the company.
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