# WeightWatchers faces bankruptcy as weight-loss drugs surge in popularity



WeightWatchers, a prominent figure in the health and diet sector for over 60 years, is reportedly facing significant financial difficulties attributed to the rising popularity of weight-loss medications such as Wegovy. The company, known officially as WW International since 2018, is considering filing for bankruptcy as a means to reorganise its debts and avoid liquidation. Sources have indicated that “a number of options are being considered, negotiations are ongoing with lenders and bondholders.”

Recent statistics from December reveal that approximately one in seven individuals in the UK have either taken weight-loss drugs or know someone who has. This surge in demand for prescription-based treatments has adversely affected companies like WeightWatchers, which has seen its revenues plunge by over £79 million to £600 million in 2024. There has also been a staggering drop in the company’s share price, which has fallen by 90% over the past year.

Adding to WeightWatchers' challenges, Oprah Winfrey, a high-profile board member and celebrity advocate for the brand, stepped down from the board after publicly acknowledging her use of weight-loss medications. At its height, WeightWatchers was a dominant force in the weight management industry, appealing to a wide audience in both the UK and US.

The financial situation for WeightWatchers appears precarious with around £1 billion in loans and bonds maturing in 2028 and 2029. Investment bank Morgan Stanley has projected that the global market for weight-loss drugs could reach a staggering £81.3 billion by 2030, with an estimated 500,000 individuals in the UK currently using such treatments. Drugs like Wegovy, which work by regulating appetite and cravings, are increasingly becoming the first choice for many looking to manage their weight.

In another related development, private health insurer Vitality announced in February its initiative to provide discounted weight-loss treatments for customers with a Body Mass Index (BMI) over 35. Those eligible can benefit from a 20% discount on Wegovy and Mounjaro medications, which are available exclusively through specialist NHS clinics. As the UK’s third-largest health insurer, covering approximately 1.9 million people, Vitality is offering this benefit as part of its health insurance policies, including access to coaching with dieticians to bolster weight loss efforts.

Dr Katie Tryon, chief commercial director at Vitality, noted that the growing issue of obesity in the workplace significantly impacts productivity, recruitment, and retention. She stated, “Over the last 10 years, we have seen obesity increasingly becoming an issue within the working environment. The potential of weight-management medications has become more evident over the past year.” Dr Tryon expressed pride in Vitality being the first UK insurer to offer weight-loss medications as part of their coverage, emphasising the “amazing results” these treatments could yield in combatting obesity-related health issues such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

The introduction of insurance coverage for weight-loss drugs may signal a broader trend among health insurers to include similar benefits as the demand for effective obesity treatments continues to rise among the adult population, nearly 15 million of whom in the UK have a BMI over 30, the official threshold for obesity.

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

## References

* <https://www.gbnews.com/money/weightwatchers-bankrupcy-ozempic-drug-trends> - This URL supports the claim that WeightWatchers is facing financial difficulties due to the rise of weight-loss drugs like Ozempic and is considering bankruptcy. It also mentions Oprah Winfrey's association and transition towards weight-loss medications.
* <https://www.vacourts.gov/courts/scv/rulesofcourt.pdf> - This URL contains procedural rules but does not directly support any claims about WeightWatchers. It provides general legal information related to court proceedings.
* <https://parade.com/news/a-once-popular-weight-loss-program-reportedly-facing-major-financial-trouble> - This article confirms that WeightWatchers is gearing up for bankruptcy due to financial troubles, partly attributed to the popularity of GLP-1 drugs like Ozempic and Wegovy. It also discusses Oprah Winfrey's role and her move towards using GLP-1 medications.
* <https://www.goodmorningamerica.com/gma3/video/weightwatchers-prepares-bankruptcy-120724341> - This video segment covers WeightWatchers' preparation for bankruptcy, aligning with reports of financial struggles tied to the rise of prescription weight-loss medications.
* <https://www.mass.gov/guide-to-evidence/article-xi-miscellaneous> - This URL does not directly support claims about WeightWatchers but provides information on evidence rules in legal proceedings, unrelated to the topic.