# UK weight-loss injections soar despite steep price hikes and access challenges



Almost 2.5 million people in Britain ordered weight-loss injections in July, a striking increase from just 493,000 the previous year. This surge reflects the skyrocketing popularity of drugs like Mounjaro and Wegovy, which have been hailed as breakthroughs in the battle against obesity and related health conditions. However, this rapid rise in demand coincides with significant market turbulence, notably a dramatic price increase introduced in September that may have tempered consumer enthusiasm for these treatments.

Pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly raised the list price of Mounjaro—dubbed the "King Kong" of weight-loss injections—by as much as 170%, with the highest monthly dose now costing £330, up from £122. According to the company, this price adjustment brings the UK cost into alignment with other European markets and reflects new clinical evidence supporting the drug's value. Despite the steep hike, NHS patients’ access remains protected through existing agreements, and the health service has started rolling out Mounjaro with stringent eligibility criteria. Over three years, the NHS plans to provide the drug to around 240,000 people, although the vast majority—estimated at 90%—currently obtain these medications privately via online and high street pharmacies.

The months leading up to the price rise saw a surge in sales and stockpiling. Between July and August alone, an additional million packs were reportedly purchased, highlighting growing demand but also consumer anticipation of higher costs. This behaviour underscores concerns about affordability, as many people who initially embraced these treatments face financial barriers following the price increase. Online pharmacies have reported sharp increases in searches for cheaper Mounjaro alternatives, with interest in such alternatives rising by thousands of percent. This has raised worries about patients turning to unregulated sources, a concern echoed by Freedom of Information data revealing that UK Border Force seized nearly 18,300 illegal weight-loss and diabetes medications between January 2024 and June 2025.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting has publicly highlighted the disparity in access to these drugs, stressing the inequities inherent in the current system. Speaking at the Labour Party conference, Streeting noted that while wealthier individuals boast about improved health and quality of life from these medications, millions struggle due to cost. He described this as "a return to the days when health was determined by wealth," reinforcing the need for equitable healthcare access. The NHS’s 10-year plan aims to address such disparities by expanding weight-loss services beyond hospitals and clinics to more accessible venues such as high streets and digital platforms, potentially bringing treatments closer to where people live and work.

Eli Lilly also temporarily paused Mounjaro shipments in the UK before the price increase to manage supply and prevent hoarding during the transition. This move was accompanied by legal protections aimed at ensuring fair distribution amid heightened demand. The firm’s broader strategy includes expanding market presence internationally, exemplified by new product launches and partnerships, such as a recent push into India supported by substantial grant funding for weight management services.

The growing appetite for GLP-1 drugs like Mounjaro and Wegovy demonstrates a significant shift in public and medical attitudes toward obesity treatment. However, the pricing landscape and access restrictions illustrate ongoing challenges in balancing innovation, affordability, and equitable healthcare delivery. As demand continues to climb, the pressure mounts for public health systems and policymakers to adapt swiftly to these evolving realities, ensuring that breakthroughs in weight-loss treatment benefit the entire population, not just those who can afford premium prices.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/almost-25-million-purchased-weight-loss-jabs-in-july-estimates-suggest-G2AEXRYAZ5JD7JAIH5C4RM6F3Y/), [[2]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/almost-25-million-purchased-weight-loss-jabs-in-july-estimates-suggest-G2AEXRYAZ5JD7JAIH5C4RM6F3Y/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[3]](https://www.euronews.com/health/2025/08/14/eli-lilly-hikes-uk-price-of-blockbuster-weight-loss-drug-mounjaro-by-up-to-170), [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/eli-lilly-hike-uk-price-mounjaro-weight-loss-diabetes-medicines-by-170-2025-08-14/), [[7]](https://www.benzinga.com/news/health-care/25/08/47127105/eli-lilly-to-raise-mounjaro-price-in-uk-expands-obesity-drug-push-in-india/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/almost-25-million-purchased-weight-loss-jabs-in-july-estimates-suggest-G2AEXRYAZ5JD7JAIH5C4RM6F3Y/), [[2]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/almost-25-million-purchased-weight-loss-jabs-in-july-estimates-suggest-G2AEXRYAZ5JD7JAIH5C4RM6F3Y/), [[5]](https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/eli-lilly-temporarily-halts-uk-shipments-weight-loss-drug-mounjaro-2025-08-27/), [[6]](https://www.insidermedia.com/news/central-and-eastnorth-east/mounjaro-why-the-cost-of-the-weight-loss-drug-is-increasing-from-1-september)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/almost-25-million-purchased-weight-loss-jabs-in-july-estimates-suggest-G2AEXRYAZ5JD7JAIH5C4RM6F3Y/), [[2]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/almost-25-million-purchased-weight-loss-jabs-in-july-estimates-suggest-G2AEXRYAZ5JD7JAIH5C4RM6F3Y/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[5]](https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/eli-lilly-temporarily-halts-uk-shipments-weight-loss-drug-mounjaro-2025-08-27/), [[6]](https://www.insidermedia.com/news/central-and-eastnorth-east/mounjaro-why-the-cost-of-the-weight-loss-drug-is-increasing-from-1-september)
* Paragraph 6 – [[7]](https://www.benzinga.com/news/health-care/25/08/47127105/eli-lilly-to-raise-mounjaro-price-in-uk-expands-obesity-drug-push-in-india/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/almost-25-million-purchased-weight-loss-jabs-in-july-estimates-suggest-G2AEXRYAZ5JD7JAIH5C4RM6F3Y/), [[2]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/almost-25-million-purchased-weight-loss-jabs-in-july-estimates-suggest-G2AEXRYAZ5JD7JAIH5C4RM6F3Y/), [[3]](https://www.euronews.com/health/2025/08/14/eli-lilly-hikes-uk-price-of-blockbuster-weight-loss-drug-mounjaro-by-up-to-170), [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/eli-lilly-hike-uk-price-mounjaro-weight-loss-diabetes-medicines-by-170-2025-08-14/), [[7]](https://www.benzinga.com/news/health-care/25/08/47127105/eli-lilly-to-raise-mounjaro-price-in-uk-expands-obesity-drug-push-in-india/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/almost-25-million-purchased-weight-loss-jabs-in-july-estimates-suggest-G2AEXRYAZ5JD7JAIH5C4RM6F3Y/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/almost-25-million-purchased-weight-loss-jabs-in-july-estimates-suggest-G2AEXRYAZ5JD7JAIH5C4RM6F3Y/> - In July, nearly 2.5 million weight-loss injections were ordered in Britain, marking a significant increase from 493,000 the previous year. This surge is attributed to the rising popularity of drugs like Mounjaro and Wegovy. However, a substantial price hike of up to 170% for Mounjaro in September may have deterred some users, leading them to seek more affordable alternatives. Approximately 90% of individuals using weight-loss injections are paying privately, either online or at high street pharmacies. The NHS has begun rolling out Mounjaro but with strict eligibility criteria, aiming to provide the drug to 240,000 people over three years. The NHS's 10-year plan includes expanding access to weight-loss services, potentially making treatments available in various locations, including high streets and digital platforms. Health Secretary Wes Streeting has expressed concerns about disparities in access to these treatments, emphasising the need for equitable healthcare solutions.
3. <https://www.euronews.com/health/2025/08/14/eli-lilly-hikes-uk-price-of-blockbuster-weight-loss-drug-mounjaro-by-up-to-170> - Eli Lilly announced a 170% price increase for its weight-loss drug Mounjaro in the UK, effective from September 1. The highest dose will now cost £330 per month's supply, up from £122. This adjustment aligns the UK price with other European markets. Despite the price hike, access for NHS patients remains unaffected due to existing agreements. Mounjaro is used to treat obesity, type 2 diabetes, and weight-related health issues in the UK and the EU. Rival drugs like Novo Nordisk's Ozempic and Wegovy are also available in the market. The price increase aims to bring Mounjaro's UK price closer to the European average, reflecting changes in the market and new clinical evidence supporting its value.
4. <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/eli-lilly-hike-uk-price-mounjaro-weight-loss-diabetes-medicines-by-170-2025-08-14/> - Eli Lilly plans to raise the UK list price of its weight-loss and type 2 diabetes treatment, Mounjaro, by up to 170%, effective from September. The price for a month's supply of the highest dose will increase from £122 to £330. This move aligns the UK price with other European markets. Despite the price hike, NHS patients will not be affected due to separate agreements ensuring continued access. Initially, Lilly priced Mounjaro lower in the UK to expedite availability through the NHS. The company emphasized that the price adjustment reflects changes in the market and new clinical evidence supporting Mounjaro's value.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/eli-lilly-temporarily-halts-uk-shipments-weight-loss-drug-mounjaro-2025-08-27/> - Eli Lilly has temporarily paused shipments of its weight-loss drug Mounjaro in the UK ahead of a significant price increase set for September. The company announced a temporary pause to manage supply and ensure continued access for patients, implementing allocations for pharmacies and providers. Shipments and orders are scheduled to resume on September 1. The price of Mounjaro's highest monthly dosage will rise dramatically, from £122 to £330—a 170% increase. This move comes as a response to pressure from the White House for drugmakers to increase medicine prices in Europe, which may facilitate price reductions in the U.S. Additionally, legal protections are in place to prevent hoarding of the medication during this transition period.
6. <https://www.insidermedia.com/news/central-and-eastnorth-east/mounjaro-why-the-cost-of-the-weight-loss-drug-is-increasing-from-1-september> - Eli Lilly, the sole supplier of Mounjaro, has announced a price increase for all doses, effective from 1 September. New prices will range from £179.99 to £309.99, depending on the dose. Following the announcement, online searches for 'Mounjaro alternatives' have surged by over 5,000%, and interest in the 'cheapest Mounjaro' has increased by 200%. The online pharmacy Chemist4U has warned that the sharp price rise could drive patients to seek weight loss injections from unregulated sources. This comes as Freedom of Information data revealed that the UK Border Force seized approximately 18,300 illegal weight loss and diabetes medications between January 2024 and June 2025.
7. <https://www.benzinga.com/news/health-care/25/08/47127105/eli-lilly-to-raise-mounjaro-price-in-uk-expands-obesity-drug-push-in-india/> - Eli Lilly and Co. will sharply increase the list price of its weight-loss and type 2 diabetes drug Mounjaro in the United Kingdom, while expanding its market presence in India with a new injector pen. Starting in September, Lilly will raise the U.K. list price for Mounjaro's highest monthly dose from £122 to £330, a 170% jump, bringing it in line with prices in other European markets. This move underscores growing competition with Danish rival Novo Nordisk A/S in the lucrative obesity drug market. Additionally, a new program was initiated to improve access to weight management services across the U.K. NHS, backed by up to $114.61 million (85 million sterling pounds), with the U.K. government contributing as much as 50 million pounds and Eli Lilly providing up to 35 million pounds in grant funding.