“Primary care practitioners are ideally placed ... to start a realistic and sensitive dialogue with parents who learn their child has a weight problem.”

“Doctors regularly miss opportunities to discuss weight problems in around 40% of overweight patients.”
undoubtedly to be those in general practice. This is likely to be welcome in a workforce that finds it difficult to engage patients in discussion about weight issues. Research in this issue demonstrates that referral to a variety of weight loss programmes can be effective in adults, going some way to address a lack of tools and knowledge of what works in primary care. For children specifically, an electronic tool to estimate health risks and provide personalised weight management advice has been developed by the PROMISE (Paediatric Research in Obesity Multi-modal Intervention and Service Evaluation) programme [https://sites.google.com/site/promisenihr/].

Obesity is now endemic and the public has normalised its perception and acceptance of overweight status. Hence, management in secondary care has become an inappropriate and unsustainable solution. With the move of public health functions to local authorities there is little likelihood that a national public health strategy will emerge soon and NICE have recently consulted on managing overweight and obesity in children and young people. Primary care remains in the frame as the best component of the healthcare system in dealing with obesity, particularly in children. We must ensure we have adequate skills for intervention with children who have weight problems. Above all we must be brave enough to open up a two-way non-judgemental dialogue when confronted with an overweight child.

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