

### Additional file 3: Topic guides

#### Topic guide for focus group with Aspire participants

<b>Introductions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How did you make the decision to apply for the programme?</li><li>• What were your experiences of the application process?</li></ul>
<b>Getting started with the programme</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Did you have any reservations on starting the programme?</li><li>• How did you find getting going at the start?</li><li>• Was there anything that helped or got in the way of getting going?</li></ul>
<b>Experiences of the programme</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What changes have you made in your life as a result of participating in the programme to help you lose weight/maintain weight loss?</li><li>• What aspects of the programme do you think were most effective for you in making these changes? What was it about these...(e.g. education, exercise, 1-to-1 sessions, Facebook)</li><li>• Were there aspects of the programme that you think didn't work as well for you?</li></ul>
<b>Reflections on the programme</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What has been the biggest impact that participating in the programme has had on your life?</li><li>• If the programme was to be delivered by other organisations, what would be the most important qualities of the providers?</li><li>• If you could do it all again, is there anything you would change for yourself?</li></ul>
<b>Future</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How has the transition from being "on" the programme to being "off" the programme been?</li><li>• Going forwards, how are you feeling about maintaining your weight loss?</li></ul>

## Topic guide for semi-structured interviews with Aspire providers

<b>Introductions and development of the programme</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can you talk to me a little bit about the history of the programme and how it came to exist e.g. funding, development?</li><li>• Were there existing programmes on which it was modelled?</li><li>• What were the main objectives (or target behaviours)?</li><li>• How did you envisage that the programme would result in changing these behaviours?</li></ul>
<b>Selection process</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can you describe the selection process, and how this came about?</li><li>• How do you select participants (e.g. distinguishing characteristics)?</li><li>• From the people who start the programme, how many complete it?</li><li>• For people who have dropped out in the first few weeks, do you know the reasons for this and do you think this could have been pre-empted?</li></ul>
<b>The programme</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can you describe how the various components came about and who was responsible for their development?</li><li>• At the outset did you have in mind how each of the components could tackle certain issues around weight loss behaviours?</li><li>• From your experience of the programme, what is it about the programme that results in people making a change and losing weight?</li><li>• How have you modified the programme over the four cohorts?</li><li>• How consuming is the programme for you personally?</li><li>• Are you ever concerned that individuals will become reliant on the programme or the support of the providers?</li><li>• Are there certain types of people that thrive more on programme than others?</li><li>• To what extent do people continue with lifestyle change after the programme to achieve their target weight loss?</li></ul>
<b>Continuation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What plans are in place for continuing to provide the programme?</li><li>• Are there plans to make further modifications to the programme going forwards?</li><li>• Blue sky thinking, what would you like to do with the programme? What are the principles that underpin the success of the programme?</li></ul>