Industry Safe Weight Limit for Workers on Offshore Installations

Explanatory Note

Issue 2
April 2026

Contents

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Definitions
NHS	National Health Service
EASA	European Union Aviation Safety Agency
FRC	Fast Rescue Craft
HEC	Human External Cargo
HMCG	His Majesty's Coastguard
OEUK	Offshore Energies UK
SAR	Search and Rescue
SARH	Search and Rescue Helicopter
UKCS	United Kingdom Continental Shelf
VantagePOB	Personnel on Board and record keeping system

Version Control

Issue 1 – November 2025 - orignal

Issue 2 – April 2026 – this update reflects changes in the OEUK Medical Guidelines Issue 8.1a published on 1st February 2026 and other minor changes and clarifications to the policy.

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Problem Statement

Offshore installation duty holders in the UKCS are facing a challenge: the increasing weight of the workforce which is posing a risk of exceeding the safe design weights of offshore safety and rescue equipment. After extensive review of potential solutions industry has determined that a safe weight limit is an appropriate solution. This document provides background and explanation for the policy and the impact assessment.

1.2 Main Issues

The primary issue relates to the maximum safe weight limit identified for search and rescue helicopter winching systems to safely accommodate heavier workers information that must be considered by employers in complying with legal obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees and others.

Additional areas of concern include:

- A reduction in the capacity of life-saving equipment such as lifeboats and life rafts that arises from the average weight increase.
- The weight capacity of equipment such as helicopter steps, stretchers, and personal descent devices to handle increased weights.
- The challenge associated with rescuing heavier personnel from confined space and height which are technically challenging for individuals of average weights.

1.3 Benefits

Addressing the average weight increase will not only address the immediate risk to the safe evacuation of offshore workers but also:

- Help to ensure compliance with a broad range of health and safety regulations.
- Foster a healthier workforce over the long term.
- Establish an upper weight limit provides certainty that lifesaving equipment will remain appropriate for the workforce. It should avoid incurring additional cost regularly upgrading equipment.

2 Introduction

In recent years, the offshore industry in the UKCS has faced a growing challenge: the increasing weight of its workforce. This issue has implications for the safety and operations of offshore installations, which involve significant inherent risks due to their remote locations and harsh environments.

Records indicate that Western populations' weight has increased steadily since the 1960s. Since 2005 there have been several initiatives introduced by industry in relation to worker size and weight including change out of lifeboats and introduction of the extra-broad (XBR) criteria for helicopter passengers. More recently, workers' average weights have been increasing at a higher rate, which has prompted industry to review the associated risks. OEUK commissioned a detailed analysis of the VantagePOB data from 2022. This data revealed a definite trend: the average weight of offshore personnel had risen to approximately 96.56kg, marking a 10kg increase since 2008. This upward trajectory in average weight shows no signs of abating soon. The data also identified that approximately 5% of workers were above 125kg. The 2024 data was also reviewed validating the 2022 data. These reports are available from the OEUK Publications page.

The implications of this weight increase are manifold. Offshore duty holders are legally obligated under the Offshore Installations (Prevention of Fire and Explosion and Emergency Response) Regulations 1995 (PFEER) to ensure safe evacuation, escape, and rescue operations, as well as maintaining adequate access to first aid facilities and equipment. The regulation requires a risk-based systematic approach to managing major hazards and emergency response. Duty holder safety cases have routinely described these measures however, many of the existing emergency provisions were designed with significantly lower average worker weights in mind.

In response to this growing concern, OEUK held a workshop in 2025 with member companies and stakeholders to identify the hazards and risks associated with a heavier workforce. Discussions highlighted several critical areas where increased worker weight posed significant safety challenges. For instance, the weight limits of helicopter steps, stretchers, the capacity of life rafts and lifeboats, personal descent device working limits may be close to exceeding the equipment design standards, and the ability to rescue workers from confined spaces or heights will be reduced.

Furthermore, the analysis underscored the risks associated with helicopter winching capacity. Based on correspondence from HM Coastguard, it has been highlighted that they cannot guarantee that someone above 124.7kg can be safely evacuated from an offshore installation, even in a life-threatening situation, via the use of a winch. Whilst the rescue crew have discretion to winch someone above this weight in a life-threatening scenario, there are many other factors the crew will have to consider (e.g. weather, location, the safety of the helicopter and winchman) which might mean this discretion is not exercised or cannot lead to a successful rescue.

To address these issues identified OEUK established a workgroup of safety specialists to review the risks and evaluate risk reduction measures. The workgroup established that a collective industry response was required to address these risks. The reasonably practicable mitigation was to implement an industry-wide weight limit of 124kg for offshore workers on the outbound flight leg. This limit was derived from calculations related to helicopter winching capacity, with an appropriate safety margin included. This recommendation aims to mitigate the immediate safety risks posed by heavier individuals, whilst recognising that a wider stakeholder group will need to address the long-term health implications of obesity and the need for promoting healthier lifestyles.

The increasing weight of offshore workers represents a tangible risk to their safety and well-being. Delays in evacuation or treatment due to weight-related constraints could lead to serious health outcomes or even fatalities. As such, OEUK considers it imperative for the industry to take collective action to address this issue and ensure the safety of all offshore personnel.

3 Offshore Workers Weights

In 2024 OEUK commissioned statistical processing of the VantagePOB data from 2022 offshore mobilisation data. This reported that the average weight of offshore personnel was approximately 96.56kg, which is a 10kg increase in the average weight of offshore personnel since 2008. The trend in increasing average weight is likely to continue, at least in the short term.[1] Chart 1 provides the average weight increase since 1960.

Note: VantagePOB data is useful due to the large population size however the weight entered for each individual includes an allowance for helicopter transit suits and lifejackets, which are applied differently across the helicopter operators. The actual weights of workers are likely to be lower.

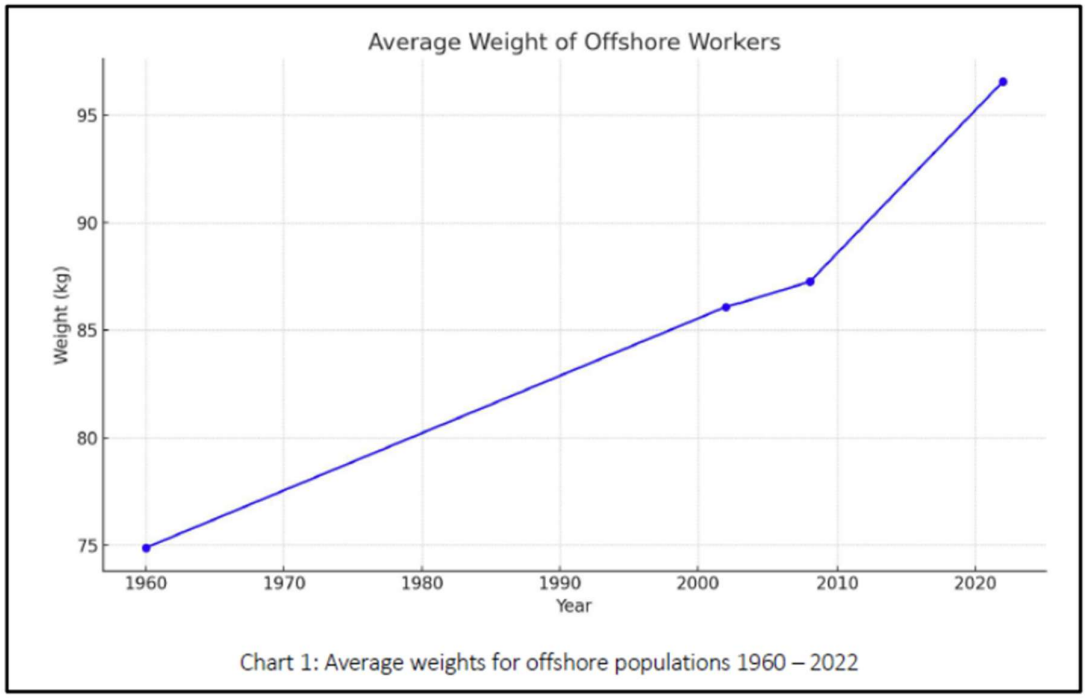

Chart 1: Average weight of offshore workers 1960 – 2022

The average weight increase presents a challenge to the emergency evacuation and escape provisions many of which were designed with lower average worker weights. Chart 2 below demonstrates that over a third of the population is above 100kg and 4.9% are greater than 125kg.

[1] https://oeuk.org.uk/product/anthropometry-of-offshore-personnel-statistical-analysis-of-the-weight-of-uk-offshore-workers/

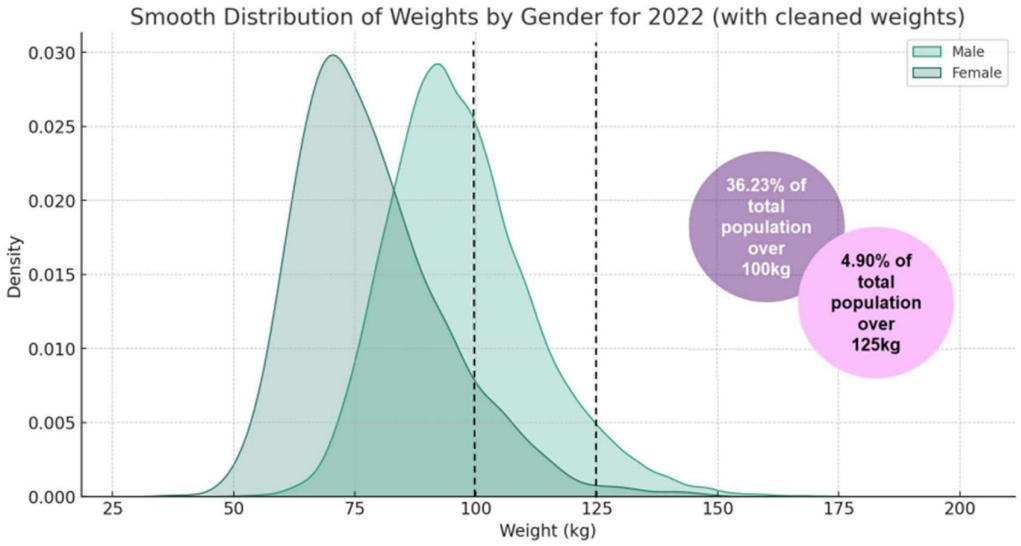

Chart 2 Kernal distribution plot of weights by Gender 2022

In 2026 the original authors of the OEUK statistical analysis – CityPort Oil and Gas Services (CPOGS) prepared a new report using 2024 data from the VantagePOB system. The report confirms strong statistical alignment with the data between sample as detailed in Chart 3 below:

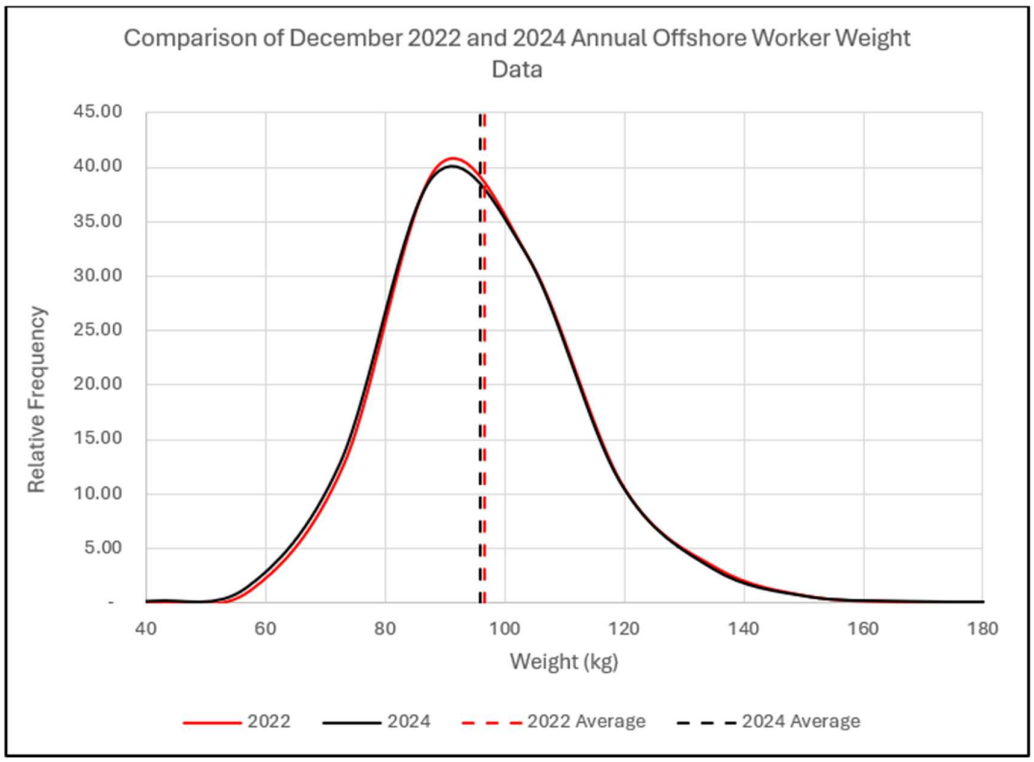

Chart 3: Normalised Population Comparison for December 2022 and 2024 Annual Average Weight Distribution Datasets for UK Offshore Workers.

4 Hazards

In 2025 OEUK held a workshop with member companies, subject matter experts across aviation, marine and emergency response disciplines, Unions, trade associations, HM Coastguard and helicopter operators to identify the hazards and risks presented by a heavier workforce. This included a review and discussion of arrangements for:

- Helicopter mobilisation
- Confined space access, egress and recovery
- Evacuation - lifeboat seatbelt limits and scenarios involving helicopter evacuation (including winching)
- Escape - life raft capacity, emergency escape device limits, marine rescue devices, and fast rescue craft capacities
- Stretcher transfer

4.1 Medevac and rescue

In September 2024 HM Coastguard wrote to OEUK to communicate the outcome of a review of winching capacity which provided calculations which demonstrated a limit of 124.7kg for stretcher lifts using the search and rescue helicopter winches. Individual search and rescue helicopter crews can, on a case-by-case basis, winch above this weight where there is deemed to be a threat to life, but that is entirely within the discretion of the helicopter crew and cannot be guaranteed or relied upon.

All search and rescue helicopters in the UK are certified for the same type of winch which has a capacity for Human External Cargo (HEC) weights of 249kg above 0°C. This is an EASA imposed limit on all Goodrich hoists specifically for HEC.

Using an average weight of the winch paramedic from the industry SAR helicopter of 90.3kg plus 29kgs for a stretcher and 5kg for their kit, it would be reasonable to suggest that the winch paramedic's total weight could be 124.3kg.

Therefore, for a person requiring a stretcher lift from an installation in a non-life-threatening situation could have a weight limit of around 124.7kg.

Note 1: There are further winch capacity limitations below 0°C.

Note 2: HM Coastguard crews will have discretion on winching during life threatening emergencies.

Summarised from HM Coastguard letter to OEUK 3 September 2024

HM Coastguard, energy company aviation advisors, SAR helicopter operators, and winch manufacturers have been engaged to determine if any changes can be made to the capacity of the winch. No solutions have been identified to date. In the future, new technology may allow a higher winching limit but that is likely to be years away from operational deployment. Regardless of winch capacity SAR crews will still need to manually handle patients from the winch into the helicopter cabin.

At various safety forums HM Coastguard have shared details of incidents which they have attended where they have not winched individuals due to their weight. They also confirmed that where winching is likely to be required for a patient, they now routinely request information about the patient's weight when tasking aircraft. In recent cases, where the patient's weight prevented winching, the helicopter paramedic has accompanied patients the vessels where the patient worked back to harbour to provide care. During this extended period the SAR helicopter is not available for other emergencies.

4.2 Personal illness or injury

Installation emergency response plans will describe arrangements for recovery of persons either injured or taken ill at the worksite or inside the accommodation modules. These arrangements will involve rescue of the injured person and transfer to the sickbay by a team of stretcher bearers. Typically, a team of 4 are used to rescue but depending on location and distance, a secondary team could be deployed.

manual handling guidance recommends not exceeding a load of 25kg per person which, in the case of any person greater than 100kg, would be a significant challenge/risk for a standard four-person team. Stretcher bearing should be risk assessed considering the stretcher capacity and maximum weight of offshore workers. This introduces manual handling related hazards to the response team such as strains, muscle tears and back related injuries, that may be further compounded if breathing apparatus is deployed. During any emergency the assessment and reassignment of personnel may delay the provision of care for the patient. Getting individuals on stretchers into lifeboats presents highly challenging handling conditions, which will be exacerbated by heavier individuals.

Once any individual has been recovered to the sick bay, the person may require to be taken onshore either through the operator's helicopter fleet or a HM Coastguard search and rescue flight. Primacy is for the flights to land on the installation helidecks however there are foreseeable scenarios where search and rescue flights may not be able to land due to either the aircraft model or the helideck not being operational due to heavy weather/sea states and where the only means of evacuation may be winching.

4.3 Additional risks to individuals

In addition to the challenges of moving casualties on stretchers, responding to casualties in congested, remote, and confined spaces can delay rescue and treatment. Equipment in installation sickbays might not be rated for heavier individuals, compounding the issue.

Helicopter step weight limits prevent some larger individuals from traveling on certain aircraft types. During precautionary reductions in personnel on an installation or in emergency situations, the number of individuals carried on each flight may need to be restricted due to payload capability.

Lifeboat seatbelt anchor points have various ratings, and many are being upgraded, but none have been proven above 150kg. Widening seatbelt spacing for broader individuals impacts the total capacity of personnel in lifeboats and could impact total personnel onboard installations. Increasing average weight of passengers could therefore make it difficult to adequately resource the installation.

Personal descent devices are limited to 150kg and, at this weight, the speed of descent increases. Heavier people also face difficulties getting into life rafts. Marine rescue from water is impaired for heavier individuals as personnel struggle to lift them onboard the FRC, and the seating capacity of the FRC may be reduced as a result.

These additional risks demonstrate that there is a clear risk for heavier individuals above 124kg offshore, which cannot be adequately mitigated. The weight limit is a reasonably practicable and proportionate way of managing the identified risks. Having a lower average weight of offshore workers also benefits helicopter payloads and lifeboat capacity.

A review of duty holders' methods of mitigation for various aspects have been conducted. This includes consideration of alternative equipment for search and rescue winchmen, increasing lifeboat seatbelt mount capacity beyond 150kg and testing boats to failure. Designing and installing new lifeboats to accommodate all weights of individuals in the current offshore population will be grossly disproportionate and would not mitigate all the risk situations identified, particularly where individuals may require to be winched. Alternative methods of rescue have been considered, including using cranes to lower stretchers to vessels, they all present significant additional risk and would not mitigate emergency situations where time is critical.

The industry safe weight limit is the reasonably practicable and proportionate way of managing the risks identified.

4.4 Industrial Sector Inconsistencies

It is intended that this policy will apply to installations that have accepted Safety Cases under the Offshore Installations (Offshore Safety Directive) (Safety Case etc.) Regulations 2015.

The high legislative threshold contained in the PFEER Regulations1995 was implemented to reflect some of the lessons learned from the Piper Alpha incident and subsequent Inquiry, requiring a means of evacuation and escape for all persons on the installation. The Offshore Installations (Offshore Safety Directive) (Safety Case etc.) Regulations 2015 require installation operators to be able to identify appropriate measures to maintain effective emergency response arrangements including evacuation, escape and rescue and to ensure the risk to persons is as low as is reasonably practicable. The expectations set out in PFEER contain the highest duty of care in industrial sectors.

The marine sector does not follow OEUK medical as there is a statutory medical known as the ENG1 in place for mariners. The offshore wind industry in the UK is not currently implementing weight restrictions this is despite the same SAR helicopters responding to their incidents. The actions of other industrial sectors is not a justification not to address a known risk. It is pertinent to note that the HMCG continues to engage with these sectors, it is a reasonable expectation that these sectors will subsequently follow similar policies. Outside of energy, industries such as fishing, health and the leisure industry may also have to consider the impact of the winch capacity information.

Other international jurisdictions are also responding to the new information on winch capacity and may enact similar risk mitigations.

5 Offshore Installations Safe Weight Limit

During 2023 and January 2025 OEUK led multiple industry workshops whilst, in parallel, industry investigated installation specific mitigations to limit the risk to heavier workers. The outcome was the introduction of a safe weight limit would serve as a collective mitigation for the identified risks.

5.1 Offshore Installations Safe weight limit

As explained in 4.1, the HMCG have highlighted restrictions on winching capacity above 124.7kg. To maximise the availability of a search and rescue helicopter transfer from an installation to onshore and for the reasons set out in detail above, a clothed weight limit of 124kg is proposed for all offshore workers. Clothed weight means dressed in compliance with the industry clothing travel policy for the season when they are travelling.

This limit includes a safety margin of 0.7kg. This is considered reasonable to accommodate minor fluctuations in weight during the offshore trip without onerously excluding workers.

5.2 Control

Various options to introduce and manage a weight limit have been identified:

- The primary control for the weight of workers will be via the OEUK Medical Fitness of Offshore Work Guideline which will be updated to reflect the controls below.
    - If a worker exceeds a weight of 124kg fully clothed at a routine OEUK offshore medical examination (held every two years), a fitness to work certificate will not be issued. A fitness to work certificate will be issued when the individual's weight falls below 124kg fully clothed with the below restrictions.
    - Those workers weighing between 120.1kg and 124kg at their OEUK offshore medical examination will receive a reduced-duration medical certificate valid for 3 months to encourage weight loss after which the certificate can be reissued following a weight check.
    - Those workers weighing between 115kg and 120kg at their OEUK offshore medical examination will receive a reduced-duration medical certificate valid for 6 months to encourage weight loss after which the certificate can be reissued following a weight check.
    - If a worker's weight exceeds 110kg (but is less than 114.9kg) at the OEUK offshore medical, they will be reminded of the 124kg weight limit.
        - N.B. the 3 and 6 month reduced durations can be extended for a maximum of 2 years where an examinee can demonstrate to the medical examiner consistent control over their weight.
- The secondary control will be company mobilisation procedures for workers travelling offshore. These must be modified to ensure that individuals who may be close to the weight limit are flagged early and reminded of the weight limit, to prompt them to check their weight and confirm that they remain below the limit prior to travelling to the heliport.

- The tertiary control and final barrier to ensure workers over the weight limit do not travel offshore will be at the onshore heliport. Workers mobilising offshore will continue to be weighed as part of the standard flight check-in arrangements. Workers weighing greater than 124kg (i.e. 124.1kg or more) clothed on the outbound flight will not be permitted to travel offshore after the mandatory compliance date (see below) regardless of their medical certificate status.
    - Where a worker cannot travel offshore due to their weight there will be a clear process agreed between each helicopter operator and client.
    - Workers travelling onshore from an offshore location are not subject to a safe weight limit restriction
- In addition to the control measures identified above, employers should consider what support can be provided to their staff and individual workers should make efforts to ensure that they maintain a weight of below 124kg to avoid restrictions in their ability to work offshore.

Appendix A contains the impact assessment of the proposed change.

Control	Detail	Comment
Routine Offshore Medicals	Workers over 124kg will not be issued with an OEUK fitness to work certificate	Recommend weight loss programmes
	Reduced-duration OEUK fitness to work certificate for workers between 120.1kg and 124kg	Certificate reduced 3-month duration*
	Reduced-duration OEUK fitness to work certificate for workers between 115kg – 120kg	Certificate reduced 6-month duration*
	Workers >110kg but 114.9kg	Verbally reminded of the new safe weight limit
Operator Mobilisation Procedures	Identify workers close to 124kg via VantagePOB and require confirmation that weight is 124kg or below prior to mobilisation	Aim is to avoid workers above 124kg being turned away at the heliport
Heliports	Workers over 124kg will not be permitted to travel offshore.	Clear process agreed between helicopter operator and client

*3 and 6 month reduced durations can be extended for a maximum of 2 years where an examinee can demonstrate to the medical examiner consistent control over their weight.

5.3 Stakeholder Engagement

In development of this explanatory note and the associated policy OEUK has engaged stakeholders with the following categories of organisation:

- Regulators – Health and Safety Executive, OPRED
- Unions
- Member companies
- Marine, aviation and catering trade associations
- OEUK Medical Examiners

6 Implementation Strategy

The implementation strategy has been developed with the purpose of minimising the number of workers affected by the offshore weight limit, keeping our valuable workers in work. To achieve this a staggered implementation strategy has been developed.

The phases of implementation will be:

- Introduction & Awareness Phase - OEUK to publicise and communicate general information to the workforce whilst employers will engage with company specific information. Completed 31st January 2026
- Transition Phase – affected workers should engage in health weight-loss efforts. Employers should engage with staff and provide weight loss support. Individuals heavier than 124kg who are renewing medicals during this time will not be given a medical valid beyond the implementation date. Individuals between 115kg and 124kg will given restricted duration certification as per OEUK Medical Guidelines Issue 8 (please see explanatory note).
- Mandatory Implementation Date –weight limit of 124kg for all workers. The safe weight limit is established as an on-going safety control. Workers between 115kg – 124kg will be issued restricted duration certification.

6.1 Timescale

It is proposed that the supportive implementation phase is communicated quickly to the offshore workforce with:

Phase 1 (Introduction & Awareness)	1st November 2025 – 31st Jan 2026	3 months
Phase 2 (Transition Phase)	1st Feb 2026 – 31st Oct 2026	9 months
Phase 4 (Mandatory Implementation)	1st November 2026	

6.2 Communication

An industry communication package and communication plan has been developed by OEUK to engage with employers and the workforce directly to explain the risks identified, reasons for the weight limit introduction, this will describe the phases of introduction and timescales involved. The information to the workforce should contain information about sustainable weight loss.

Individual employers are expected to communicate with their workforce company specific information.

6.3 Employers' transitional arrangements

During the transition phase 1st February 2026 – 31st October 2026 employers should provide employees with information about the support available to them to lose weight at an achievable and healthy rate with a view to being able to achieve a clothed weight of 124kg or less by the conditional compliance date. During this time there will be no mandatory weight restriction. Workers going for OEUK medical examinations during the supportive implementation phase who are greater than 115kg should receive

a reduced-duration certificate in line with the OEUK Medical Fitness for Offshore Work 8.1a Edition (see 6.4).

Whilst all staff going offshore need to understand the implications of the new offshore weight limit, it is recommended that employers seek to identify workers who are likely to be impacted by the implementation of this guidance and the associated policy at the beginning of the supportive implementation phase to highlight the policy changes, outline the support available to them, and signpost them to appropriate weight-loss programmes. The total implementation phase is 15 months however the duration of standard medical certification is 2 years, therefore some workers may be restricted for offshore travel despite holding a valid, in-date medical certificate. It may be beneficial [for employers] to review workers with medical expiry dates the extend beyond the various implementation dates in order to pre-empt any issues with helicopter check-in.

Individual employers should consider the support they make available to workers during and after the supportive implementation phase and conditional compliance phase. This may vary from employer to employer taking account of their size and administrative resources. Employees are encouraged to take part in healthy weight reduction programmes. Details of programmes are contained in Appendix B.

6.4 Considerations for OEUK Medical Examiners

Extract from OEUK Medical Fitness for Offshore Work Issue 8.1a February 2026 from 3.8.5.1 – 3.8.5.3:

Introduction & Awareness phase, 1st November 2025 to 31st January 2026:

In this phase industry provided information about the policy to the workforce. ***No changes to certification occurred during this phase***. Medical examiners advised workers above 110kg of the policy limit but only followed the guidance at Table 16 above.

Transition phase, 1st February 2026 to 31st October 2026:

All workers above 110kg should be advised of the 124kg policy limit. At all weights at or above 115kg certificate duration should be reduced according to table 17 below. Those above 124kg will not be fit for work in the UK due to the UK safe weight limit from 1st November 2026. Medical Examiners should explain this to the examinee and must exclude the UK on any certificate valid beyond 31st October 2026.

Table 17: Certification considerations – body weight (transition phase)

				
Weight (clothed*) *industry standard clothing policy	110-114.9kg	115-120kg	120.1-124kg	>124kg
	Standard certificate of up to 2 years duration, consistent with other conditions. Advise policy limit	Advise policy limit. Standard certificate not beyond 30th April 2027 (=mandatory implementation date + 6 months)	Advise policy limit. Standard certificate not beyond 31st January 2027 (=mandatory implementation date + 3 months)	Advise policy limit. Standard certificate reduced duration not beyond 31st October 2026

Mandatory Implementation phase, 1st November 2026 and onwards:

From the 1st November 2026 the policy will be fully implemented. Examinees over 124kg are not fit for work in the UK due to the UK safe weight limit. Medical Examiners should explain this to the examinee and must exclude the UK on any certificate. All workers above 110kg should be advised of the policy limit. At weights from 115 to 124kg certificate duration should be reduced according to table 18 below, unless the examinee is 'athletic' in build (i.e. paragraphs 3.8.3 and 3.8.4 (obesity) do ***not*** apply, and his/her weight consistently shows no increasing trend) in these cases a longer duration between weight checks can be set but should be no more than for the standard certificate.

Note that the purpose of 6-month/3-month review at table 18 is a weight check only, unless the examinee is also being reviewed under paragraphs 3.8.3 or 3.8.4.

Examinees attending for a weight check only may have the original medical duration extended as per table 18 below. Examinees over 124kg at a weight check are not fit for work in the UK due to the UK safe weight limit. Medical Examiners should explain this to the examinee and must exclude the UK on any certificate.

Table 18: Certification considerations – body weight (mandatory implementation phase)

				
Weight (clothed*) *industry standard clothing policy	110-114.9kg	115-120kg	120.1-124kg	>124kg
	Standard certificate of up to 2 years duration, consistent with other conditions. Advise policy limit	Standard certificate maximum duration 6 months**. Advise policy limit	Standard certificate maximum duration 3 months**. Advise policy limit	No certificate

*Industry standard clothing policy includes footwear as below and the policy at the time of the medical should be applied:

Source: Step Change in Safety, (https://www.stepchangeinsafety.net/resources/standard-clothing-policy/)

** certificate duration may be up to 2 years for examinees of 'athletic' morphology, or demonstrated consistent weight control.

6.5 Legal review

OEUK commissioned a legal review of the proposal to consider both employment law and health and safety law implications this was completed prior to publication.

A Appendix Impact assessment

A.1 Impact Assessment

A.1.1 Cumulative Workforce impact

The main benefit for the workforce is controlling the risks presented within this paper.

VantagePOB data for 2024 was examined which indicated an average weight of workers of 95.84kg. and that up to 4.83% of the offshore workforce with vantage records may have a weight record of at least 124kgs. This weight record includes an unspecified figure for helicopter PPE of between 3kg and 7kg. Using the vantage recorded weight is conservative and takes account of any weight increases by the population since 2022, the average of which is projected to increase by between 0.25 and 0.30kg per year.

Examination of the data indicates the following numbers of workers impacted by the policy:

- A conservative maximum of 1,893 workers with recorded weights of 115-120kg who would be issued a reduced-duration (6 month) medical certificate due to proximity to the safe weight limit.
- A conservative maximum of 1,086 workers with recorded weights of 120-123kg who would be issued a reduced-duration (3 month) medical certificate due to proximity to the safe weight limit.
- A conservative maximum of 1,083 workers with recorded weights of 124 – 130kgs who are likely to be able to reduce their weight through healthy eating and additional exercise by around 5kg to get below the safe weight limit.
- A conservative maximum of 896 workers with recorded weights of 131 - 140kg who may be able to achieve weight loss sufficient to achieve the safe weight limit, however this is harder and may require additional support.
- There is a conservative maximum of 298 workers with recorded weights of 141- 150kg and 128 between 150 – 200kg who may struggle to achieve sufficient weight loss to get below the safe weight limit.
- The conservative maximum total number of workers who will be impacted by the implementation of this safe weight limit is 5,474 some to a lesser degree than others.

A.1.2 Health Impact

While the policy will require all workers above 124kg to consider changes, it also offers a valuable opportunity for individuals to focus on their overall health and wellbeing. Many may find that, with supportive guidance and adequate time during the 12 month implementation period, gradual and healthy weight management is achievable. This approach encourages a positive journey towards improved health, and recognises the challenges involved, ensuring individuals are not alone as they work towards these goals.

Industry health benefits – a healthier workforce is likely to reduce the instances of injury and LTIs and sudden death and emergency medevacs from offshore installations over time.

Company health benefits – companies who support their workers with appropriate health programmes are likely to retain workers, experience less sickness absences and create a positive impact for their workers who are likely to feel cared for.

A.1.3 Operational Impact

It is hoped that most existing of the workers weighing more than 124kg will choose to manage their healthy weight loss and remain within the workforce. That is the overall objective of the implementation period. Individual companies should review the impact on its own workforce in relation to safety critical positions.

There are 367 vantage records of people who are likely to find it very challenging to achieve the weight limit and are at risk of exiting the offshore workforce. This impact has been considered by the workgroup which accepts that this is a likely outcome. These individuals are at most at risk from the hazards described in this document.

There is minimal impact for an additional 2,979 personnel who may be placed on reduced-duration certification. This is likely to generate additional costs for employers. OEUK will keep the impact of this under review and may consider measures to allow for longer durations of certification for workers demonstrating good consistent weight control based on evidence obtained during the implementation of the policy.

Helicopter operators will need to be engaged on the feasibility and operational impact of implementation of a safe weight limit at the point of helicopter check in.

A.1.4 Additional Benefits

Lifeboats

The introduction of a weight limit is expected to have a positive effect on the average weight of workers. If incorporated into lifeboat 'design weight' calculations would have a positive impact on the total number of personnel, the lifeboat can accommodate in some circumstances. Lifeboat seatbelt design ratings may be below 124kg and should be reviewed. It has been demonstrated that some lifeboat seatbelts mounting points can be upgraded to 150kg. 124kg gives a comfortable safety margin in those cases.

Life rafts

Most life rafts designed to IMO code have a lower average weight considered in calculating the capacity. These will also benefit from a restriction on workers' weight. The life raft steps provide limited buoyancy for personnel entering the life raft. Restricting workers to 124kg limits the impact of reduced step buoyancy.

Helicopters

Access to helicopters is difficult for the heaviest workers due to weight capacity of the helicopter steps. This issue is mitigated by imposing a weight limit. This policy is likely to reduce concerns about the heaviest workers being able to effectively escape from helicopter windows. Additionally, overall helicopter payloads will be positively affected.

Stretchers

Many of the standard stretchers used offshore have a narrow width and low weight capacity, meaning they are not suitable for moving larger individuals. Imposing the weight limit policy will mean that such equipment remains viable, albeit with additional stretcher team members being deployed for those over 100kg to address manual handling risks.

Rescue from confined space, restricted space and suspended casualties

Heavier individuals present significant additional challenges when attempting to rescue them from confined space which may involve recovering them from a restricted space and/or safely recovering suspended casualties. The additional arrangements are likely to delay the time taken to rescue an individual. A safe weight limit will reduce those challenges.

Installation Escape

Installations have a variety of tertiary escape devices to allow individuals to descend to the water in a controlled manner. The DONUT device common across the North Sea has a maximum capacity of 150kg but it is noted that current versions will descend at a higher rate for individuals at the upper end of the weight capacity though upgraded versions are expected to address this in the coming years. There are various descent chute systems in use where design weights range from 98kg – 115kg. duty holders should review these systems against their own personnel to ensure they remain fit for purpose if their personnel individually exceed the design range stated above to ensure limits are not exceeded.

Rescue from water

Rescuing casualties from the water using existing mechanical devices should be possible for all personnel if a 124kg weight limit is imposed. It will also ensure that the capacity for FRC is maintained.

B Appendix Weight loss advice

B.1 Employer Led Programmes

Employers will be able to deploy a range of existing and additional programmes to support affected workers in their weight loss journey and ensure they have the best chance for safe and sustainable weight loss. The following list highlights some examples of services and programmes employers should consider:

Targeted Health Programmes:

TAC Healthcare – To help address the challenge of increasing offshore weight, TAC Healthcare has introduced a multi-disciplinary, tiered approach weight management programme for offshore workers. By working closely with their specialist clinical team, TAC Healthcare's programme is providing access to dietetic support, physiotherapy, private GP consultations, and where appropriate, weight-loss medications. The programme also incorporates habit-breaking support, designed to help individuals identify and overcome unhelpful behaviours and maintain long-term weight management success. Support is organised into four tiers based on weight categories, starting with assessments and lifestyle guidance and progressing to more structured weekly programmes for individuals above 124kg.

Health Outfit – Healthoutfit offers a holistic approach to sustainable weight loss, combining evidence-based nutrition education, personalised fitness guidance, and ongoing support. Participants receive regular 3D body composition scans to track real changes in body fat and muscle, weekly one-on-one coaching sessions, and practical tools covering everything from meal planning and portion control to safe exercise routines tailored to individual fitness levels. This programme offers an alternative and/or supplement to medically assisted weight loss www.healthoutfit.co.uk/weightloss

RigRun - RigRun provides a proven, crew-focused solution to support offshore personnel in maintaining the health and fitness required to meet industry standards. Delivered as a digital health and engagement programme, it combines exercise, motivation, and camaraderie to strengthen physical and psychosocial wellbeing. By fostering a positive and inclusive approach, RigRun helps companies enable their personnel to stay healthy and fit for duty.

Complementary Employee Services:

- Employee benefits and engagement platforms such Perkbox, RewardGateway, Achievers, often offer access to fitness, health and other benefits to employees and may already be part of company offers.
- Employee Assistance Programmes traditionally offer confidential support and counselling services however modern offers may also include health advice lines, wellbeing portals in addition to weight loss and nutritional services. Examples of the comprehensive programmes include HealthAssured, /AXA Health, etc.
- Digital solutions include Wondr Health, Noom, burnalong, these programmes may help support a workforce that is located around the world for work time and home life.

B.2 Sources of advice for individuals considering weight loss

NHS & UK-Based Resources

- NHS Better Health – Lose Weight: 12-week structured plan with meal ideas, activity tracking, and goal setting. Includes a free downloadable app and printable PDF guide.

https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight/:contentReference[oaicite:7]{index=7}

- NHS Weight Loss Plan App: Available on iOS and Android. Features daily food and activity diary, BMI calculator, and weekly guidance.

iOS: https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/nhs-weight-loss-plan/id1519208548

Android: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.nhs.weightloss

- NHS Inform – 12-Week Weight Management Programme (Scotland): Tailored for Scottish residents, offering weekly guidance on nutrition, activity, and goal setting.

https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/12-week-weight-management-programme:contentReference[oaicite:17]{index=17}

- NHS Digital Weight Management Programme: Free 12-week online programme for individuals with obesity and either diabetes or high blood pressure. Referral required via GP or pharmacist.

https://www.england.nhs.uk/digital-weight-management/how-to-access-the-programme/:contentReference[oaicite:24]{index=24}

NHS Tips to Help You Lose Weight: Practical advice on healthy eating, portion control, and increasing physical activity.

https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/managing-your-weight/tips-to-help-you-lose-weight/:contentReference[oaicite:28]{index=28}

OEUK.org.uk

OGUK Technical Notes
Member companies dedicate specialist resources and technical expertise in providing technical notes in collaboration with OGUK, demonstrating a commitment to continually improving and enhancing the performance of all offshore operations.

Technical Notes are part of the OGUK suite of Guidelines, free for our members.

OEUK.org.uk

info@OEUK.org.uk

@OEUK_

Offshore Energies UK