PROCEDURES OF LOW CLINICAL PRIORITY
Helping you and your doctor to make the right decisions about your care

Information for patients about procedures of low clinical priority and clinical thresholds
The NHS provides healthcare on behalf of the local population. The money for this comes from a fixed budget and by law, Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group are required to keep within this budget. Demand for healthcare is often greater than can be funded from this fixed budget.

**What are the procedures of low clinical priority?**

They are operations or treatments that medical experts agree offer only limited or temporary benefit, and which are not felt to be necessary to maintain good health. This means they need to be considered on a case by case basis and meet strict criteria before they can be funded by the NHS.

**Which procedures and treatments are affected?**

There are a number of treatments and procedures that are classed as Procedures of Low Clinical Priority and currently not funded or are restricted. The full policy, listing all not funded or restricted treatments and procedures can be found on Wirral HealthCare and Commissioning website: [https://www.wirralccg.nhs.uk/about-us/policies/procedures-of-low-clinical-priority/](https://www.wirralccg.nhs.uk/about-us/policies/procedures-of-low-clinical-priority/)

**What this means for you**

This may mean that your doctor is not able to offer you a certain treatment because it is not funded by the NHS. Your GP has to follow this guidance because it is an agreed policy of the NHS.

In certain circumstances your GP may refer you for further investigations or a consultant's opinion; however, a procedure can only take place according to the policy which applies to all clinical professionals including GPs and consultants.

**Are there any exceptions?**

Occasionally, in exceptional circumstances, some procedures can be carried out through the Individual Funding Request (IFR) procedure. Further details can be found at [https://www.wirralccg.nhs.uk/media/1190/wirral-ccg-ifr-policy.pdf](https://www.wirralccg.nhs.uk/media/1190/wirral-ccg-ifr-policy.pdf)

Applications can only be made by the clinician (GP or consultant) who is recommending the treatment / procedure. The clinician will be informed of the outcome and if approved, they will arrange for your treatment / procedure to take place in the normal way. If funding is not granted, the reasons will be explained to you.

**Discussing options with your GP**

Having discussions with your doctor or nurse can help you make better decisions about your care. Often, this will help to avoid tests, treatments or procedures that are unlikely to be of benefit to you.

Your GP will discuss with you:
1. Why do I really need this test or procedure?
2. What are the risks or downsides?
3. What are the possible side-effects?
4. Are there simpler, safer options?
5. What will happen if I do nothing?

**What if I’m not happy with the decision?**

Decisions are based on strict medical criteria and so are usually clear-cut. If your clinical condition changes your case may be re-examined and this will need to be discussed with your GP.
We welcome any feedback, complaints or compliments on any of the services we commission:

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If you need independent advice:

Healthwatch is an independent consumer champion for health and care. They work to ensure that people’s health and social care needs are heard, understood and met.

For non-clinical advice and signposting visit: www.healthwatchWirral.co.uk, call 0151 230 8957 or email info@healthwatchWirral.co.uk