

Cataract Surgery

NHS Devon

Why does NHS Devon ICB have policies for healthcare treatments?

Your Integrated Care Board (ICB) is responsible for ensuring that the treatments provided for the local population represent the best use of the NHS budget allocated to us for our population's health services. Demand for healthcare in Devon is increasing every year. We have to choose how to use our funds carefully to ensure that the local population has access to the healthcare that is most needed and that people with equal need have equal opportunity to access treatments.

This inevitably means that difficult decisions need to be made. Unfortunately, some treatment that patients might wish to receive, and that healthcare professionals might wish to offer, cannot be funded or is only offered under certain circumstances. This approach is consistent with other NHS organisations who buy healthcare for their local communities.

What will this mean for patients?

NHS Devon has agreed a Devon-wide policy for cataract surgery. The introduction of this policy will ensure that access to cataract surgery for patients with the same clinical circumstances is consistent throughout Devon regardless of where they live. There are different types of cataract and these cause different visual symptoms. The policy takes this into account and covers some ophthalmic procedures which are associated with a high rate of cataract formation. The policy can be found at the following link: <https://onedevon.org.uk/download/cataract-surgery/>. You can also request a copy by e-mailing the ICB at d-icb.clinicaleffectiveness@nhs.net or calling the number over the page.

Your doctor, optometrist (optician) or specialist is required to observe the policy because the local NHS has put it into effect. You will be able to access cataract surgery if you meet the criteria described in the policy. This will be determined by your optometrist before they refer you and will be confirmed before a decision on surgery is made. If you are already being treated by an ophthalmologist for an eye

condition and you also have a cataract, your specialist will be able to tell you whether you meet the criteria for cataract surgery.

You may be told during an eye examination that you have an early cataract or initial signs of a cataract which do not meet the criteria for surgery. Cataract surgery is not funded until the cataract causes visual impairment which results in difficulties in everyday life. Your optometrist or specialist will advise you on how long to wait before having another eye examination.

How are these decisions made?

In Devon, these decisions are made by the Clinical Policy Recommendation Committee. This committee includes GPs, lay members from the general public, healthcare professionals from the local NHS and public health teams. The committee considers the condition, available treatment options, evidence of benefit, cost-effectiveness and affordability and receives input from relevant healthcare professionals. The decision is made by GP/clinical members on the committee. The factors considered in approving the policy for cataract surgery are outlined in the rationale to the policy.

What if I think I should be treated differently?

If you or your clinician or optometrist consider there are reasons why your treatment should be different to the policy, you can ask for your case to be reviewed by the ICB's Individual Funding Request (IFR) Panel. There must be an exceptional reason as to why you need to be treated over and above other patients with similar clinical circumstances for whom the treatment is not available. Applications are accepted from the patient's GP, consultant or clinician or optometrist. Applications cannot be considered from patients personally.

Information on the Individual Funding Request Panel is available at the following link and as a patient information leaflet from <https://onedevon.org.uk/our-work/services-and-support/individual-funding-requests/>

Further information

If you have specific questions relating to your own healthcare you should speak to your GP, optometrist or specialist clinician.

If you have a more general enquiry and you cannot find an answer on the One Devon website, you can contact the ICB:

Telephone: 0300 123 1672 (local call rate number)

Email: d-icb.patientexperience@nhs.net

If you require this leaflet in other formats such as large print, braille, audio description or different languages, please do not hesitate to contact us:

Telephone: 01392 674 801

Email: d-icb.communications@nhs.net