

Fusion surgery for non-specific, mechanical back pain

NHS Devon

Commissioning policy

Spinal fusion surgery is not commissioned for the treatment of non-specific, mechanical back pain.

Rationale for the decision

The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges Evidence Based Interventions guidance notes that by the nature of the description 'non-specific low back pain,' a focal site of pathology is usually never found. In the absence of a focal structural pathology and concordant mechanical or neurological symptoms, there remains a distinct lack of high-quality evidence to support fusion of the spine as a treatment of mechanical axial back pain. This is in line with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Guideline NG59.

Guidance notes on exceptionality

Where the circumstances of treatment for an individual patient do not meet the criteria described above exceptional funding can be sought. Individual cases will be reviewed by the appropriate panel of the ICB upon receipt of a completed application from the patient's GP, consultant or clinician. Applications cannot be considered from patients personally.

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