

The Surgical Repair of Hernias

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 the specialist management of hernias. The introduction of this policy will ensure that access to hernia repair surgery for patients with the same clinical circumstances is consistent throughout Devon regardless of where they live.

There are several different types of hernias, some may require surgery sooner than others. The policy takes into account these differences, as well as providing lifestyle advice to support patients prior to surgery. Your GP and specialist will decide at what point you require surgery. The policy can be found at the following link: <https://onedevon.org.uk/download/hernia/>. 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 GP or specialist is required to observe the policy because the local NHS has put it into effect. You will be able to access hernia repair surgery if you meet the criteria described in the policy. For some types of hernias this will be determined by your GP before they refer you and will be confirmed in the hospital before a decision

on surgery is made. However, for other hernia types the decision to operate will be determined by your specialist, after a referral has been made by your GP.

You may be told during an appointment with your GP that you have a hernia which does not meet the criteria for surgery. The symptoms associated with a hernia often change over time. Your GP and specialist will advise you what symptoms you should watch out for and what you can do to manage these. If your condition changes you should contact your GP to discuss your treatment options.

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 the specialist management of hernias are outlined in the rationale to the policy.

What if I think I should be treated differently?

If you or your clinician 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. 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 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