

Policy Category:

CBA

Who usually applies for funding?

Not applicable

Total Knee Replacement

Commissioning decision	<p>The ICB will provide funding for total knee replacement for patients who meet the criteria defined within this policy.</p> <p>Where a patient meets the criteria set out in this policy the decision to go ahead with surgery should be made using the principles of shared decision making to ensure that any decision is reached jointly taking into account the patient's needs and preferences.</p> <p>New GP referrals should normally made via the MSK specialist triage service in line with the agreed local pathway.</p> <p>Surgical intervention should only be considered where the patient's general physical and mental health is sufficiently good to expect that significant improvement in pain and function will result from surgery.</p>
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Policy Statement:

The ICB will only fund surgical treatment for patients who meet the criteria set out below:

The patient is suffering from significant persistent pain as defined within the policy

AND

The patient is suffering from significant functional impairment as defined within the policy

AND

The patient has radiological features of severe or moderate OA (Grade II or above)

AND

The patient's symptoms persist despite the patient having fully engaged with conservative measures as defined by NICE Quality Standard QS87 (Quality Standard 7: Core treatments before referral for consideration of joint surgery) for a period of 3 months (unless the patient has severe persistent pain that is causing severe functional impairment which is compromising their mobility to such an extent that they are in immediate danger of losing their independence and joint replacement would relieve this, and conservative management as set out in this policy is contra-indicated).

Definition of significant persistent pain

- *Pain of almost continuous nature despite appropriate analgesia*
- *Pain when walking short distances on level surfaces or standing for less than half an hour*
- *Daily activities limited*

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Definition of significant functional impairment

- Functional capacity adequate to perform only a few normal activities and self-care
- Walking capacity limited usually less than 30 minutes
- Aids such as a cane are often required.

Conventional radiograph grading

- **grade 0:** normal
- **grade 1:** possible joint space narrowing and subtle [osteophytes](#)
- **grade 2:** definite joint space narrowing, defined osteophytes and some sclerosis, especially in the acetabular region
- **grade 3:** marked joint space narrowing, small osteophytes, some sclerosis and cyst formation and deformity of femoral head and acetabulum
- **grade 4:** gross loss of joint space with above features plus large osteophytes and increased deformity of the femoral head and acetabulum

MRI grading (MRI not routinely required)

- **grade 0:** normal
- **grade 1:** inhomogeneous high signal intensity in cartilage (T2WI)
- **grade 2:** inhomogeneity with areas of high signal intensity in articular cartilage (T2WI); indistinct trabeculae or signal intensity loss in femoral head & neck (T1WI)
- **grade 3:** criteria of grade 1 and 2 plus indistinct zone between femoral head & acetabulum; subchondral signal loss due to bone sclerosis
- **grade 4:** above criteria plus femoral head deformity

Rationale:

Knee replacement surgery is an effective but invasive treatment and should only be undertaken when a patient is experiencing significant adverse symptoms and more conservative approaches have failed to adequately address the problem.

Evidence base:

British Orthopaedic Association, Commissioning Guide: Painful Osteoarthritis of the Knee, 2017 <https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/-/media/files/rcs/standards-and-research/commissioning/boa-painful-oa-knee-guide-final-2017.pdf>
NG157 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng157>

For further information please contact GLICB.IFR@nhs.net

Date of publication	September 2020
Policy review date	September 2023

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Not applicable



Policy sign off:

Reviewing Body	Date of review
Effective Clinical Commissioning Policy Group	17.09.2020
Quality and Governance Committee	Amendments agreed Oct 20

Version Control:

Version No	Type of Change	Date	Description of Change
0.1		4.4.16	
0.2	Review date, minor wording change	21.6.18	Review date changed to June 2021; minor wording changed under policy statement (criteria in either 1 or 2 to be met)
0.3	Policy title, review date and wording	17.9.20 (ECCP meeting)	Title changed from Primary Knee Replacement agreed at MSK review. Review date changed to Sept 2023. Minor wording change ratified by M Walkingshaw & M Andrews-Evans Oct 20
0.4			