

Policy Category:

CBA

Who usually applies for funding?

Not Applicable

-Grommet Insertion in Children

Commissioning decision

The ICB will provide funding for grommet insertion in children under the age of 12 years old who meet the criteria defined within this policy.

Policy Statement:

Funded for children under the age of 12 years when the following criteria are met:

- All children must have had specialist audiology and ENT assessment.
AND
- Persistent bilateral otitis media with effusion over a period of 3 months
AND
- Hearing level in the better ear of 25-30dbHL or worse averaged at 0.5, 1, 2, & 4kHz
OR
- Exceptionally, healthcare professionals should consider surgical intervention in children with persistent bilateral OME with a hearing loss less than 25-30dbHL where the impact of the hearing loss on a child's developmental, social, or educational status is judged to be significant.
- Healthcare professionals should also consider surgical intervention in children who cannot undergo standard assessment of hearing thresholds where there is clinical and tympanographic evidence of persistent glue ear and where the impact of the hearing loss on a child's developmental, social, or educational status is judged to be significant.

It is also good practice to ensure glue ear has not resolved once a date of surgery has been agreed, with tympanometry as a minimum.

Rationale:

The policy is aligned to the guidance set out in the national Evidence Based Intervention (EBI) guidance on grommet insertion - <https://www.aomrc.org.uk/ebi/clinicians/grommets-for-glue-ear-in-children/>.

Plain English Summary:

Otitis media with effusion (OME) more commonly known as 'glue ear' is where there is a build-up of non-infected fluid in the middle ear space. This fluid may accumulate as a result of a cold, sore throat or upper respiratory infection. It can occur in one or both ears and usually affects children but may occasionally occur in adults. It can cause temporary hearing loss, but usually clears up within 3 months. In children who have persistent symptoms it may be appropriate to operate and insert small temporary tubes called 'grommets' into the ear which help drain fluid away.

This policy outlines when 'grommet' insertion surgery may be appropriate for children under the age of 12 years. To be eligible for grommet insertion your child will need to have had specialist audiology and ENT assessment. Hearing loss is measured in decibels Hearing Level (dBHL), which is a measure of the quietest sounds that your child can detect. This test will need to show at least mild hearing loss. The table below is a guide to levels of hearing loss measured in dBHL. If your child's hearing tests reveal a level of slight hearing loss, then grommet insertion may still be considered if this lower level of hearing loss is still causing notable difficulties for your child in terms of social or educational development.

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Degree of hearing loss	Hearing loss range (dB HL)
Normal hearing	-10 to 20
Slight hearing loss	21 to 24
Mild hearing loss	25 to 40
Moderate hearing loss	41 to 55
Moderately severe hearing loss	56 to 70
Sever hearing loss	71 to 90
Profound deafness	91+

If your doctor believes that your child meets the criteria set out in this policy Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group will fund the treatment.

Evidence base:

EBI guidance available at the following link -

<https://www.aomrc.org.uk/ebi/clinicians/grommets-for-glue-ear-in-children/>

NICE Guidance - [Surgical management of otitis media with effusion in children \(CG60\)](#)
February 2008 - (on static list)

Cochrane Library - <http://ent.cochrane.org/guidelines> Otitis Media With Effusion:
Comparative Effectiveness of Treatments.

Similarity to policies in other local ICBs – Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and
Northeast Somerset, West Midlands, Oxfordshire.

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

Date of publication	
Policy review date	March 2025

Policy sign off:

Reviewing Body	Date of review
Effective Clinical Commissioning Policy Group	March 2023
System Clinical Effectiveness Group	June 2023
System Quality Committee	19 October 2023

Version Control:

Version No	Type of Change	Date	Description of Change
1		1.8.15	
2	Review date	8.11.16	Review date changed to 8.11.18
3	Policy change/review date change	1.2.18	Prior approval removed; policy changed to CBA from 1.2.18. Review date changed to 8.11.18
4	Review date change	18.10.18	Review date changed to Dec 2019; Plain English Summary and Rationale updated.
5	Review date change & Plain English summary	09.01.20	Review date changed to January 2023: Plain English Summary updated.

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6	Minor wording added	11.3.21	Wording added around adjuvant adenoidectomy for the treatment of glue ear in policy statement to bring in line with EBI Policy.
7	Major Change Review date change	21.03.23	Wording changes to align the policy to the national Evidence Based Interventions guidance. Review date changed to March 2025.