

Commissioning Policy

Grommet Insertion in Children

Criteria Based Access (CBA)

Date adopted: INSERT DATE

Version: 8

Authorisation and document control

Name of policy:	Grommet insertion in children
Job title of author:	Senior Commissioning Programme Manager – Elective Care
Name of sign off group:	Commissioning Programmed Review Group

Equality and Engagement Impact Assessment	
Date Equality and Engagement Impact Assessment was completed:	26/02/2026

Consultation	
Name of group	Date considered
<i>Insert relevant individuals/forums consulted during policy development</i>	

Authorisation	
Name of group	Date approved
Commissioning Programmed Review Group	March 2026
Effective Clinical Commissioning Policy Group	March 2023
System Clinical Effectiveness Group	June 2023
System Quality Committee	October 2023

Date of adoption	
Date of publication	
Review date	March 2029
To be reviewed by (job title)	Senior Commissioning Programme Manager – Elective Care

Version control				
Version number	Date	Summary of changes	Author/Editor	Approved by
1	01/08/2015	New policy		
2	08//11/2016	Review date changed to 8.11.18		

3	01/02/2018	Prior approval removed; policy changed to CBA from 1.2.18. Review date changed to 8.11.18		
4	18/10/2018	Review date changed to Dec 2019; Plain English Summary and Rationale updated.		
5	09/01/2020	Review date changed to January 2023: Plain English Summary updated.		
6	11/03/2021	Wording added around adjuvant adenoidectomy for the treatment of glue ear in policy statement to bring in line with EBI Policy. (minor change)		ECCP
7	21/03/2023	Wording changes to align the policy to the national Evidence Based Interventions guidance. Review date changed to March 2025.		ECCP
8	23/03/2025	Review date of March 2029 agreed. No changes to policy criteria. New policy template adopted.	IFR Manager	CPRG

1.0 Background

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/>

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.

2.0 Policy statement

Policy category	Policy details																
CBA	<p>Funded for children under the age of 12 years when the following criteria are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>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.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Degree of hearing loss</th> <th>Hearing loss range (dB HL)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Normal hearing</td> <td>-10 to 20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Slight hearing loss</td> <td>21 to 24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mild hearing loss</td> <td>25 to 40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Moderate hearing loss</td> <td>41 to 55</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Moderately severe hearing loss</td> <td>56 to 70</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sever hearing loss</td> <td>71 to 90</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Profound deafness</td> <td>91+</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>If your doctor believes that your child meets the criteria set out in this policy Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board will fund the treatment.</p>	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+
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3.0 Patients who are not eligible for treatment under this policy

Patients who are not eligible for treatment under this policy may be considered on an individual basis where their GP or consultant believes exceptional circumstances exist that warrant deviation from the rule of this policy.

Individual cases will be reviewed at the ICB's Individual Funding Request Panel upon receipt of a completed application form from the patient's GP, Consultant or Clinician. Applications cannot be considered from patients personally.

4.0 Connected policies

None

5.0 References

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.