

**Programme Title: Clinical Policies**

Clinical Policies aim to prevent avoidable harm to patients by only offering treatments on the NHS that are evidence-based, clinically safe and effective, as well as cost effective and a good use of resources.

**Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes and Hertfordshire**

<b>Title of policy and version:</b>	<b>ENT - Tonsillectomy for Recurrent Tonsillitis</b>  Version: v1.0
<b>Commissioning position:</b>	This intervention is ROUTINELY FUNDED by the ICB when the policy criteria are met
<b>Scope:</b>	<p><b>Covers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surgical removal of tonsils for treatment of recurrent acute tonsillitis</li> </ul> <p><b>Out of scope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tonsillectomy for other indications (e.g. OSA, malignancy, quinsy)</li> <li>• Emergency presentations (e.g. treatment of parapharyngeal abscess)</li> </ul>
<b>Cohort:</b>	Adults and children with recurrent acute tonsillitis causing disabling episodes and preventing normal functioning.
<b>Other relevant Clinical Policy</b>	TBC

<b>Treatments routinely funded:</b>	<p>Tonsillectomy is routinely funded where all the following apply:</p> <p>Tonsillectomy surgery for treatment of recurrent severe episodes of sore throat will only be funded when <b>ALL</b> of the following criteria are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sore throats are due to acute tonsillitis</li> </ul> <p><b>AND</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The episodes are disabling and prevent normal functioning</li> </ul>
-------------------------------------	---

	<p><b>AND</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seven or more, documented, clinically significant, adequately treated sore throats in the preceding year</li> </ul> <p><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five or more such episodes in each of the preceding two years</li> </ul> <p><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three or more such episodes in each of the preceding three years</li> </ul> <p>There are a number of medical conditions where episodes of tonsillitis can be damaging to health or tonsillectomy is required as part of the on-going management. In these instances, tonsillectomy may be considered beneficial at a lower threshold than this guidance after specialist assessment. A request for Advice and Guidance is recommended to discuss the patient, before considering referral:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acute and chronic renal disease resulting from acute bacterial tonsillitis</li> <li>• As part of the treatment of severe guttate psoriasis</li> <li>• Metabolic disorders where periods of reduced oral intake could be dangerous to health</li> <li>• PFAPA (Periodic fever, Aphthous stomatitis, Pharyngitis, Cervical adenitis)</li> <li>• Severe immune deficiency that would make episodes of recurrent tonsillitis dangerous</li> </ul>
--	---

<b>Treatments not funded:</b>	<p>Tonsillectomy for recurrent tonsillitis where the above criteria are not met.</p> <p>Tonsillectomy for tonsilloliths alone.</p>
-------------------------------	--

<p><b>Rationale:</b></p> <p>Tonsillectomy for recurrent tonsillitis is considered a low clinical priority intervention unless strict clinical criteria are met. NHS commissioning is focused on interventions that treat disease or restore function; tonsillectomy is therefore routinely funded only for patients with recurrent, severe and disabling episodes of acute tonsillitis that meet the policy thresholds.</p>
---

<p><b>IFR Statement Clinical Exceptionality:</b></p>
--

Where a patient does not meet the policy criteria or the intervention is not normally funded by the NHS, an application for clinical exceptionality can be considered via the ICB's Individual Funding Request (IFR) Policy and Process.

**Coding list:**

Policy document record:	ENT - Tonsillectomy for Recurrent Tonsillitis Version: v1.0
Ratification date:	1 April 2026
Record of significant change:	v1.0 – New harmonised policy for Central East ICB, based on predecessor ICB policies (C&P, HWE, BLMK)
Planned review date:	TBC

**Document Environmental Impact statement:**

Neutral environmental impact. Policy to be shared and stored electronically where possible; if printed, use double-sided printing and minimal copies.