

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

Title of policy and version:	Orthopaedics - Knee Arthroscopy for Osteoarthritis Version: v1.0
Commissioning position:	This intervention is NOT NORMALLY FUNDED by the ICB
Scope:	<p>Covers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arthroscopic washout/lavage of the knee, with or without debridement, as part of treatment for knee osteoarthritis <p>Out of scope:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arthroscopy for non-osteoarthritic indications (e.g. acute injury/internal derangement), which sit under separate policies/pathways
Cohort:	Adults with knee osteoarthritis.
Other relevant Clinical Policy	TBC

Treatments routinely funded:	Arthroscopic washout/lavage (\pm debridement) only where the person has knee OA with a clear history of true mechanical locking (as opposed to morning joint stiffness, 'giving way' or X-ray evidence of loose bodies).
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Treatments not funded:	Arthroscopic washout/lavage (\pm debridement) for osteoarthritis where there is no clear history of true mechanical locking (including where symptoms are gelling, "giving way", or X-ray evidence of loose bodies alone).
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Rationale:	
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Knee arthroscopy (washout/lavage ± debridement) for osteoarthritis is considered a low clinical priority intervention. NHS commissioning is focused on interventions that treat disease or restore function; evidence shows arthroscopy for osteoarthritis does not provide clinically meaningful improvement in pain or function for most patients and is therefore not normally funded, except where there is a clear history of true mechanical locking.

IFR Statement Clinical Exceptionality:

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:	Orthopaedics - Knee Arthroscopy (washout/lavage ± debridement) for Osteoarthritis Version: v1.0
Ratification date:	1 st 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.