

Introduction

This policy review is part of a wider project to review and update more than 100 health policies by six Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in Merseyside. The review will ensure that the latest clinical guidance is applied consistently across Merseyside and that patients have access to the latest treatments.

Name of treatment or procedure

Cough assist devices

Description of treatment or procedure

Cough assist is a non-invasive device that removes mucus and other secretions in the lungs for patients who can't cough effectively on their own. It works by gradually applying positive pressure to the airway before rapidly shifting to negative pressure, stimulating a stronger, more efficient cough.

Proposed policy

Cough assist devices will be commissioned where the patient:

- can't cough or clear secretions effectively with a peak cough flow (PCF) less than 160L/min
- OR has vital capacity (VC) below 1.1L in general respiratory muscle weakness, or voluntary reduced PCF of 270L/min or < 270L/min and clinical symptoms or a weak cough.

Requests for MI-E or cough assist therapy for patients who do not meet the above criteria are considered low priority and will not be routinely funded.

Reason for proposed changes

There is no current policy for cough assist devices across the Merseyside CCGs. It was identified as an important area for policy development because of the number of applications for these devices coming through as individual funding requests.

Summary of proposed changes

- CCGs currently have no policy in place for cough assist devices despite a cohort of patients having previously been identified who would benefit from such devices. The introduction of a policy will allow CCGs to more effectively manage this patient group.
- Typical cough assist patients include (but is not limited to) those with the following conditions:
 - An established diagnosis as paralytic/restrictive disorder including but not exclusively:
 - spinal cord injuries (SCI)
 - neuromuscular diseases such as ALS
 - Guillain-Barré Syndrome
 - myasthenia gravis
 - muscular dystrophy
 - multiple sclerosis
 - post-polio



- kypho-scoliosis
- syringomyelia.