

It is important to note that, even if your Consultant or GP refers you to the Panel, this will not always mean that your case will be considered exceptional. While we understand that this may be disappointing for some people, we are duty bound to spend our limited resources in a way that prioritises essential treatment and treatment aimed at preventing disease.

What if I am seen by a Consultant?

Your GP may refer you to a Consultant for advice on treatment and management of your condition. This does not mean that your Consultant will be able to offer you a treatment not routinely available without gaining prior approval.

Who can I contact for more information?

Your doctor or nurse will be able to discuss the different options for treatment that are suitable and ways of managing your condition.

You can also find more information on ways to manage your condition online, either through www.cks.nhs.uk or www.patient.co.uk.

More information

For general health information and information about the NHS, including the complaints procedure, call the NHS Direct Service free on 0845 4647 or look on their website www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk.

Useful contacts

Somerset Primary Care Trust

Wynford House
Lufton Way
Yeovil
Somerset
BA22 8HR

Tel: 01935 384000

Fax: 01935 384079

Email: headquarters@somerset.nhs.uk

Website: www.somerset.nhs.uk

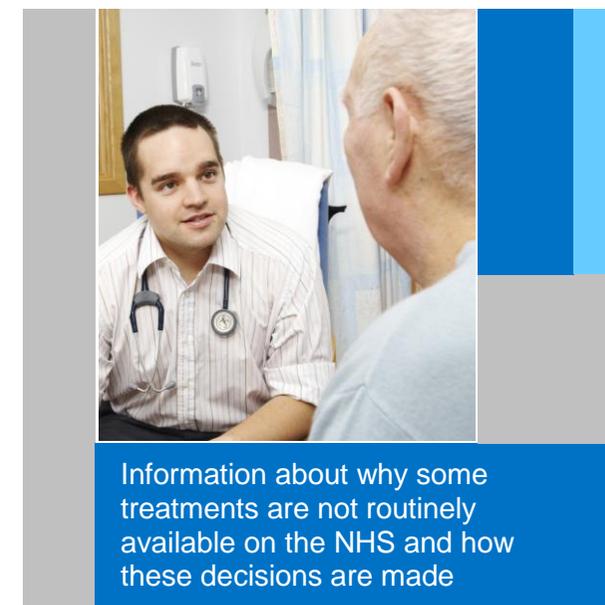
Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Tel: 0800 0851 067

Email: pals@somerset.nhs.uk

Treatments not routinely available on the NHS

Information for patients



Introduction

This leaflet explains why some treatments are not routinely available on the NHS. It tells you how these decisions are made and what this means for you as a patient.

Why set priorities?

NHS Somerset is committed to making the best use of resources to improve the health of Somerset's population. We have to balance very carefully the health needs of our population with the resource that is available. This means we have to make sure the treatments we do spend money on will work and will improve people's health.

By doing this, we can continue to fund the many thousands of operations, treatments, appointments and prescriptions for the people of Somerset each year. To make this work we have to prioritise treatments. This means that some treatments will not normally be available on the NHS.

Why are some procedures not routinely available on the NHS?

Some treatments are not routinely available on the NHS because there is limited evidence of clinical effectiveness.

Even though we may have used these procedures for many years, advancing medical knowledge may have shown that benefits for most patients are small.

The NHS continually reviews the clinical effectiveness of the treatments that it provides. The availability of treatments changes with new clinical evidence, so it may be that somebody you know has had a procedure in the past which is no longer available. An example of this is the routine removal of the tonsils (tonsillectomy) for preventing recurrent tonsillitis. Your GP or nurse will discuss the different treatment options with you.

For some procedures, there may be concerns about the safety of the treatment or procedure, or the burdens of the procedure have been found to outweigh the benefit to most patients. Again, your GP or nurse will discuss the different treatment options with you.

For other types of procedures, the underlying condition does not normally affect the health and functioning of the individual, nor does it ordinarily lead to longer term complications. These procedures are usually performed primarily for cosmetic reasons. Your GP or nurse should be able to discuss alternatives with you.

Who decides which treatments are not routinely available?

Decisions are reached on which treatments may be available based on a number of factors. These include clinical evidence about the impact of the condition on health, lifestyle and well-being. We also consider whether the condition could lead to future complications.

NHS Somerset considers different treatments and makes recommendations about which should be routinely available locally on the NHS in partnership with doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals. Recommendations are taken from national guidance, such as that available from the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE).

Decisions about procedures that are not routinely available in Somerset are very similar to other parts of the country.

Are there any exceptions?

In exceptional circumstances, an individual may gain considerably more benefit from a particular procedure than might be expected for the average patient with the same condition. In these circumstances, an application may be made to the Individual Funding Review Panel for consideration by your GP or consultant.