

## **Drainage of the middle ear in Greater Manchester** [Link GM Drainage of the Middle Ear \(with or without grommets\)](#)

This commissioning statement is about the management of *otitis media with effusion*, a condition in which there is buildup of fluid deep inside the ear. Also known as “glue ear”, this might cause a variety of symptoms ranging from earache, buzzing sounds, difficulty with balance or even hearing impairment. Glue ear is very common in children and fortunately the problem may only last a few weeks. In most children, it will clear up of its own accord.

Unfortunately, there are some children where the problem will persist and could last for even months. If it occurs in both ears, this is particularly problematical especially if the child’s hearing is affected. If this goes on for a long time, speech development and progress at school could be affected.

Children with the most serious problems might require surgery. This is the main procedure which is covered by the GM commissioning statement. The surgical procedure itself involves insertion of a small tube (also known as a grommet) into the ear. The grommet allows drainage of the fluid and eventually, hearing is restored. This has to be done under a general anaesthetic and so it is not something which should be taken lightly. Occasionally, the surgeon might remove the child’s adenoids (which are little glands at the back of the nose) at the same time because they could be contributing to the fluid buildup.

The current commissioning statement complies with guidance from the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) which was first published in 2008. Because NICE reviewed its guidance on glue ear last year, the current GM commissioning statement may need to be reviewed so that it is as up to date as possible. This could involve some slight changes or amendments, but these will be in line with the new NICE guidance and will be discussed and agreed by local experts. Because the new commissioning statement will be based on NICE recommendations, the people in Greater Manchester can be assured that their children are being treated according to the best available guidance which is standard across the whole of the country.

Practically, no major changes are expected following this review.