

Surgery for snoring in Greater Manchester

Background

Snoring is very common and is not a health problem for most people. It is known as 'simple snoring' when a person snores but does not have breathing problems during sleep. Sometimes, snoring can be a sign of obstructive sleep apnoea, a health condition in which people stop breathing briefly during sleep. Obstructive sleep apnoea requires treatment because it can have a big impact on a person's overall health and quality of life, but it can usually be treated without surgery.

Clinical policy is needed to make sure that surgery is not offered to people who have simple snoring. This is because surgery can cause side effects and there is little evidence that it helps people with simple snoring. Policy is also needed to make sure that people with obstructive sleep apnoea only have surgery when the benefits outweigh the risks, which include breathing problems and bleeding.

We looked at the current Greater Manchester commissioning statement and did a review to see if any new evidence had been published on surgery for snoring. We also needed to review the commissioning statement to include information about obstructive sleep apnoea that had been removed from the tonsillectomy commissioning statement.

What does the current Greater Manchester commissioning statement say?

The current commissioning statement says that patients cannot have surgery for simple snoring. The tonsillectomy commissioning statement also said that adults could not have surgery to remove their tonsils (tonsillectomy) to treat obstructive sleep apnoea.

What evidence did we find?

Guidance was published in 2019 and said that surgery for simple snoring should not be available on the NHS. Since then, no new evidence on simple snoring has been published.

New guidance on obstructive sleep apnoea in adults was published in 2021 and says that some patients with a BMI less than 35 should be offered a tonsillectomy if they have sleep apnoea. It also said that some patients with severe obstructive sleep apnoea should be offered other types of surgery if other treatments for sleep apnoea have failed.

No guidance on sleep apnoea surgery for children has been published since the previous commissioning statements on snoring and tonsillectomy were written.

Recommendations

We are recommending that the commissioning statement for simple snoring should not change.

For obstructive sleep apnoea, we are recommending that surgery to remove the tonsils should be commissioned for adults with large tonsils that partially block their airway, if

their body mass index is less than 35. For patients with severe obstructive sleep apnoea, we are recommending that surgery should be commissioned if other treatments have not worked.

For your information, here is the link to the current commissioning statement on Invasive treatments for Snoring [GM Snoring Commissioning Statement](#)