



London Choosing Wisely: Improving health outcomes for all Londoners

Programme update: October 2018

1. Background

In December 2017, London's Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) Accountable Officers commissioned a series of clinical expert working groups to inform the harmonisation of clinical commissioning policies for a limited number of specific treatments. The aim of the work was to ensure that Londoners have equal access to these treatments across London, to make sure they are used consistently across London and their use follows criteria that improves the health of patients. The clinically-led programme was set up and adopted the title [London Choosing Wisely](#).

The eight treatments reviewed by the [London Choosing Wisely](#) programme are surgical removal of benign skin lesions; hip arthroplasty; knee arthroplasty; knee arthroscopy; interventional treatments for back pain; varicose vein procedures; shoulder decompression and cataract surgery.

The programme is advisory and the statutory duty for approval of London-wide policies rests with each CCG governing body who will have the opportunity to further review, engage and consult in line with local governance processes, before making a decision on implementation.

2. What this means for patients

Undertaking such an extensive evidence review for each treatment will reduce variation of care for patients across London by providing doctors with the latest evidence on what treatments should be offered to patients to achieve the best health outcome, whilst also seeking to ensure that patients do not receive unnecessary treatment or intervention that will have little impact on their condition.

The programme has embedded public and patient involvement throughout; the patient voice is being heard through the Steering Group's two patient representatives and each Task and Finish Group also has a patient representative supporting the development of each draft London policy.

3. London Choosing Wisely: outcomes

In October 2018, the London Choosing Wisely Steering Group signed off the pan London commissioning policies which have been developed through the expert clinical working groups. Chair of the London Choosing Wisely Steering Group, Dr Vin Diwakar, Regional Medical Director, NHS England (London Region), has now presented these commissioning policies to London's CCG Accountable Officers.

The final pan London policies which were submitted to CCG Accountable Officers can be downloaded via the Healthy London Partnership website:

<https://www.healthylondon.org/resource/london-choosing-wisely-outcomes/>.

The entire process has involved a rigorous and detailed review of each treatment and included assessment using the latest and most robust research available. Clinicians on the London Choosing Wisely programme, who have led local programmes in their CCGs and Sustainability and Transformation partnerships (STPs), have advised that the pan London policies will add value to their local work.

Undertaking such an extensive review at a regional level positions London as a leader in delivering appropriate, consistent and robust policies for providing equal access to certain treatments where there has previously been variation. It is a strong demonstration of clinically-led partnership working across London's STP regions.

4. Implementing London Choosing Wisely policies

London Choosing Wisely is an advisory programme. CCGs will now consider how far the draft pan London policies presented vary from existing local policies, where these are present.

The draft London Choosing Wisely policies, if implemented, would be managed within current local systems. It will be for CCGs to further review, engage and/or consult locally in line with local governance processes, prior to any implementation.

The London Choosing Wisely Programme Board, facilitated by NHS England (London region), will continue to support CCGs in compliance and to provide a forum for STP commissioning leads to more generally discuss how commissioning policies are being developed locally in their patch.

5. NHS England's national Evidence-Based Interventions (EBI) programme

At both national and local levels, there is a general consensus that more needs to be done to ensure that the least effective interventions are not routinely performed, or only performed in more clearly defined circumstances.

Whilst the London Choosing Wisely programme is separate to the national [Evidence-Based Interventions \(EBI\)](#) programme, the Steering Group has engaged with the EBI team as they are also reviewing clinical criteria for benign skin lesions; knee arthroscopy; low back pain (spinal injections); varicose veins and subacromial shoulder pain.

The London Choosing Wisely policies drafted in these treatment areas have been shared with the national team and do not contradict the proposed national criteria, which were recently out for consultation.

The national team have confirmed that national guidance produced in these treatment areas will not be mandatory and CCGs will have the flexibility to adopt local policies where they align to national policy and are already in use.

6. Further information

Please consult your local CCG for further information regarding the development of London Choosing Wisely policies in your area. You can find your local CCG [here](#).