

Non-specific Low Back Pain

CRITERIA BASED ACCESS

Surgical treatment for non-specific low back pain is considered to be a procedure of low clinical priority. These procedures are therefore not normally funded.

Consider referral for surgical opinion only for people who:

- have completed an optimal package of care, including a combined physical and psychological treatment programme of minimum of 6 weeks

AND

- continue to have severe non-specific low back pain for which they would consider surgery

AND

- multidisciplinary assessment suggests that benefits of intervention will exceed the risks and full attempt at non invasive treatment greater than 1 year has been tried.

Only offer an MRI scan for non-specific low back pain within the context of a referral for an opinion on spinal fusion surgery.

A clinician who suspects that there is a specific cause for their patient's low back pain should arrange the relevant investigations. The management of the following conditions is not covered by this policy: malignancy, infection, fracture, ankylosing spondylitis and other inflammatory disorders, radicular pain resulting from nerve root compression or cauda equina syndrome.

Back pain with possible serious pathologies, red flag symptoms, should be referred urgently as per usual practice.