



June 2025

Simple Ear Wax Removal Commissioning Policy

Overview

Simple ear wax removal, for the purposes of impacted wax alone, is no longer to be funded on the NHS in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Patients will still be able to have ear wax removed, when clinically appropriate, where they meet the policy criteria, or where it is part of an Ears, Nose and Throat (ENT) or Audiology pathway.

The decision was taken by the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board (ICB) following a review of its Excluded & Restricted Procedure Policy. This is to make sure the services provided by the NHS are both clinically and cost effective, aiming to get the best value for money from the resources available.

Background

Prior to this decision, the ICB did not have a commissioning policy for ear wax removal and services were fragmented and inequitable, with a large percentage of the population already accessing services privately. The Clinical Policy Advisory Group (CPAG) was asked to review the clinical evidence and concluded there was little evidence available on the clinical value and outcomes of ear wax removal. Therefore, a task and finish group was established to understand need and identify specific patient demographics who may benefit from this service.

The new policy ensures that, where clinically appropriate, patients would still be able to have their ear wax removed, as part of an ENT or Audiology pathway, or where the patient meets the policy criteria i.e. if there is a foreign object, an infection, trauma or other referable abnormality or if a patient has learning disabilities or dementia and requires more complex care. It now means the access criteria is equitable for the whole population and removes the post code lottery that existed prior to this.

The review found that there would be a small percentage of patients, who are currently accessing a service from their GP practice, or a tier three ENT service, who may be disadvantaged by this policy change as they would no longer meet the criteria. There is self-care advice available to patients on the NHS website and patients will be signposted to this advice: [Earwax build-up - NHS](#).

Decision

The new policy will be adopted with immediate effect, however for GP practices currently delivering the service, notice has been given to cease delivery as of the 31st July 25.

Information has been shared with GP practices to support communication with patients. Anyone who wishes to make a complaint following the policy change is asked to contact the ICB Patient Advice and Liaison team (PALS) [Patient advice and liaison service / complaints - Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB](#)