

To: All Practices in Surrey and Sussex LMCs

25 June 2018

Dear Colleague

Ear Wax Syringing and Irrigation: Update

As has been widely reported, NICE has published guidance entitled Hearing Loss in Adults: assessment and management (June 2018) available at <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng98>.

In relation to removing earwax, NICE has recommended the appropriate place for this to occur is in primary care or community ear care services, if the earwax is contributing to hearing loss or other symptoms.

Prior to treatment, adults are advised to use wax softeners; manual irrigation to remove earwax is not recommended, instead, irrigation using an electronic irrigator, microsuction, or another method are suggested. If two attempts with pre-treatment wax softening having been unsuccessful, NICE recommends referral to a specialist ear care or ear nose and throat service.

Given this guidance, it is now even more appropriate for CCGs to commission an appropriate service to be delivered from General Practice or another community service; this would need to include provision for any equipment and/or training that NICE has recommended.

The LMC would reiterate to all GP practices that they should not undertake any NHS care that is not commissioned and appropriately resourced. It may be helpful in the context of patient enquiries, or in anticipation of stopping an unfunded service the practice is currently providing, to discuss this issue with your PPG and gain their views. If no local service is commissioned, practices should ask their CCG where to refer patients. In this context the LMC also has an appropriate LCS specification for ear irrigation available if any CCG wishes to commission such care from General Practice.

With best wishes



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Chief Executive

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