NHS Greater Manchester

Arthroscopic subacromial decompression surgery for pure subacromial pain commissioning statement

Version 0.1 (13 Jan 2026)

Criteria

Arthroscopic subacromial decompression surgery for pure subacromial pain is routinely commissioned if all of the criteria below are satisfied:

1. The pain has been present for at least 12 months.
   AND
2. The following "red flag" warnings have all been excluded:
   - Acute, painful, *red warm joint* (suspected infection).
   - *Trauma* (with loss of rotation and abnormal shape, unreduced dislocation).
   - *Shoulder mass/swelling* (suspected malignancy).
   - Sudden *inability to actively raise the arm*, with or without trauma (acute cuff tear).
   - New symptoms of *inflammation in several joints* (suspected systemic inflammatory joint disease).

   AND
3. There are no signs of calcific tendinopathy/tendinitis.
   AND
4. There is no history of rotator cuff tear or acromioclavicular joint pain.
   AND
5. Shoulder specific exercises have been performed for at least 3 months and/or up to 2 subacromial corticosteroid injections have been administered.
   AND
6. Despite (5) above, the patient's pain and loss of function persist.
   AND
7. The patient is considered fit for surgery.
   AND
8. After a discussion between the surgeon and patient, a joint decision is taken to proceed with surgery.

Exclusions

1. The conditions described as "red flag" warnings (paragraph 2) are excluded from this policy.

2. Shoulder arthroscopy for indications other than pure subacromial shoulder pain are not within the scope of this commissioning statement.

Notes for clinicians:

1. When referring to secondary care for treatment, please ensure you include enough detail for secondary care clinicians to triage against, otherwise referrals could be rejected.

2. Treating clinicians can submit an Individual Funding Request, also known as an IFR, outside of this guidance if they feel there is a good case for exceptionality. More information on determining clinical exceptionality can be found in the Greater Manchester IFR Operational Policy.

DRAFT