GIG CYMRU NHS WALES
Cyd-bwyllgor Comisiynu
Joint Commissioning Committee

Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) service for adults with cardiac failure

Policy Position Statement: PPS102

Document Information	
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Description	NHS Wales will not routinely commission this specialised service in accordance with the criteria described in this policy
Document Update Information	On the latest template Updated links to the NICE HealthTech Guidance

Contents

Abbreviations

ECMO	Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation
IPFR	Individual Patient Funding Request
NWJCC	NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee

Policy Statement

NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee (NWJCC) will not routinely commission Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) service for adults with cardiac failure in accordance with the criteria outlined in this document.

Welsh Language

NWJCC is committed to treating the English and Welsh languages on the basis of equality, and endeavour to ensure commissioned services meet the requirements of the legislative framework for Welsh Language, including the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards (No.7) Regulations 2018.

Where a service is provided in a private facility or in a hospital outside of Wales, the provisions of the Welsh language standards do not directly apply but in recognition of its importance to the patient experience, the referring health board should ensure that wherever possible patients have access to their preferred language.

In order to facilitate this, NWJCC is committed to working closely with providers to ensure that in the absence of a Welsh speaker, written information will be offered. Where possible, links to local teams should be maintained during the period of care.

Decarbonisation

NWJCC is committed to taking assertive action to reducing the carbon footprint through mindful commissioning activities. Where possible and taking into account each individual patient's needs, services are provided closer to home, including via digital and virtual access, with a delivery chain for service provision and associated capital that reflects the NWJCC commitment.

Disclaimer

NWJCC assumes that healthcare professionals will use their clinical judgment, knowledge and expertise when deciding whether it is appropriate to apply this document.

This document may not be clinically appropriate for use in all situations and does not override the responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or their carer or guardian, or Local Authority.

NWJCC disclaims any responsibility for damages arising out of the use or non-use of this policy.

1. Introduction

NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee (NWJCC) have developed this Policy Position Statement to define the commissioning position of NWJCC on Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation(ECMO) service for adults with cardiac failure resident of Wales.

NWJCC ensure that decisions on commissioning are based on evidence, and in creating this document NWJCC has reviewed the relevant guidance issued by NHS England[1]. It has considered the place for this treatment in current clinical practice and whether the research has shown a benefit to patients.

NWJCC has concluded that there is not enough evidence to make the treatment available at this time, and therefore will not routinely commission ECMO for adults with cardiac failure resident in Wales.

1.1 Background

Heart failure is a condition caused by the heart failing to pump enough blood around the body at the right pressure. This can cause:

- feeling short of breath
- feeling tired
- ankle swelling

Acute heart failure is when these symptoms develop quickly, the patient will require urgent hospital treatment.

Acute heart failure may be treated:

- with medicines
- by mechanically supporting the heart and circulation system, using a device that helps the heart to pump blood.

Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) is a form of mechanical circulation support. It involves:

- an artificial lung (called a 'membrane') is fitted, this sits outside the body
- the artificial lung puts oxygen into the blood (called 'oxygenation')
- it also continuously pumps this blood into and around the body, this supports or replaces the function of the heart.

[1] Extra-corporeal-membrane-oxygenation-service-for-adults-with-cardiac-failure.pdf

1.2 About the treatment

Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) is a form of mechanical circulatory support that can sustain or replace cardiac function. It is a type of life support intended for short to mid-term support.

There are two main types of ECMO:

- venovenous (VV), and
- venoarterial (VA).

For acute heart failure in adults, the venoarterial (VA) method is used. Blood is withdrawn via the venous system (usually the femoral vein or right atrium) and pumped through an oxygenator, where gas exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide takes place. It is then returned to the arterial system (usually the femoral artery or ascending aorta). Patients are given a continuous infusion of an anticoagulant, usually heparin, to prevent blood clotting in the external system. For patients with renal insufficiency, a haemofiltration unit may be integrated into the circuit.

VA ECMO provides both respiratory and haemodynamic support. Some forms of VA ECMO can be inserted percutaneously by experienced clinicians who don't need to be surgeons, but some forms of VA ECMO require cardiothoracic surgical interventions.

The use of VA ECMO in acute heart failure in adults can be divided in 3 main categories:

- following heart surgery
- acute heart failure
- augmented CPR

1.3 Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment

The Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment (EWLIA) process has been developed to help promote fair and equal treatment in the delivery of health services. It aims to enable NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee to identify and eliminate detrimental treatment caused by the adverse impact of health service policies upon groups and individuals in relation to the protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010), the Public Sector Equality Duty (2011) and the Welsh Language requirements.

This policy has been subjected to an EWLIA. The Assessment demonstrates the policy is robust and there is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. All opportunities to promote equality have been taken.

2. Aims and Objectives

This policy aims to define the commissioning position of NWJCC on ECMO for adults with cardiac failure for the residents of Wales.

The objective is to ensure evidence-based decisions are made on commissioning an ECMO service for adults with cardiac failure for the residents of Wales.

3. Documents which have informed this policy

The following documents have been used to inform this policy:

- **National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance**
  - Migrated to NICE interventional procedures 807, 808 and 810
  - 807 migrated to HealthTech Guidance 764 Overview | VA ECMO for severe acute heart failure in adults | Guidance | NICE
  - 808 migrated to HealthTech Guidance 765 - Overview | VA ECMO for extracorporeal cardiopulmonary resuscitation (ECPR) in adults with refractory cardiac arrest | Guidance | NICE
  - 810 migrated to HealthTech Guidance 762 - Overview | VA ECMO for postcardiotomy cardiogenic shock in adults | Guidance | NICE

- **NHS England policies**
  - NHS England Clinical Commissioning Policy: Extra corporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) service for adults with cardiac failure.

- **NHS Wales**
  - All Wales Policy: Making Decisions in Individual Patient Funding requests (IPFR).

4. Date of Review

This document will be reviewed when information is received which indicates that the policy requires revision.

5. Listening to People:

5.1 Complaints, Incidents and Redress Process

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that decisions made under this policy are robust and appropriate for the patient group, it is acknowledged that there may be occasions when the patient or their representative are not happy with decisions made or the treatment provided.

The patient or their representative should be guided by the clinician, or the member of NHS staff with whom the concern is raised, to the appropriate arrangements for management of their concern.

If a patient or their representative is unhappy with the care provided during the treatment or the clinical decision to withdraw treatment provided under this policy, the patient and/or their representative should be guided to Listening to People, The NHS Wales Complaints, Incidents and Redress Process – People's Guidance 2026. For services provided outside NHS Wales the patient or their representative should be guided to the NHS Trust Concerns Procedure, with a copy of the concern being sent to NWJCC.

5.2 Individual Patient Funding Request (IPFR)

If the patient does not meet the criteria for treatment as outlined in this policy, an Individual Patient Funding Request (IPFR) can be submitted for consideration in line with the All Wales Policy: Making Decisions on Individual Patient Funding Requests. The request will then be considered by the All Wales IPFR Panel.

If the patient wishes to be referred to a provider outside of the agreed pathway, and IPFR should be submitted.

Further information on making IPFR requests can be found at: Individual Patient Funding Requests

Annex i Glossary

Glossary

Individual Patient Funding Request (IPFR)

An IPFR is a request to NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee (NWJCC) to fund an intervention, device or treatment for patients that fall outside the range of services and treatments routinely provided across Wales.

NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee (NWJCC)

NWJCC is a joint committee of the seven local health boards in Wales. The purpose of NWJCC is to ensure that the population of Wales has fair and equitable access to the full range of Tertiary Services. NWJCC ensures that services within our portfolio are commissioned from providers that have the appropriate experience and expertise. They ensure that these providers are able to provide a robust, high quality and sustainable services, which are safe for patients and are cost effective for NHS Wales.

Contact Us

If you have a question related to this document you can contact us using one of the methods outlined below.

If you would like this document in an alternative format and/or language, please contact us for assistance.

Email:

NWJCC consultation mailbox – NWJCC.Consultation@wales.nhs.uk

Telephone:

General Enquiries – 01443 433112

Website:

Contact us - NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee

Writing:

If you wish to contact the NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee, you can write to us at one of our locations below, we welcome correspondence in Welsh or English:

South Wales Office
Unit G1 The Willowford, Main Avenue, Treforest Industrial Estate, Pontypridd, CF37 5YL

North Wales Office
Unit 3, Media Point - Unit 3, Mold Business Park, Mold, CH7 1XY