

Berkshire West CCG Commissioning Policy Statement

Aquatic physiotherapy (hydrotherapy)

Recommendation made by the CCG: February 2021

Aquatic physiotherapy, also known as hydrotherapy, is the use of water in the treatment of conditions such as arthritis, musculoskeletal and neurological disorders.

Due to the limited evidence of clinical and cost-effectiveness of the benefits of aquatic physiotherapy compared with land-based physiotherapy aquatic physiotherapy is **not normally funded**.

Cases of exceptionality where significant clinical benefit for the use of aquatic physiotherapy over land based physiotherapy can be demonstrated by a referring clinician, can be considered via the CCG Individual Funding Request process (IFR).

Guidance note for applications for IFR

Applications for funding as an exception to the policy will benefit from supporting evidence to indicate the following, as relevant:

- Reasons why the patient cannot take part in land based therapy / activity? (For example, due to post-operative restrictions, severe weakness, obesity and pain)
- Does the patient have a specific muscle strength loss? (For example, muscle injury or wasting associated with a condition or trauma).
- Would this aquatic physiotherapy intervention enable future self-management?
- Is the patient prescribed medication which could be potentially reduced or stopped as a result of aquatic physiotherapy intervention?

Please note the above are not criteria for funding. However, if there is no evidence of the above examples it is unlikely that a clinician could sustainably argue that an individual had an exceptional capacity to benefit.

NOTES:

- Potentially exceptional circumstances may be considered by a patient's CCG where there is evidence of significant health status impairment (e.g. inability to perform activities of daily living) and there is evidence that the intervention sought would improve the individual's health status.
- This policy will be reviewed in the light of new evidence or new national guidance, e.g., from NICE.

- Thames Valley clinical policies can be viewed at <http://www.fundingrequests.cscsu.nhs.uk/>