

**Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Priorities forum statement**

**Number: 19**

**Subject: The treatment of Onychomycosis (fungal nail infection)**

**Date of decision: February 2012**

**Date of review: February 2014**

**GUIDANCE**

Fungal nail infection is a common and often benign condition. Treatment for 12 weeks with only produces a clinical cure, a little over one year after treatment has been completed, in just over half of those treated. There is a risk of relapse and re-infection.

Onychomycosis may produce cosmetic symptoms only and it is accepted that in such cases treatment is not clinically necessary.

**Treatment for fungal nail infection should therefore not routinely be funded by the NHS.**

Exceptions to this are where the onychomycosis causes significant pain; secondary infection (cellulitis); functional impairment (eg inability to use footwear or difficulty walking) or where the patient is at significant risk of complications due to, for example, diabetes, peripheral vascular disease or immunosuppression.

**It is essential, in those exceptional cases where treatment is planned, that before treatment is commenced the diagnosis must be first confirmed with nail scrapings or clippings.**

**At present the most cost-effective treatment is terbinafine which should be considered first line for those exceptional patients.**

**The Human Rights Act has been considered in the formation of this guidance statement.**