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Dear Colleague,

Referrals for breast reduction surgery

We are writing to clarify the position with regards to PCT funding for breast reduction surgery.

The criteria under which breast reduction surgery will be funded by the PCTs in the Kent and Medway cluster were included in the Referral and Treatment Criteria (RaTC) document.

Breast reduction is available to patients who fulfil all of the following criteria:

- Physical symptoms of back ache and/or neck ache due to large breasts
- Require >500g tissue removed per breast
- BMI of <26kg/m²
- Non-smokers

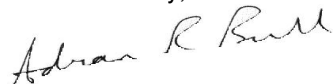
These criteria were identified and agreed through the NHS South East Coast Health Policy Support Unit (HPSU) policy review and recommendations process which reported in April 2011.

The HPSU report states that two systematic reviews and numerous primary studies conclude that breast reduction can reduce pain in shoulders, back and neck caused by large breasts.

Patients generally express a high level of satisfaction following surgery. Other outcomes observed in research studies include improved psychosocial outcomes, psychological well-being, and quality of life. One cost effectiveness study calculated that the cost per quality-adjusted life year (QALY) for breast reduction was in the same range as that observed in hip replacement.

This type of procedure is carried out by Queen Victoria Hospital's team of plastic surgeons who specialise in breast reconstructions. Details of their local clinics across the region can be found in the QVH referral guide for clinicians at www.qvh.nhs.uk/assets/qvh_referral_guide.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Adrian R Bull, MD
Chief Executive