

Policy Category:

CBA

Who usually applies for funding?

Not applicable

Bevacizumab (Avastin) for Wet AMD

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| Commissioning decision | The ICB will provide funding for the treatment of neovascular (wet) age related macular degeneration (Wet AMD) with Avastin (Becavizumab) for patients for whom this represents a clinically appropriate treatment option, within the existing NICE treatment guidelines for Wet AMD. |
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Policy Statement:

Primary and Secondary Care clinicians working together through the Gloucestershire Eye Health Clinical Programme Group confirm the additional option for local patients by commissioning treatment with Avastin (Becavizumab) for patients where this is a clinically appropriate treatment option for them for Wet AMD.

The use of Avastin (Becavizumab) provides a further treatment option in the formulary of medicines available for the treatment of Wet AMD in Gloucestershire within the NICE eligibility criteria for treatment (see bullet points below). Alongside this policy, Gloucestershire residents will continue to benefit from our local treatment pathway, which supports the use of Avastin (Becavizumab) at the first point where any level of disease is detected where this level of disease does not meet the NICE eligibility criteria for treatment with Eylea or Lucentis.

NICE Eligibility Criteria from TA155 and TA294:

- Diagnosed with neovascular (wet) age related macular degeneration
- Best visual acuity in the affected eye (6/12 to 6/96). The use of Snellen values to define visual acuity limits is imprecise compared to using “ETDRS letter scores” and could be interpreted as either 23-70 ETDRS letters or 23-74 letters.
- No permanent damage to the fovea
- Lesion size is less than or equal to 12 disc areas in greatest linear dimension
- Signs that the condition has been getting worse

This policy is in accordance with the NICE clinical guidelines for treatment of Wet AMD, which provides sound evidence that treatment with Avastin (Becavizumab) is a rational treatment option within this pathway. Further, the High Court judgment (later affirmed by the Court of Appeal) confirms that ICBs have competence to make policy decisions based on reasonable evidence.

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Further, having regard to the recent Court of Appeal judgment, a prior prescription is required to be in existence before commencement of treatment of patients using Avastin (Bevacizumab) for Wet AMD.

The NICE clinical guideline takes extensive clinical trial evidence of use of the three available medications and through the use of extensive meta-analyses and 'do novo' economic modelling determines that the use of Avastin can be considered to be safe, provide equivalent outcomes for patients and offer a significant cost efficiency improvement on the existing treatment options available in the NHS.

The study of current practice across the world in the treatment of Wet AMD indicates that Avastin (Bevacizumab) is the primary drug used to treat this condition across much of the rest of the world, including in the USA and France. The Court of Appeal judgment reaffirms that given the evidence available, it is reasonable for treating clinicians working in the NHS to lawfully choose to offer Avastin for ophthalmic use on grounds of cost.

Rationale:

The benefits of this approach are considered to be the potential for improved health outcomes for people of Gloucestershire within available resources.

Plain English Summary:

NHS Gloucestershire ICB is committed to improving the health of the people of Gloucestershire within available resources. The Gloucestershire Eye Health Clinical Programme Group is the forum where clinicians, managers and patients work together with a shared vision - to reduce avoidable sight loss within available resources.

The group reaffirms that it is clinically appropriate to offer treatment with Avastin (Bevacizumab) to patients diagnosed with neovascular age-related macular degeneration (AMD). The Groups' decision follows the publication of the NICE clinical guideline for Wet AMD as well as a Court of Appeal decision reaffirming a similar policy adopted by a group of 12 ICBs in the North East of England for treatment of Wet AMD, which supports the rationality of the ICB taking this decision. Avastin (Bevacizumab) is a licensed drug used primarily to treat cancer, but has a well-established track record in the UK and abroad of being used 'off label' to treat Wet AMD. This offer of treatment will be in addition to the existing funded options of treatment with Lucentis (Ranibizumab) and Eylea (Aflibercept) for Wet AMD.

The NICE Clinical Guideline NG82 published in January 2018 put the outcomes of all the clinical trials that have been reported that were relevant to this treatment pathway alongside each other, and by analysing all of the evidence have concluded that the treatment outcomes for Avastin (Bevacizumab) when used to treat this condition are equivalent, safe and offer a more cost effective option for the NHS compared to using the licensed

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products. Any money saved by offering this treatment option would be reinvested for the benefit of local patients living in Gloucestershire.

Not every patient will be suitable for this drug and prescribing will always be the decision of your clinician based on your clinical presentation. Your eye specialist will discuss with you the potential advantages and disadvantages of using Avastin (Bevacizumab) if this is an option for you. They will always ask for your consent to this treatment option, as they will for any other treatment options that you may be offered.

Evidence base:

NICE Guideline NG82 Age –Related Macular Degeneration

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng82>

Court of Appeal Judgment regarding the use of Avastin in the NHS:

<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/bayer-v-nhs-judgment-250320.pdf>

High Court Judgment regarding use of Avastin in the NHS:

<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/bayer-and-novartis-v-nhs-darlington-ICB-judgment.pdf>

NICE Technology Appraisal Guidance 155 (June '12), 294 (Jul '13) Royal College of Ophthalmology statement published September 2018

<https://www.rcophth.ac.uk/2018/09/the-royal-college-of-ophthalmologists-is-delighted-that-the-high-court-has-found-in-favour-of-the-use-of-avastin-for-wet-amd/>

National Institute for Health Research, Page 9 of their annual report highlights their large scale research programme of Avastin vs Lucentis and the subsequent decision of the World health Organisation to include Avastin on their list of essential medicines for the treatment of wet age related macular degeneration: [NIHR ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15 \(yumpu.com\)](https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/11111111/NIHR-ANNUAL-REPORT-2014-15)

For further information please contact GLICB.IFR@nhs.net

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| Date of publication | 19 November 2020 |
| Policy review date | March 2025 |

Policy Approval Route:

| Reviewing Body | Date of review |
|--|-----------------------|
| Eye Health Clinical Programme Group | |
| NHS Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group | 19 November 2020 |
| Governing Body | |

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Version Control

| Version No | Type of Change | Date | Description of Change |
|------------|----------------|---------|-----------------------------------|
| 0.1 | | | |
| 0.2 | Review date | 10.3.22 | Review date changed to March 2025 |