

Freedom of Information Request: Our Reference CTMUHB_399_23

You asked:

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request information on the commissioning of ear wax removal services by Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. Please may you provide me with answers to the questions below.

1. Does the Health Board currently commission an ear wax removal service or services within primary care or community ear care services, available to all patients registered with GP practices within the Health Board's boundary, as per [Welsh Government's Ear Wax Management Primary and Community Care Pathway \(WHC/2020/014\)](#)?
2. If it does, how can a patient access this service or services when it is considered clinically necessary and/or self-care advice, if appropriate, has been unsuccessful?
3. If the Health Board does commission this service or services within primary care or community ear care services, please provide the name or names of those commissioned providers.
4. Does the Health Board have a policy or guidance on ear wax removal and/or referral pathways for its primary care providers for patients for whom the benefit of ear wax removal is clinically indicated?
5. If the Health Board has issued such guidance, please provide a copy.

Our response:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) indicates that microsuction (using fixed microscopes) is the preferred treatment for ear wax removal.

In 2014 prior to the boundary change, Cwm Taf University Health Board launched a community based Aural Care Nurse led service in RCT & Merthyr. In addition to microsuction, this specialist team of ENT nurses are able to identify and manage a number of other ENT conditions. The team can also refer directly to audiology and ENT consultants when red flags are identified such as tinnitus in one ear or life-threatening infections which can lead to meningitis and septicaemia.

This Aural care service is delivered from central community sites namely; Ysbyty Cwm Rhondda & Ysbyty Cynon Community Hospitals as well as Keir Hardie Health Park. Patients can be referred to this service by their GP or local pharmacy (offering a minor ailment service) using the attached referral form.

For patients living in the Bridgend area, ear wax removal is undertaken by a highly skilled Ear Nose & Throat (ENT) Clinical nurse specialist at Princess of Wales (POW) hospital. This nurse also provides a specialist assessment and treatment service for the removal of impacted wax through the process of microsuction. Patients can be referred to this service by their GP. In this instance, practices are advised to write to the ENT department at POW hospital.

Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board is committed to ensuring care is delivered closest to home and is equitable for all people with aural care needs.

Work is currently underway to extend the community service into the Bridgend area.

All ENT nurses follow NICE guidance (2018), Hearing loss in adults: assessment and management [Recommendations | Hearing loss in adults: assessment and management | Guidance | NICE](#) and are expertly trained in microsuction as per the attached local policy.

At launch of the community service in 2014, all GP practices were contacted and advised of the referral process (attached) and practices have recently been reminded of both ear wax removal services available to them and how to refer patients.