

Freedom of Information Request: Our Reference CTMUHB_267_25

You asked:

Please could you provide:

1. A breakdown of the types of knee injections available through NHS services in the Cynon Valley North and South Clusters (e.g., corticosteroid, hyaluronic acid, polyacrylamide hydrogel such as Arthrosamid, etc.).
2. A list of GP surgeries or community clinics in the Cynon North and South Cluster that currently provide knee injections for osteoarthritis or similar musculoskeletal conditions.
3. The number of NHS clinicians (e.g., GPs, nurse practitioners, physiotherapists) in each cluster who are trained and qualified to deliver joint injections, including their job role and location of service.
4. Any guidelines or service protocols used in these clusters that determine eligibility for receiving joint injections (e.g., maximum number per year, diagnostic thresholds, imaging requirements, etc.).
5. If available, any consideration or pilot projects exploring the use of long-lasting non-surgical alternatives to corticosteroid injections, such as Arthrosamid, especially given the cost-effectiveness of these interventions (estimated at £2,000 for >3 years of relief compared to ~£19,000 for a knee replacement).

Our response:

Injections provided within GP practices in Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board are commissioned under the **Local Enhanced Service Specification for Minor Surgery**, as quoted below:

Scope of Service to be Provided

Procedures in the categories below and other procedures, which the practice is deemed competent to carry out, will be covered by this local enhanced service. These procedures have been classified into the following two groupings for payment:

- i. Invasive procedures, including incisions and excisions*
- ii. Injections (muscles, joints and around tendons) and aspirations*

It is worth noting that a new Directed Supplementary Service will shortly be commissioned by Welsh Government and offered to GP practices in Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board from 1st September 2025. The new service specification will provide further information and direction for primary care to undertake this service.

The current joint injections available from GP practices are Corticosteroid injections, for example, Depo-Medrone. These injections are anti-inflammatory

medications injected directly into the knee joint to relieve pain and swelling, to treat conditions such as osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, bursitis, and tendinitis. Practices do not generally offer other injections such as hyaluronic acid, as this has hospital-only status on the formulary, and is also not recommended within NICE guidelines.

The following table provides information on which GP practices are commissioned to provide joint injections under the existing Minor Surgery Local Enhanced Service, and have an existing accredited GP to provide this service:

GP Practice	Clinician
St Johns Medical Practice	2 GPs
Cwmaman Surgery	1 GP
Meddygfa Glan Cynon	2 GPs
Abercynon Health Centre	3 GPs
Penrhiwceiber Medical Centre (branch of Ashgrove Surgery)	5 GPs

Within North Cynon, all GP practices are able to refer patients requiring joint injections to St Johns Medical Practice, whereby a network minor surgery enhanced service allows GPs at this practice to undertake such service on behalf of other practices. Similarly in South Cynon, patients across the cluster can be referred by their own GP practice to Penrhiwceiber Medical Centre to receive joint injections. Guidelines for eligibility to receive any joint injections are within the parameters of the Local Enhanced Service Specification for Minor Surgery.

At this current time, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board are not aware of any pilot projects exploring the use of long-lasting non-surgical alternatives to corticosteroid injections. However, St Johns Medical Practice has made contact with Arthrosamid® directly to discuss a private service being provided within the North Cynon area. Arthrosamid is an injectable hydrogel designed to provide long-lasting pain relief for patients suffering from knee osteoarthritis, and is not available to anyone within the cluster at present.