

CLINICAL POLICY ADVISORY GROUP (CPAG)

Lycra body suits for postural management of cerebral palsy and other musculoskeletal/ neurological conditions Policy

Statement

Derby and Derbyshire ICB, in line with its principles for procedures of limited clinical value has deemed that **lycra body suits for postural management of cerebral palsy and other musculoskeletal/ neurological conditions in children** should not routinely be commissioned unless the following circumstances apply:

- The patient is on an orthotics, occupational therapist or physiotherapy caseload
- The patient has cerebral palsy or similar condition with significantly abnormal postural muscle tone
- Other interventions have been trialled without success

See Appendix 3 for the Contraindications to Lycra Garments

This policy specifically applies to children under the age of 18.

Lycra body suits will not be funded in adults, unless the patient has been transferred from the paediatric service and ongoing benefit from the lycra garment is demonstrated.

These commissioning intentions will be reviewed periodically. This is to ensure affordability against other services commissioned by the ICB.

1. Background

Cerebral palsy is the name for a group of lifelong conditions that affect movement and coordination. Cerebral palsy is the most common motor disability in childhood. Cerebral means having to do with the brain. Palsy means weakness or problems with using the muscles. It is caused by a problem with the brain that develops before, during or soon after birth. There's currently no cure for cerebral palsy, but treatments are available to help people with the condition be as active and independent as possible. These treatments include physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and medicines.

A feature of cerebral palsy is the alteration of muscle tone - too much or too little tonicity which can possibly be addressed by the use of Lycra Suits. Lycra garments come in the form of gloves, socks, shorts, leggings or a suit. These suits are made up of various sections of Lycra of varying thicknesses which are stitched together using specific tensions and directions of pull. They are made-to-measure and designed specifically to fit the shape of the wearer and so individual assessment is needed. The close-fitting nature of the garments along with the elastic properties of the Lycra provides extra support, which may lead to increased proximal stability. The goals of providing suits includes addressing muscle tone but also reducing contracture of muscle and soft tissue, and improving postural alignment, proximal stability and upper limb movements.

2. Recommendation

Derby and Derbyshire ICB, in line with its principles for procedures of limited clinical value has deemed that **lycra body suits for postural management of cerebral palsy and other musculoskeletal/ neurological conditions in children** should not routinely be commissioned unless the following circumstances apply:

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A prior approvals form is not required

3. Rationale for Recommendation

There is little published data on the use of Lycra suits in the management of cerebral palsy and other neurological and musculoskeletal disorders. There is a paucity of published quality evidence. Whilst research can be traced back over 20 years the current evidence is still of low quality, due to small patient numbers, lack of adequate comparators, short trial durations, and inconsistencies in the types of cerebral palsies and reported outcomes. Studies have shown variable results from both beneficial to detrimental. There is little evidence on either the clinical effectiveness or cost-effectiveness in the use of Lycra suits in the management of cerebral palsy. The current evidence base does not support routine commissioning of Lycra suits in the management of Cerebral Palsy

4. Useful Resources

Improving the Quality of Orthotic Services (2015). NHS England Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2015/11/orthcs-final-rep.pdf> [Accessed Sept 2021]

Uhegwu, E. Lycra garments for neurological and musculoskeletal conditions (2016). Regional Drugs and Therapeutics Centre Available at: <https://www.spioworks.com/files/Lycra-garments-for-the-treatment-of-Cerebral-Palsy-NTAG-appraisal-report.pdf> [Accessed Sept 2021]

Liu, A., Bolton-Maggs, D. LITERATURE REVIEW: Use of Lycra Suits in the Management of Cerebral Palsy and Multiple Sclerosis (2014). Available at <https://liverpoolccg.nhs.uk/media/1075/public-health-lycra-suits-paper.pdf> [Accessed Sept 2021]

5. References

Romeo, D.M., Blandford, S., Marsden, J., Di Polito, A., Del Vecchio, A., Ferrara P., Bernabei, R., Mercuri, E. Effects of Lycra suits in children with Cerebral Palsy. *Eur J Paediatr Neurol.* 2018 Sept; 22 (5): 831-836. doi: 10.1016/j.ejpn.2018.04.014. [Accessed Sept 2021]

Knox, Virginia. (2003). The Use of Lycra Garments in Children with Cerebral Palsy: A Report of a Descriptive Clinical Trial. *The British Journal of Occupational Therapy.* 66. 71-77. 10.1177/030802260306600205. [Accessed Sept 2021]

Matthews, M., Blandford, S., Marsden, J., & Freeman, J. (2016). The use of dynamic elastomeric fabric orthosis suits as an orthotic intervention in the management of children with neuropathic onset scoliosis: A retrospective audit of routine clinical case notes. *Scoliosis and spinal disorders*, 11, 14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13013-016-0073-z>

Karadağ-Saygı, E., & Giray, E. (2019). The clinical aspects and effectiveness of suit therapies for cerebral palsy: A systematic review. *Turkish journal of physical medicine and rehabilitation*, 65(1), 93–110. <https://doi.org/10.5606/tftrd.2019.3431>

6. Appendices

Appendix 1- Consultation

All relevant providers/stakeholders will be consulted via a named link consultant/specialist. Views expressed should be representative of the provider/stakeholder organisation. CPAG will consider all views to inform a consensus decision, noting that sometimes individual views and opinions will differ.

Consultee	Date
Consultant Neurologist STHFT	July 2021
Medical Director CRH	July 2021
Clinical Director CRH	July 2021
Derby Physiotherapists	July 2021
Clinical Policy and Advisory Group	October 2021
Clinical Lay Commissioning Committee	November 2021
Consultant Neurologist CRH	March 2024
Physiotherapist CRH	March 2024

Appendix 2- Document Update

Document Update	Date Updated
Version 2. Policy has been re-worded and reformatted to reflect the DDCCG clinical policies format, with addition of background information, useful resources, references and consultation.	September 2021
Version 2.1 – Review date extended by 12 months in agreement with clinical stakeholders.	March 2024

Appendix 3 – Contraindications to Lycra Garments

Contraindications to the use of Lycra Garments include:

- Intolerance to Lycra
- Chronic skin conditions
- Inadequate monitoring and supervision
- Chronic respiratory condition where the garment covers the trunk (due to cyanosis risk)