1. INTRODUCTION

This is the policy of NHS West Lancashire CCG to enable the commissioning of treatment of varicose veins. This includes cosmetic surgery and non-surgical cosmetic treatments.

The term 'cosmetic surgery' means operations that revise or change the appearance, colour, texture, structure or position of the bodily features to achieve what patients perceive to be more desirable.

'Non-surgical cosmetic treatments' means other procedures that revise or change the appearance, colour, texture, structure or position of the bodily features to achieve what patients perceive to be more desirable.

This policy is written in recognition of service agreements that exist for the provision of treatment of varicose veins and describes eligibility criteria for these procedures. Patients may satisfy the criteria, or may be confirmed as exceptions by NHS West Lancashire CCG on an individual patient basis.

1.1 Scope

This policy applies to the commissioning of services for those individuals who request treatment of varicose veins. Exceptional circumstances are considered when funding requests are received.

This policy applies to patients who are registered with a West Lancashire CCG General Practitioner.

1.2 Principles

The principles that underpin this policy include the need for NHS West Lancashire CCG to commission interventions that are evidence-based, based on need and equitably accessible.

The principles are outlined in more detail in a separate policy entitled: ‘The Ethical Framework Policy for commissioning individual patient funding requests’.

Exceptionality

The Panel will consider the exceptionality of the case when considering funding requests. For the purposes of the policy, exceptionality is taken to mean that the patient is different in their needs compared to other patients with a similar condition requiring an intervention.

2. TREATMENT OF VARICOSE VEINS POLICY

2.1 Context

The NHS will not pay for surgery for cosmetic reasons alone. However,
reconstructive surgery and cosmetic surgery to correct or improve congenital abnormalities and injuries may be undertaken free of charge.

2.2 **Inclusion criteria**
Surgical treatment of severe varicose veins will be considered when any of the following apply:

- Bleeding from a varicosity that has eroded the skin
- Bleeding from a varicosity and are at risk of bleeding again
- An ulcer which is progressive and/or painful despite treatment
- An active or healed ulcer
- Recurrent superficial thrombophlebitis
- A history of DVT
- Recurrent varicose veins following previous surgery provided the criteria used for undertaking the initial surgery are in the inclusion criteria listed in the policy.
- Surgery intended to prevent imminent skin ulceration when all other appropriate treatment options have failed

3. **IMPLEMENTATION**

Line Managers will ensure that all staff involved in processing commissioning requests will follow the policy.

This policy will be available to all General Practitioners and service providers.

The policy will be available to the public and staff from the NHS West Lancashire CCG’s website.

3.1 **Monitored and Compliance**
Any breaches to this policy will be monitored through the Commissioning Appeals Process and reported to the Clinical Executive Committee.

4. **REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

Department of Health: Cosmetic Procedures Frequently Asked Questions.

5. **GLOSSARY**

None