Clinical Guide to Surgical Prioritisation During the Coronavirus Pandemic

This Guide was produced at the request of NHS England at the start of the pandemic. It is written by specialists in the procedures listed and is updated at least every month. It sets out what clinicians view as the relative priorities of conditions at the time it is posted. It is essential that all patients listed in any category are regularly, clinically reviewed to ensure their condition is not changing and in need of re-prioritising.

The relative priorities between cases listed in the same time frame will need to be decided locally in relation to facilities available and local Covid conditions.

The ‘RPM’ form, included in the footer of the guide, is designed to help review and reprioritise cases in p2-4.

The Guide is a short term expedient to the pandemic and not for long term use.

Both the Guide and the RPM are available to download at [https://fssa.org.uk/covid-19_documents.aspx](https://fssa.org.uk/covid-19_documents.aspx)

With thanks to all the Surgical Associations, which have contributed and to the RCOG, RCOphth, RCPSG, RCSEd, RCSEng and RCSI
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prioritisation</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priority 1a</td>
<td>Emergency procedures to be performed in &lt;24 hours</td>
<td>Life-threatening conditions that require immediate intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 1b</td>
<td>Life-threatening procedures to be performed in 1-24 hours</td>
<td>Conditions that pose a high risk of morbidity or mortality if not addressed promptly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 2</td>
<td>Life-threatening procedures to be performed in 24-48 hours</td>
<td>Conditions that require urgent intervention to prevent serious harm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 3</td>
<td>Urgent procedures to be performed within 48-72 hours</td>
<td>Conditions that need prompt attention to prevent significant complications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 4</td>
<td>Urgent procedures to be performed within 72-96 hours</td>
<td>Conditions that require timely intervention to prevent inconvenience or discomfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority 5</td>
<td>Routine procedures</td>
<td>Procedures that are not time-sensitive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note: This prioritisation scheme is intended to guide decision-making and does not indicate the primacy of ANY procedure to be performed in ANY category. It does not signify that performing any procedure in ANY category does not require keen attention. This document will be updated regularly to reflect current clinical practice and research. The prioritisation scheme should be used in conjunction with local guidelines and protocols.
**Reconstruction of plastic surgery including craniofacial and hands**

- Burns - exudation requiring débridement
- Burns - full thickness/ deep partial - requiring suturing and closure
- Burns - child/patient with burns - requiring débridement and closure
- Burn debridement
- Blister/serosal fluid evacuation
- Pseudocyst evacuation

**Diabetes**

- Upper urinary tract obstruction (stable patient)
- Acute obstruction
- Retrograde/ retroperitoneal
- Severe

**Urology**

- Stone/obstructive uropathy
- Dehydration
- Renal failure

**OMFS**

- (n.b. This prioritisation is about ‘when and not by whom’ during the Covid19 Crisis - see notes below)

**Priority 1b - Procedures to be performed in <72 hours.**

- **Cardiothoracic**
  - Carotid/sternocleidomastoid
  - Thoracic spinal
  - Pericardial

- **Neurosurgery**
  - Cranial
  - Spinal
  - Intradural

- **Neurootology**
  - Vestibular

- **Otolaryngology**
  - Bronchial
  - Nasal

- **OMFS**
  - Facial fractures - not suitable for conservative Rx
  - Amputation for limb ischaemia
  - Conversion of failed revisional surgery

- **Paediatric**
  - Large bowel obstruction
  - Nephrotic syndrome

- **Urology**
  - Urgent insertion for urethral catheterisation

- **Plastic surgery**
  - Body graft - threat to sight
  - Vascularised bone graft

- **Ophthalmology**
  - Anterior – pupil re-attachment
  - Conjunctival graft
  - Ectropion

- **Paediatrics**
  - Neonatal
  - Congenital
  - Malformations

- **Urology**
  - Transurethral resection (TUR)
  - Laparoscopic
doctors

- **Obstetrics**
  - Cesarean section

- **Gastroenterology**
  - Upper gastrointestinal tract
  - Rectum

- **Surgery**
  - Spinal trauma
  - Fractures
  - Pathological and un稳定的 shaft
  - Tibial fractures - high energy
  - Femoral

- **Orthopaedics**
  - Fractures
  - Displaced articular fractures
  - Non-hip lower limb fractures
  - Upper limb fractures

- **Neurology**
  - Ischaemic (unstable)
  - Haemorrhagic (stable)

- **Respiratory**
  - Asthma
  - COPD

- **Emergency**
  - Trauma
  - Cancer
  - Sepsis

- **Other**
  - Hip/acetabular
  - Shoulder

- **Plastic surgery**
  - Body graft - threat to sight
  - Vascularised bone graft
### Example Table

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
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<tr>
<td>Orthopaedic surgery</td>
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<td>Head and neck surgery</td>
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### Example Text

- **Ophthalmology**
  - Priority 1: Ophthalmology procedures, including cataract surgery, retinal detachment surgery, and glaucoma surgery.
  - **Neonatal**
    - Neonatal ophthalmic surgery, including cataract surgery, retinal detachment surgery, and glaucoma surgery.
  - **Intraocular**
    - Intraocular lens extraction, vitrectomy, and retinal detachment surgery.

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    - Intraocular lens extraction, vitrectomy, and retinal detachment surgery.
In this prioritisation we have taken the stance of not permitting any non-emergency cosmetic surgery to be performed during the Covid-19 crisis.

**General surgery** (including emergency general surgery, cardiothoracic and vascular surgery, and transplantation surgery)

- **Gastrointestinal**
  - Acute perforation of bowel or other intestinal obstruction
  - Acute appendicitis
  - Acute diverticulitis
  - Acute cholecystitis
  - Acute pancreatitis
  - Acute mesenteric ischemia

- **Neurological**
  - Acute stroke
  - Acute subdural hematoma
  - Acute traumatic brain injury

- **Cardiovascular**
  - Acute myocardial infarction
  - Acute aortic dissection

- **Orthopedic**
  - Acute dislocation of the hip
  - Acute fracture of the femur
  - Acute fracture of the tibia
  - Acute fracture of the clavicle

- **Plastic and reconstructive surgery**
  - Acute burn injuries
  - Acute traumatic amputations

- **Urological**
  - Acute obstructive urinary tract infection
  - Acute urinary retention

**Ophthalmology**

- Acute retinal detachment
- Acute angle closure glaucoma
- Acute retinal vein occlusion
- Acute papilledema
- Acute optic neuritis

**Otolaryngology**

- Acute epistaxis
- Acute laryngotracheal stenosis
- Acute otitis media

**Obstetrics and Gynecology**

- Acute miscarriage
- Acute ruptured uterus
- Acute pelvic inflammatory disease

**Paediatric surgery**

- Acute appendicitis in children
- Acute intussusception
- Acute pyloric stenosis

**Urology**

- Acute urinary tract infection
- Acute urinary retention

**Otorhinolaryngology**

- Acute epistaxis
- Acute laryngotracheal stenosis
- Acute otitis media

**General surgery** (including emergency general surgery, cardiothoracic and vascular surgery, and transplantation surgery)

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**Ophthalmology**

- Acute retinal detachment
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- Acute papilledema
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**Otolaryngology**

- Acute epistaxis
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**Obstetrics and Gynecology**

- Acute miscarriage
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- Acute pelvic inflammatory disease

**Paediatric surgery**

- Acute appendicitis in children
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**Urology**

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- Acute retinal detachment
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- Acute retinal vein occlusion
- Acute papilledema
- Acute optic neuritis

**Otolaryngology**

- Acute epistaxis
- Acute laryngotracheal stenosis
- Acute otitis media

**Obstetrics and Gynecology**

- Acute miscarriage
- Acute ruptured uterus
- Acute pelvic inflammatory disease

**Paediatric surgery**

- Acute appendicitis in children
- Acute intussusception
- Acute pyloric stenosis

**Urology**

- Acute urinary tract infection
- Acute urinary retention

**Otorhinolaryngology**

- Acute epistaxis
- Acute laryngotracheal stenosis
- Acute otitis media
**General surgery (including oesophagogastric, HPN, coloproctology, breast, endocrine, bariatric)***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malignant bowel cancer (including colorectal, rectal)</td>
<td>Referred to general surgery or colorectal</td>
<td>1a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benign colorectal disease</td>
<td></td>
<td>1b</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorectal polyp</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abdominal aortic aneurysm</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varicocele</td>
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</table>

**Urology***

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male genital disorders</td>
<td></td>
<td>1a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male infertility</td>
<td></td>
<td>1b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female genital disorders</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female infertility</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renal and urological diseases</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Vascular surgery***

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<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limb salvage</td>
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<td>1a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limb reconstruction</td>
<td></td>
<td>1b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venous disorders</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arterial disorders</td>
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</table>

**Other surgery***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other surgery-NOS</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
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