

28 August 2026

Knee Replacement Surgery Criteria

1. I would like a copy of the guidance and criteria used when assessing the suitability of a patient for knee replacement surgery.

Assessment of patients being considered for knee replacement surgery is informed by relevant national clinical guidance published by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act applies where information is already reasonably accessible to the requester and may be obtained from the sources identified below.

The relevant guidance can be accessed at:

- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust: Orthopaedic ICATS Service.
[Orthopaedic ICATS | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust website](#)
- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust: Orthopaedics Service.
[Orthopaedics | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust website](#)
- NICE Guideline NG226: *Osteoarthritis in over 16s: Diagnosis and Management*
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng226>
- NICE Guideline NG157: *Joint Replacement (Primary): Hip, Knee and Shoulder*
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng157>

2. I would like to know if there are any variances to this guidance, any exceptions to the rule i.e. patients operated on outside the normal guidance and procedures.

[Overview | Joint replacement \(primary\): hip, knee and shoulder | Guidance | NICE](#)

[Overview | Osteoarthritis in over 16s: diagnosis and management | Guidance | NICE](#)

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- 3. Would there be a statistic of patients who are deemed unsuitable for surgery based on BMI alone. How many patients received a knee replacement surgery with a BMI greater than 40 in the past 5 years?**

The information requested is not held in a format that can be extracted through routine reporting. To determine whether the information is held would require a manual review of individual patient records. The Trust estimates that the cost of locating, retrieving and extracting the requested information would exceed the appropriate limit prescribed by Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and is therefore unable to comply with this part of the request.

- 4. What percentage of patients under 55 underwent knee replacement surgery in the past 5 years?**

4.6%.

- 5. How many onward referrals to assist with obesity weight loss to accommodate surgery are made by the Orthopaedic service in comparison to the number of patients who are turned down for surgery due to BMI alone?**

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For information provided to patients to assist with obesity weight loss to accommodate surgery please refer to Page 8 in the attached booklet which is available by accessing the Orthopaedics website: [Orthopaedics | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust website](#)