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| Intervention | **139. Spinal fusion surgery** |
| For the treatment of | Mechanical axial low back pain |
| Commissioning Position | This intervention is commissioned if it is undertaken as part of the treatment of:   * Serious spinal pathology (e.g. neoplasm, infection or osteoporotic collapse) OR * Scoliosis OR * Sacroiliac joint dysfunction OR * Nerve compression, where a more extensive exposure of the affected neurological structures is required and would otherwise render the spine unstable   Fusion is not otherwise commissioned for the treatment of pain localised to the low back and not present in the lower limbs. |
| Summary of Rationale | Isolated back pain is common, often multifactorial and amenable to multimodal non-operative treatment (e.g. lifestyle modifications, weight loss, analgesia, exercise). By the nature of the description, isolated back pain, a focal site of pathology is often never found. In many cases, symptoms may be underpinned by a centralised pain disorder that exists outside of the spine.  In the absence of a focal structural pathology and concordant mechanical or neurological symptoms, there remains a distinct lack of high-quality evidence to support fusion of the spine as a treatment of isolated back pain. NICE Guideline NG59 established formal, multidisciplinary consensus on the management of isolated back pain, which is implemented through the [National Back Pain Pathway](https://www.ukssb.com/_files/ugd/dd7c8a_caf17c305a5f4321a6fca249dea75ebe.pdf). This NICE-endorsed pathway offers all patients timely, evidence-based care for back pain. |
| References | [Fusion surgery for mechanical axial low back pain (EBI)](https://ebi.aomrc.org.uk/interventions/fusion-surgery-for-mechanical-axial-low-back-pain-2/)  [NG56 Low back pain and sciatica in over 16s: assessment and management (NICE)](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng59)  [National Low Back Pain and Radicular Pain Pathway (NHS England)](https://www.ukssb.com/_files/ugd/dd7c8a_caf17c305a5f4321a6fca249dea75ebe.pdf) |
| Effective from | April 2025 |
| Policy Review Date | April 2028 |