

Individual Funding Requests (IFR) Service

IFR Activity Report 2020/21 Quarter 1

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1. Introduction

The Effective Commissioning Initiative (ECI) Team at Surrey Heartlands Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) hosts the Individual Funding Requests (IFR) service on behalf of East Surrey, Guildford & Waverley, North West Surrey and Surrey Downs ICP's, and Surrey Heath CCG.

There may be individual cases where a patient's needs cannot be met through existing contracts and commissioning arrangements, but their consultant considers that their patient has a need for an un-commissioned treatment and wishes to request funding on their patient's behalf. When these requests occur, CCG's must have a robust and transparent system in place to assess and determine whether the request should be funded, demonstrating a rational decision making process for an individual patient.

The IFR applications for procedures and treatments are submitted through an online database called Blueteq, which are checked for completeness by the IFR admin team. Applications are screened on a weekly basis by the IFR screening group which consists of a minimum of 2 clinicians. Applications can be submitted for both interventions and drugs.

Where cases are deemed to be eligible for consideration by the IFR Panel, they are submitted to the next available Panel meeting; Panel meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month and are attended by clinical representation from each of the 4 Surrey ICP's/CCG as well as a pharmacist, a member of Public Health and a Lay Member. The IFR Panel will decide whether to approve or decline funding. Once a Panel decision has been made, the IFR admin team will communicate the outcome to the applicant. If the applicant, or their patient, requests a review of the outcome following a declined decision, they have the option of sending a request in writing to the IFR admin team; this must be received within one calendar month of the date of the IFR Panel decision email/letter.

During this period, NHS England issued guidance that all providers be on a block contract in order to minimise the burden of formal contractual documentation and contract management processes so that staff can focus fully on the COVID-19 response. The impact of this agreement has impacted on the number of IFR applications that have been submitted.

2. Foreword from IFR Clinical Lead

This report demonstrates the scope of the IFR applications which have been received by the IFR admin team over the last quarter. All data within this report relates to all 4 ICP's and 1 CCG within Surrey; East Surrey, Guildford & Waverley, North West Surrey, Surrey Downs and Surrey Heath.

The IFR admin team continue to hold a joint weekly screening meeting between themselves and the Pharmaceutical Commissioning Team, to screen cases for eligibility for consideration by the IFR Panel. The process ensures that cases are always screened by a minimum of 2 clinicians to guarantee a fair and transparent process.

The ECI and the Pharmaceutical Commissioning Team's (IFR admin team) continue to monitor requests and flag up potential commissioning gaps in a timely manner to the commissioners.

Dr Iain Cruickshank took up his role as IFR Panel Clinical Chair as of 1st April 2020.

3. Surrey ICP's/CCG's population sizes

These figures are taken from each individual ICP's/CCG's Annual General Meeting June 2019. (* figure taken from Surrey Heath CCG Annual Report 19/20).

ICP/CCG	Population size
East Surrey	180,000 +
Guildford & Waverley	225,000 +
North West Surrey	370,000 +
Surrey Downs	305,000 +
Surrey Heath	97,154 *

4. IFR applications received by Provider

During the same time period for the previous year, there has been a 33% decrease in applications received. This is likely due to the block contract arrangement imposed by NHS England.

Provider	Activity
Epsom & St Helier NHS Trust	2
Ashford & St Peters Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	2
Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	1
Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust	1
Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	1
Odstock Medical Limited	1
Grand Total	8

5. IFR's received by procedure

The table below shows the procedures for which IFR's were submitted.

Procedure	Activity
Assisted Conception procedure	1
Gastroenterology procedure	1
Breast Reduction	1
Breast Augmentation	1
Cryopreservation to preserve fertility in people diagnosed with cancer	1
Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Service	1
Revision of Breast Augmentation	1
Functional Electrical Stimulation Follow Up Assessment	1
Grand Total	8

6. IFR's received by ICP/CCG

Very few applications have been received during this period due to the block contract arrangement imposed by NHS England. Guildford & Waverley, North West Surrey and Surrey Downs ICP's all have their own Referral Support Service whereby requests that would require an IFR application would be filtered out. These services continued throughout the lockdown period.

CCG	Activity
East Surrey	2
Guildford & Waverley	2
North West Surrey	2
Surrey Downs	1
Surrey Heath	1
Grand Total	8

7. IFR applications screened

IFR applications are screened for eligibility for consideration by the IFR Panel. Where applications have been withdrawn, they are considered to be incomplete and the applicant is advised that they can resubmit at any time.

Month	No of IFR's screened	Eligible for Panel	Ineligible for Panel
April	1	0	1
May	1	0	1
June	1	0	1

8. IFR application outcomes

Although very few applications have been received during this period, 5 were withdrawn; the common themes being:

- There is a policy therefore an IFR application is not required
- Insufficient clinical detail was provided or the request was uploaded onto the Blueteq database but not submitted

Cases that have been considered to be ineligible for Panel are generally deemed not clinically exceptional based on the evidence provided.

Status	Activity
IFR Withdrawn	5
IFR Ineligible for consideration by the IFR Panel	2
IFR Approved outside of IFR Panel (IFR not required)	1
Grand Total	8

9. IFR application outcomes by ICP/CCG

The table below shows the outcomes for all of the IFR applications that were submitted for this quarter. Out of the 8 applications that were submitted, 5 were withdrawn due to incomplete information.

CCG	IFR Outcome	Activity	Anticipated Cost
East Surrey		1	£3000
	Ineligible	1	£3000
Guildford & Waverley		2	£600
	Withdrawn	1	£250
	Approved outside of Panel	1	£350
North West Surrey		2	£7500
	Withdrawn	1	£4000
	Ineligible	1	£3500
Surrey Downs		2	£8000
	Withdrawn	2	£8000
Surrey Heath		1	£3500
	Withdrawn	1	£3500
Grand Total			£22,600

10. IFR Panel GP Attendance Log

The table below shows the attendance log for the GP's that were present at the IFR Panel meetings during this time period.

The Panel meeting scheduled for June did not take place as there were no cases that were eligible for consideration.

Name	Organisation	April	May	June
Dr David Eyre-Brooks	Guildford & Waverley ICP	✓	✓	
Dr Philippa Woodward	North West Surrey ICP	✓	✓	
Dr Phi Vo	Surrey Downs ICP	✓	✓	
Dr John Fraser	Surrey Heath CCG	✓		

11. IFR Panel Non-GP Attendance Log

The table below shows the attendance log for the Non-GP's that were present at the IFR Panel meetings during this time period.

The Panel meeting scheduled for June did not take place as there were no cases that were eligible for consideration.

Name	Organisation	April	May	June
Tejinder Bahra	Surrey Downs ICP		✓	
Liz Clark	Surrey Downs ICP	✓		
Clare Johns	Surrey Downs ICP		✓	
Dr Liz Saunders	Public Health			
Dr Iain Cruickshank	Surrey Heartlands CCG	✓	✓	
Andrea Golding	Surrey Heartlands CCG	✓		
James Forbes	Surrey Heartlands CCG	✓	✓	

12. Assisted Conception

Under patient choice, patients who are registered with a Surrey GP have the option of choosing where to undergo their Assisted Conception treatment, although there are 3 preferred providers that are commissioned by the CCG: Nuffield Health, Woking Hospital, Croydon Health Services NHS Trust (Mayday) and Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

Up to 2 full cycles (consisting of 1 fresh and 1 frozen cycle) of IVF, with or without ICSI, are funded in eligible women who are aged no more than 39 years at the time of their referral to a fertility clinic. If the woman reaches the age of 40 during treatment, then that cycle can be completed but no others must be initiated.

The table below shows the details of the only IFR application that was received for an assisted conception procedure during this period. This application was withdrawn as the patient met the criteria for cryopreservation and therefore a Prior Approval application was submitted and subsequently approved.

CCG	Procedure	Activity	Expected Cost
Surrey Heath	IFR: Withdrawn	1	£3500
	Cryopreservation to preserve fertility in people diagnosed with cancer	1	£3500
Grand Total		1	£3500

13. European Economic Area Requests by ICP/CCG

European Economic Area (EEA) requests are for routine treatments which took place in a European country. ICP's/CCG's are responsible for reimbursing patients if the treatment would have been routinely available on the NHS. All EEA requests are managed by NHS England. When treatment takes place via this route, the designated team at NHS England submit a request for reimbursement of costs to the patients ICP/CCG.

All EEA requests are managed by the ECI team; each request is logged by the team and the patients ICP makes the decision on whether the reimbursement should be made.

Requests received from NHS England contain minimal information and do not include the costs involved in the treatment. If a response is not submitted to NHS England within 7 working days, they have the authorisation to approved funding on behalf of the patients ICP providing the treatment undertaken is funding locally. NHS England will then recharge the ICP.

No EEA reimbursement claims were made during this period.

14. Equipment Requests

Requests for equipment are submitted to the ECI team via an Outside Remit Request (ORR). The ECI team log the request details and send the completed ORR form to the Surrey Heartlands contracting team for a response.

No requests for any equipment were received during this period.

15. Appeals (Process Review) Received

When the IFR Panel has not supported funding for a treatment, the patient or requesting clinician have the option of requesting that the process which led to the decision be subject to review. The request must be submitted to the ECI team within 28 working days of the IFR Panel outcome and submitted in writing via email.

The IFR Review Panel will consider whether the process followed by the IFR Panel was fair and consistent, based on whether the decision reached:

- Was taken following a process which was consistent with the policies of CCG;
- Was a decision which a reasonable IFR Panel was entitled to reach;
- Understood, took into account and weighed, all the relevant evidence; and
- Did not take into account any irrelevant factors.

In the event that the IFR Review Panel considers that there was any procedural error in the IFR Panel's decision, they will consider whether there was any reasonable prospect that the IFR Panel could have come to a different decision had that error not been made.

If the IFR Review Panel considers that there was no reasonable prospect of the IFR Panel coming to a different decision, then the IFR Review Panel will approve the decision notwithstanding the procedural error. If the IFR Review Panel considers that there was a reasonable prospect that the IFR Panel may have come to a different decision had the error not been made, the IFR Review Panel will require the IFR Panel to reconsider the decision.

No appeals were received during this period.

16. Complaints Received

Complaints that relate to the IFR process are submitted directly to the Surrey Heartlands CCG complaints team who will, in turn, contact the ECI team for a response.

No complaints were received during this period.

17. Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

The ECI team work to Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) in order to ensure that the process is managed in a robust manner. The table below shows the details of each KPI and whether the target was met each month.

KPI	Target	April	May	June
IFR applications logged and acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt	100%	100%	100%	100%
Incomplete applications returned to the requesting clinician within 5 working days	100%	100%	100%	100%
Applications outside of scope returned to the requesting clinicians within 5 working days	100%	100%	100%	100%
Non-urgent IFR requests that are completed within 25 working days from the date all information is received	100%	100%	100%	100%
Urgent requests receive a decision within 3 working days of receipt	100%	100%	100%	100%

18. Next Steps

- Finalise the new IFR policy and accompanying Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).
- The transition from Surrey Priorities Committee to Surrey Clinical Priorities Committee is still underway.
- Due to the force majeure made by NHS England, all providers (NHS and Independent) are within a block contract for IFR's until further notice. This will continue to have an impact on the number of IFR applications received. The ECI team will closely monitor this over the coming months.