

**Surrey Heartlands CCG
and Frimley CCG
(Surrey Heath only):
Individual Funding Request (IFR)
Service**

**IFR Activity Report 2021/22
Quarter 2 (July – September 2021)**

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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 Place-based Partnerships, and Frimley CCG (Surrey Heath only).

The Surrey-wide clinical intervention policies are developed on the basis of the detailed evidence reviews produced by the Public Health Team. The suggested thresholds, which form part of the evidence review, are discussed, and agreed for recommendation to the Health & Care Professionals Executive (HCPE) by the Surrey Priorities Committee (SPC). The recommendations for each threshold are considered and ratified by the Health & Care Professionals Executive (HCPE) prior to publication within the relevant clinical policy.

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, CCGs 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.

IFR applications for procedures and treatments which are not routinely funded on the NHS are submitted through an online database called Blueteq and each one is checked for completeness by the ECI Team. Applications are screened for eligibility for consideration by the IFR Panel on a weekly basis by the IFR Screening Group; this group consists of a minimum of 2 clinicians to guarantee a fair and transparent process. IFR applications can be submitted for both interventions and drugs; any received for drugs are processed by the Pharmaceutical Commissioning Team and are not included within this report.

IFR applications that are deemed to be eligible for consideration by the IFR Panel are processed and submitted to the next available Panel meeting for clinical discussion. Panel meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month and are attended by clinical representation from each of the 4 Surrey Place-based Partnerships/CCG as well as a pharmacist, a member of the Public Health Team, and a Lay Member. The IFR Panel will decide whether to approve or decline funding. Once a Panel decision has been made, the ECI 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 ECI Team; this must be received within one calendar month of the date of the IFR Panel decision email/letter.

In March 2020, 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.

1.1 Evidence Based Interventions (EBI) Programme

The Evidence Based Interventions (EBI) programme was initiated by NHS England/Improvement in 2018 and aims to reduce harm and unnecessary interventions taking place by ensuring that those that are routinely available on the NHS are evidence-based and appropriate.

In addition, the programme aims to avoid needless harm to patients and free up scarce professional time for performing other interventions, including creating headroom for proven innovations. The time saved can, in turn, be reinvested in patient care.

NHSE/I compiled an initial list of 17 interventions, known as Wave 1, that had either none or limited clinical effectiveness based on clinical evidence and research including NICE guidelines, Choosing Wisely recommendations and academic studies which formed part of the NHS Standard Acute Contract.

Of the 17 interventions in Wave 1, 4 fell under the IFR category: Intervention for snoring (not OSA), Dilation and Curettage for heavy menstrual bleeding, Knee Arthroscopy for Osteoarthritis, and Injections for non-specific low back pain without sciatica. In December 2020, a further 31 interventions/tests/procedures were introduced, known as Wave 2, 2 of which were IFRs: Exercise ECG for screening for coronary heart disease and Helmet Therapy for treatment of positional plagiocephaly/brachycephaly in children.

Current contracts stipulate the requirement to comply with the EBI guidance. Although the guidance is not mandatory, CCG activity is monitored on a monthly basis by NHSE. A dashboard is used to present the data for all interventions across the country and can be used to identify providers/commissioners that are outliers against each intervention/test/procedure. The dashboard is accessible via ViewPoint which provides an interactive view of EBI activity across England, down to provider level.

2. Foreword from IFR Clinical Lead

This report demonstrates the scope of the IFR applications which have been received (for interventions only) by the ECI Team over the last quarter. The data within this report relates to all 4 Place-based Partnerships within Surrey Heartlands CCG: East Surrey, Guildford & Waverley, North West Surrey, and Surrey Downs, and also includes Frimley CCG (Surrey Heath only).

The ECI Team hold a joint weekly IFR screening meeting with the Medicines Management Team, to screen applications for eligibility for consideration by the IFR Panel. Both teams continue to monitor requests and flag up any potential commissioning gaps in a timely manner to the commissioners.

3. Surrey Heartlands Place-based Partnerships/CCG population sizes

These figures are taken from each individual Place-based Partnership/CCG Annual General Meeting June 2019. (* figure taken from Surrey Heath CCG Annual Report 19/20).

Place-based Partnership/CCG	Population size
East Surrey Place-based Partnership	185,000 +
Guildford & Waverley Place-based Partnership	225,000 +
North West Surrey Place-based Partnership	370,000 +
Surrey Downs Place-based Partnership	305,000 +
Frimley CCG (Surrey Heath only)	98,142 *

4. IFR applications screened

All complete 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	Further information required
Jul	5	0	4	1
Aug	1	1	0	0
Sep	1	1	0	0

5. IFR applications received by provider

During the same time period for the previous year, 2020/21, there has been just under a 17% decrease, equating to 2 IFR applications less in comparison.

Provider	Activity
University College Hospital London	1
Odstock Medical	1
Epsom & St Helier	3
Royal Surrey County Hospital	1
White Lodge	1
Ashford & St Peters Hospitals	1
Queen Victoria Hospital	2
Grand Total	10

6. IFR applications received by procedure

The table below shows the procedures for which IFRs were submitted during Quarter 2.

Procedure	Activity
Embryo Freezing	1
Functional Electrical Stimulation	1
Hernia Repair	1
ICG Scan	1
Total Knee Replacement	1
Open MRI Scan	1
Physiotherapy	1
Bariatric Surgery	1
Brow Lift	2
Grand Total	10

7. IFR applications received by Place-based Partnership/CCG

The table below shows the number of IFR applications received for each of the 4 Place-based Partnerships and Frimley CCG (Surrey Heath) during Quarter 2.

Place-based Partnership/CCG	Activity
East Surrey Place-based Partnership	1
Guildford & Waverley Place-based Partnership	1
North West Surrey Place-based Partnership	2
Surrey Downs Place-based Partnership	6
Frimley CCG (Surrey Heath only)	0
Grand Total	10

8. IFR application outcomes

Very few applications have been received during this period, 3 were withdrawn; the common themes being:

- There is a policy therefore an IFR application is not required, e.g., a procedure that is funded where it can be demonstrated that a patient meets the criteria.
- Insufficient clinical detail was provided, or the request was uploaded onto the Blueteq database but not fully submitted, i.e., an application remains incomplete despite numerous attempts by the ECI Team to obtain the omitted information from the requesting clinician. If no response is received, the application is withdrawn.

Status	Activity
Incomplete	1
IFR: Case withdrawn	3
IFR: Further information requested	4
IFR: Approved by IFR Panel	1
IFR: Prepared for IFR Panel	1
Grand Total	10

9. IFR application outcomes by Place-based Partnership/CCG

The table below shows the outcomes for all the IFR applications that were submitted during this quarter. Where cases are incomplete, no costs are available.

Place-based Partnership/CCG	IFR Outcome	Activity	Anticipated Cost
East Surrey Place-based Partnership			£8,000
	IFR: Case withdrawn	1	£8,000
Guildford & Waverley Place-based Partnership			£1,800
	IFR: Further information requested	1	£1,800
North West Surrey Place-based Partnership		2	£10,425
	IFR: Prepared for IFR Panel	1	£2,425
	IFR: Further information required	1	£8,000
Surrey Downs Place-Based Partnership			£16,614
	Incomplete	1	£7,045
	IFR: Further information required	2	£2,045
	IFR: Case withdrawn	2	£3,045
	IFR: Approved by IFR Panel	1	£4,480
Frimley CCG (Surrey Heath)		0	£0
Grand Total		10	£36,839

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 September did not take place as there were no cases eligible for consideration.

Name	Organisation	Jul	Aug	Sep
Dr Bethan Forgie	East Surrey Place-based Partnership			
Dr Joe McGilligan	East Surrey Place-based Partnership			
Dr David Eyre-Brook	Guildford & Waverley Place-based Partnership			

Name	Organisation	Jul	Aug	Sep
Dr Philippa Woodward	North West Surrey Place-based Partnership			
Dr Phi Vo	Surrey Downs Place-based Partnership			
Dr John Fraser	Frimley CCG (Surrey Heath only)			

11. IFR Panel Non-GP Attendance Log

The table below shows the attendance log for the non-GPs that were present at the IFR Panel meetings during this time period.

The Panel meetings scheduled for September did not take place as there were no cases eligible for consideration.

Name	Organisation	Jul	Aug	Sep
Dr Iain Cruickshank	Independent Clinical Chair			
Carina Joanes	Medicines Management Team, Surrey Heartlands CCG			
Dr Elizabeth Saunders	Public Health, Surrey County Council			
Taylor Keech	ECI Team, Surrey Heartlands CCG			
Paul Barton	Lay Member			
Clare Johns	Medicines Management Team, Surrey Heartlands CCG			
Cyril Haessig	Public Health, Surrey County Council			
Katie Patrick (observing)	Public Health, Surrey County Council			
Sarah Watkin	Medicines Management Team, 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: Care Fertility (previously 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 received for an Assisted Conception procedure between July and September 2021.

Place-based Partnership/CCG	Procedure	Activity	Expected Cost
East Surrey Place-based Partnership		1	£8000
	Embryo Freezing	1	£8000
Grand Total			£8000

13. European Economic Area Requests by Place-based Partnership / CCG

European Economic Area (EEA) requests are for routine treatments which took place in a European country. Place-based Partnerships/CCGs 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 Place-based Partnership/CCG.

All EEA requests are managed by the ECI Team; each request is logged by the team and the patients Place-based Partnership/CCG 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 Place-based Partnership/CCG providing the treatment undertaken is funding locally. NHS England will then recharge the appropriate Place-based Partnership/CCG.

1 EEA reimbursement claim was made during this period for the treatments listed in the table below:

Month	Place-based Partnership /CCG	Treatment/Procedure
July	North West Surrey	Extraction of the polyp, sonography of uterus x 2, transvaginal sonography x 2, microscopy, colposcopy, Aptima HPV test x 2

14. Non-IFR Funding Requests

Applications that are submitted for treatments/procedures/equipment that does not fall under the remit of IFR but still require from Surrey Heartlands CCG/Frimley CCG (Surrey Heath), are processed via an Outside Remit Request (ORR). The ECI Team log the request details onto a central document and then send the completed, anonymised ORR form to the relevant contracting team for a response.

During this period, 1 request was submitted to the ECI Team for a Surrey Downs patient with Alopecia who required a Human Hair Wig, to prevent contact dermatitis, at a cost of £1800. The patient suffered a severe allergic reaction to synthetic wigs; the request was reviewed by a Clinical Lead for Surrey Downs and subsequently approved.

15. Appeals (Process Review) Received

When the IFR Panel has not supported a funding request 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. New information provided cannot be taken into consideration.

1 appeal was received during this period for an IVF request. The patient submitted their appeal on the grounds that not all relevant information was taken into account by the IFR Panel when reaching their decision. However, new information was provided by the patient therefore the appeal was unable to be processed further. The initial applying clinician was advised that should they agree that the additional information was significant new clinical evidence, which he considered may have made a difference to the IFR Panel's decision if it had been available, then they have the option of re-submitting the application to the IFR Panel including the additional information. To date, a revised IFR application has not been submitted.

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 to be drafted.

1 complaint was received during Quarter 2 from a couple that were disappointed the CCG does not routinely fund Egg Donation. The couple were advised of the rationale behind this decision, i.e., there is a lack of NHS egg banks and altruistically donated eggs, and the complaint was closed.

17. Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

The ECI Team work to Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) in order to ensure that the IFR 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	Jul	Aug	Sep
IFR applications reviewed within 5 working days of receipt	100%	100%	100%	100%
Response sent to requesting clinicians within 5 working days when applications submitted incomplete	100%	100%	100%	100%
Applications received which are outside of the remit of the ECI Team, returned to the requesting clinician within 5 working days	100%	100%	100%	100%
IFR application outcome communicated to requesting clinician within 35 working days (from the date completed 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

- All providers (both NHS and Independent) will continue to be on a block contract, likely until 2022/23.
- The ECI Team will continue to be part of the demonstrator community for the Evidence Based Interventions (EBI) lead by NHS England. The team will contribute to the 3rd Wave of thresholds that will be implemented in due course following consultation.
- The procedures within the Treatments Not Routinely funded (TNRF1) policy will continue to be reviewed on a 5-year cycle.