

Individual Funding Requests (IFR) Service

IFR Activity Report 2020/21 Quarter 2 (July – September 2020)

Report produced by Andrea Golding - IFR & POLCE Manager
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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 for interventions on behalf of East Surrey, Guildford & Waverley, North West Surrey and Surrey Downs (Integrated Care Partnerships (ICP's), and Surrey Heath CCG.

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

IFR applications for procedures and treatments are submitted using an online database called Blueteq, which are then checked for completeness by the ECI admin team. Applications are screened on a weekly basis by the IFR screening group which consists of a minimum of 2 clinicians.

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 based on the information provided. Once a Panel decision has been made, the ECI 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 ECI admin team; this must be received within one calendar month of the date of the IFR Panel decision email/letter.

Since March 2020, all providers have been 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. Providers are not required to submit IFR applications at this time, however some have continued to do so for monitoring purposes.

2. Foreword from IFR Clinical Lead

This report demonstrates the scope of the IFR applications for interventions (only) which have been received by the ECI admin team over the last quarter. All data within this report relates to Surrey Heartlands and Surrey Heath CCG's.

The ECI admin team continue to hold a joint weekly screening meeting between themselves and the Pharmaceutical Commissioning Team (for drugs), 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 team continue to monitor requests and flag up potential commissioning gaps in a timely manner to the commissioners.

The ECI team are currently recruiting a Lay Member to sit on the IFR Panel and be the advocate for patients. A high number of exceptional candidates have applied and we therefore are hopeful that the interview process will be successful.

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

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

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

4. IFR applications received by Provider

During the same time period for the previous year, there has been a 63% decrease in applications received. This is likely due to the block contract arrangement imposed by NHS England in March 2020.

Provider	Activity
Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust	2
Guys & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust	2
Surrey & Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust	1
Ashford & St Peters Hospitals NHS Trust	1
Nuffield Health Woking Hospital	1
BMI Healthcare Princess Margaret Hospital	1
Spire Thames Valley Hospital & Windsor Clinic	1
Odstock Medical Limited	1
Aintree University Hospitals	1
Kingston Hospital NHS Trust	1
Grand Total	12

5. IFR's received by procedure

The table below shows the procedures for which IFR's were submitted. The application that was received for a drug was returned to the requesting clinician advising them to redirect it to the Pharmaceutical Commissioning Team for processing.

Procedure	Activity
Cryopreservation	2
Embryo transfer	1
IVF	1
Functional Electrical Stimulation	1
Other Orthopaedics	1
Other Breast Surgery	1
Removal and Replacement of Breast Implant	1
Orthotics	1
Epilepsy Assessment	1
Other Orthopaedics	1
Drugs	1
Grand Total	12

6. IFR's received by ICP/CCG

Although there has been a slight increase in applications received during this quarter, there was still a reduction in the number of submissions. This is likely to continue during the COVID-19 pandemic, owing to the block contract arrangement imposed by NHS England.

Surrey Heartlands CCG have a Referral Support Service (RSS) whereby requests that would require an IFR application would be filtered out and returned to practice.

ICP/CCG	Activity
East Surrey ICP	2
Guildford & Waverley ICP	1
North West Surrey ICP	1
Surrey Downs ICP	2
Surrey Heartlands CCG Grand Total	6
Surrey Heath CCG	6
Surrey Heath CCG Grand Total	12

7. IFR applications screened

IFR applications are screened for eligibility for consideration by the IFR Panel. At the screening panel held in August, a case was considered appropriate for a Prior Approval application rather than an IFR. During September there were no cases that required screening.

Month	No of IFR's screened	Eligible for Panel	Ineligible for Panel	Withdrawn: IFR not required
Jul	1	1	0	0
Aug	2	0	1	1
Sep	0	0	0	0

8. IFR application outcomes

Out of the 12 IFR applications received by the ECI team between July and September 2020, 10 were withdrawn. The common themes for an IFR being withdrawn are:

- 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 finalised and submitted

Where the screening group have considered that a case is ineligible for panel, generally the reason is that the requesting clinician has not provided enough evidence to demonstrate how the patient is exceptional. Clinicians have the option of resubmitting their request at a later date provided there is additional clinical information available.

Status	Activity
IFR Withdrawn	10
IFR Ineligible for consideration by the IFR Panel	1
IFR Declined by the IFR Panel	1
Grand Total	

9. IFR application outcomes by ICP/CCG

The table below details the outcomes and anticipated costs for all of the IFR applications that were submitted for this quarter. Out of the 12 applications that were submitted, 10 were withdrawn; 3 due to the application being initiated but not completed on Blueteq; these applications are indicated with a * and have no cost or detail of the required procedure.

ICP/CCG	IFR Outcome	Activity	Anticipated Cost
East Surrey		2	£3000
	Withdrawn	1	£0*
	Withdrawn	1	£3000

Guildford & Waverley		1	£1610
	Withdrawn	1	£1610
North West Surrey		1	£3000
	Withdrawn	1	£3000
Surrey Downs		2	
	Withdrawn	1	£0*
	Withdrawn	1	£3000
Surrey Heath		6	£21,500
	Withdrawn	1	£4000
	Withdrawn	1	£4000
	Withdrawn	1	£0*
	Withdrawn	1	£1000
	Ineligible	1	£4500
	IFR Panel; Declined	1	£8000
Grand Total			£29,110

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 held in September did not consider any intervention cases.

Name	Organisation	Jul	Aug	Sep
Dr Joe McGilligan	East Surrey ICP	✓	✓	✓
Dr David Eyre-Brook	Guildford & Waverley ICP	✓	✓	✓
Dr Philippa Woodward	North West Surrey ICP	✓	✓	✓
Dr Phi Vo	Surrey Downs ICP	✓	✓	✓
Dr Rachel Darroch	Surrey Heath CCG		✓	
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 held in September did not consider any intervention cases.

Name	Organisation	Jul	Aug	Sep
Tejinder Bahra	Pharmaceutical Commissioning Team, East Surrey ICP	✓	✓	✓
Sarah Watkin	Pharmaceutical Commissioning Team, Surrey Downs ICP			✓
Hannah Macdonald	Pharmaceutical Commissioning Team, Surrey Downs ICP	✓		✓

Name	Organisation	Jul	Aug	Sep
Nikki Smith	Lead Commissioning Pharmacist, Surrey Heartlands CCG			✓
Clare Johns	Pharmaceutical Commissioning Team, Surrey Downs ICP	✓	✓	✓
Georgina Randall	Pharmaceutical Commissioning Team, Surrey Downs ICP			✓
Dr Liz Saunders	Public Health, Surrey County Council	✓	✓	✓
Dr Iain Cruickshank	IFR Panel Chair, Surrey Heartlands CCG	✓	✓	✓
Andrea Golding	ECI Team, Surrey Heartlands CCG	✓		✓
James Forbes	ECI Team, Surrey Heartlands CCG	✓	✓	✓
Taylor Keech	ECI 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: 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 4 IFR application's received for an assisted conception procedures during this period.

ICP/CCG	Procedure	Activity	Expected Cost
East Surrey ICP	Withdrawn	2	£3000
	Embryo Transfer	1	£3000
	Cryopreservation to preserve fertility in people diagnosed with cancer	1	£0*

Surrey Heath CCG	IFR Panel: Declined	1	£8000
	IVF	1	£8000
	Withdrawn	1	£0*
	Cryopreservation to preserve fertility in people diagnosed with cancer	1	£0*
Grand Total		4	£11,000

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.

One EEA reimbursement claim was made during this period. The claim was made in July and was for a Septoplasty for a patient with a deviated septum and turbinate hypertrophy.

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			
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

- The transition from Surrey Priorities Committee (SPC) to Surrey Clinical Priorities Committee (SCPC) is still underway. The paper documenting the transfer to SCPC is in its final stages of production.
- Due to the force majeure made by NHS England, all providers (NHS and Independent) continue to function within a block contract for IFR's until further notice; the impact on the number of IFR applications received will be closely monitored by the ECI team over the coming months.
- The advert for the vacant IFR Panel Lay Member role has now closed. Shortlisting will now take place and interviews will be held in mid-October.