

Individual Funding Requests (IFR) Service

IFR Activity Report 2020/21 Quarter 3 (October – December 2020)

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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, a GP from Surrey Heath CCG, a pharmacist, a member of the Public Health Team and an independent Lay Member. The IFR Panel will decide whether to approve or decline funding based on the clinical information provided. 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 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 their own internal monitoring purposes.

2. Foreword from IFR Clinical Lead

This report demonstrates the scope of the IFR applications which were received by the ECI Team between September and December. All data within this report relates to Surrey Heartlands and Surrey Heath CCG's for interventions only.

The ECI Team continue to hold a joint weekly IFR screening meeting with 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 any potential commissioning gaps in a timely manner to the commissioners.

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 33% decrease in IFR applications received. This is due to the block contract arrangement imposed by NHS England.

Provider	Activity
Queen Victoria Hospital	3
Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust	2
Guys & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust	1
Central Surrey Health	1
Surrey & Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust	1
Ashford & St Peters Hospitals NHS Trust	1
Kingston Hospital NHS Trust	1
Chelsea & Westminster Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	1
BMI Healthcare Princess Margaret Hospital	1
Grand Total	12

5. IFR's received by procedure

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

Procedure	Activity
Radiofrequency Denervation	1
Ptosis Correction	1
Pinnaplasty – Bilateral	1
Female Breast Reduction	2
Speech and Language Therapy	1
Fat Injection	1
Female Sterilisation	1
Fertility Preservation	2
Breast Implant Removal and Replacement	1
Arthroscopic Subacromial Shoulder Decompression	1
Grand Total	12

6. IFR's received by ICP/CCG

The number of applications received during this quarter has remained the same, however there was still a reduction in the number of submissions compared to the previous year. This is due to the knock on effect of the COVID-19 pandemic and the block contract arrangement imposed by NHS England. All ICP's within 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	4
Guildford & Waverley ICP	1
North West Surrey ICP	3
Surrey Downs ICP	3
Surrey Heartlands CCG Grand Total	11
Surrey Heath CCG	1
Surrey Heath CCG Grand Total	1
Grand Total of IFR's Received	12

7. IFR applications screened

IFR applications are screened for eligibility for consideration by the IFR Panel.

Month	No of IFR's screened	Eligible for Panel	Ineligible for Panel	Withdrawn: IFR not required
Oct	0	0	0	0
Nov	1	0	1	0
Dec	0	0	0	0

8. IFR application outcomes

Out of the 12 IFR applications received by the ECI Team between October and December 2020, 8 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	8
IFR Ineligible for consideration by the IFR Panel	1
IFR Pending; Further information requested	3
Grand Total	12

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 reviewed, 8 were withdrawn; 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 ICP		4	
	Withdrawn *	4	
Guildford & Waverley		1	£4,000
	IFR Pending; Further information requested	1	£4,000
North West Surrey		3	
	Withdrawn *	3	
Surrey Downs		3	£10,000
	Withdrawn *	1	
	IFR Pending; Further information requested	2	£10,000
Surrey Heath		1	£4350
	IFR Ineligible for consideration by the IFR Panel	1	£4350
Grand Total		12	£18,350

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 meetings held in November and December did not take place as there were no cases for consideration.

Name	Organisation	Oct	Nov	Dec
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 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 meetings held in November and December did not take place as there were no cases for consideration. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Panel meetings which take place are done so via Microsoft Teams.

Name	Organisation	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tejinder Bahra	Pharmaceutical Commissioning Team, East Surrey ICP	◆		
Sarah Watkin	Pharmaceutical Commissioning Team, Surrey Downs ICP	◆		
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	◆		
Paul Barton	Lay Member	◆		
Andrea Golding	ECI Team, Surrey Heartlands CCG	◆		
James Forbes	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: 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 2 IFR application's received for an assisted conception procedures during this period.

ICP/CCG	Procedure	Activity	Expected Cost
Guildford & Waverley ICP		1	£4,000
	Fertility Preservation	1	£4,000
Surrey Downs ICP		1	£4,000
	Fertility Preservation	1	£4,000
Grand Total		2	£8,000

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 appropriate ICP.

3 EEA reimbursement claims were made during this period, as listed in the table below, and were all approved.

ICP/CCG	Request
Surrey Downs ICP	A& E Treatment including cast; Broken shin bone
Surrey Heath CCG	Acute Urine Infection (Emergency)
	Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy

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 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 relating to IFR applications were received.

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	Oct	Nov	Dec
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%

KPI	Target	Oct	Nov	Dec
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. Until such time as the SCPC has been fully initiated, the SPC will continue on an ad-hoc basis, as and when there are evidence reviews that required clinical discussion and consideration.
- 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.