

Individual Funding Requests (IFR) Service

IFR Annual Activity Report 2020/21

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Contents

1.	Introduction	3
1.1	Evidence Based Interventions	4
2.	Surrey ICPs/CCGs population sizes.....	4
3.	Number of IFR applications received by Provider	5
4.	Number of IFR applications received by procedure.....	5
5.	Number of IFR applications received by ICP/CCG	6
6.	Number of IFR applications screened	7
7.	IFR application outcomes	7
8.	IFR application outcomes and anticipated cost, by ICP/CCG	7
9.	IFR Panel Attendance Log	9
10.	Assisted Conception.....	10
11.	European Economic Area Requests	11
12.	Equipment Requests	12
13.	Appeals (Process Review) Received	12
14.	Complaints Received	13
15.	Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)	14
16.	Next Steps.....	14

1. Introduction

The Effective Commissioning Initiative (ECI) Team hosts the Individual Funding Requests (IFR) service (for interventions only) on behalf of East Surrey, Guildford & Waverley, North West Surrey, and Surrey Downs Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs), Surrey Heath CCG.

There are often 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 types of requests occur, ICPs/CCGs 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, Blueteq, which are checked for completeness by the ECI Team. Applications are screened on a weekly basis by the IFR Screening Group which consists of a minimum of 2 clinicians including representation for the Pharmaceutical Commissioning Team.

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 ICPs, a GP from Surrey Heath, 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 the decision to decline funding, they have the option of sending a formal request in writing to the ECI Team; this must be received within one calendar month of the date that IFR Panel decision was communicated to the requesting clinician.

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 recovery. Providers are not required to submit IFR applications at this time, however some have continued to do so for their own internal monitoring purposes.

This report demonstrates the scope of the IFR applications which were received and processed by the ECI Team between April 2020 and March 2021. All data within this report relates to the 4 ICPs within Surrey Heartlands CCG and Surrey Heath CCG, 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.

1.1 Evidence Based Interventions

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 currently accessible via the NHS Business Services Authority website however it is being transferred to ViewPoint and will be available for use early 2021/22.

2. Surrey ICPs/CCGs population sizes

These figures are taken from each individual ICPs Annual Report for 2019/20 (* figure taken from Surrey Heath CCG website).

ICP/CCG	Population size
East Surrey ICP	185,000 +
Guildford & Waverley ICP	225,000 +
North West Surrey ICP	370,000 +
Surrey Downs ICP	305,000 +
Surrey Heath CCG	98,142 *

3. Number of IFR applications received by Provider

The table below shows the number of IFR applications that were received by the ECI Team during each quarter in 2020/21, broken down by provider. A total of 44 IFR applications were received over the course of the year, despite all providers being on a block contract.

Provider	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Grand Total
Aintree University Hospitals NHS FT	-	1	-	-	1
Ashford & St Peter's Hospitals NHS Trust	2	1	1	-	4
BMI Healthcare Princess Margaret Hospital	-	1	1	1	3
CARE Fertility Woking	-	1	-	1	2
Central Surrey Health	-	-	1	-	1
Chelsea & Westminster Healthcare NHS FT	-	-	1	1	2
Epsom & St Helier NHS Trust	2	-	-	-	2
Guy's & St Thomas' NHS FT	-	2	1	1	4
Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust	-	-	2	-	2
Kingston Hospital NHS Trust	-	1	1	-	2
Mayday Healthcare NHS Trust	-	-	-	1	1
Odstock Medical	1	1	-	1	3
Queen Victoria Hospital NHS FT	1	-	3	3	7
Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Trust	1	-	-	-	1
Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust	1	2	-	-	3
Spire Thames Valley Hospital & Windsor Clinic	-	1	-	-	1
St George's Healthcare NHS Trust	-	-	-	2	2
Surrey & Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust	-	1	1	1	3
Grand Total	8	12	12	12	44

4. Number of IFR applications received by procedure

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

Procedure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Grand Total
Abdominoplasty	-	1	-	-	1
Assisted Conception	1	4	2	2	9
Botulinum Toxin Injection	-	-	-	1	1
Breast Augmentation	1	-	-	1	2
Breast implant removal and replacement	-	1	1	3	5
Breast reduction	1	-	2	-	3
Carbon Dioxide Laser Ablation	-	-	-	1	1
Chronic Fatigue Syndrome service	1	-	-	-	1
Cryopreservation to preserve fertility in people diagnosed with cancer	1	-	-	-	1

Procedure	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Grand Total
Drug requirement	-	1	-	-	1
Epilepsy Assessment	-	1	-	-	1
Fat Injection	-	-	1	-	1
Female Sterilisation	-	-	1	1	2
Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES)	1	1	-	1	3
Gastroenterology procedure	1	-	-	-	1
Orthotics	-	1	-	-	1
Other Breast Surgery	-	1	-	-	1
Other Orthopaedics	-	1	1	-	2
Pinnaplasty - Bilateral	-	-	1	1	2
Ptosis Correction - Right Eye Only	-	-	1	-	1
Radiofrequency Denervation	-	-	1	-	1
Revision of breast augmentation	1	-	-	-	1
Shoulder & Elbow - General	-	-	-	1	1
Speech & Language Therapy	-	-	1	-	1
Grand Total	8	12	12	12	44

5. Number of IFR applications received by ICP/CCG

Although 44 IFR applications were received during 2020/21, 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 ICPs 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	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Grand Total
East Surrey ICP	2	2	4	2	10
Guildford & Waverley ICP	2	1	1	-	4
North West Surrey ICP	2	1	3	3	9
Surrey Downs ICP	1	2	3	7	13
Surrey Heartlands CCG Total					36
Surrey Heath CCG	1	6	1	-	8
Surrey Heath CCG Total					8
Grand Totals	8	12	12	12	44

6. Number of IFR applications screened

IFR applications are screened for eligibility for consideration by the IFR Panel. The table below shows the number of applications that were reviewed by the IFR Screening Group and their outcomes.

Quarter	No of IFR's screened	Eligible for Panel	Ineligible for Panel	Withdrawn
1	3	0	3	0
2	3	1	1	1
3	1	0	1	0
4	0	0	0	0

7. IFR application outcomes

Out of the 44 IFR applications received by the ECI Team during 2020/21, 26 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 IFR Screening Group have considered that a case is ineligible for IFR Panel, generally the reason is that the requesting clinician has not provided enough evidence to demonstrate how the patient is clinically exceptional compared to other patients with the same clinical presentation. Clinicians have the option of resubmitting their request at a later date provided there is additional clinical information available that has not previously been submitted.

IFR Outcome	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Grand Total
IFR: Withdrawn	5	10	8	3	26
IFR: Ineligible for IFR Panel	2	1	1	2	6
IFR: Further Information Requested	-	-	3	6	9
IFR: Approved - No IFR Required	1	-	-	1	2
IFR: Declined by the IFR Panel	-	1	-	-	1
Grand Total	8	12	12	12	44

8. IFR application outcomes and anticipated cost, by ICP/CCG

The table below details the outcomes and anticipated costs for all the IFR applications that were submitted for during 2020/21. Out of the 44 applications that were reviewed, 26 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.

East Surrey ICP			
Quarter	IFR Outcome	Activity	Anticipated Cost
1	IFR Ineligible for IFR Panel	1	£3,000
2	Withdrawn	2	£3,000
3	Withdrawn	4	£3,000
4	Withdrawn	1	£0
	IFR: Further information requested	1	£0
	IFR: Ineligible for IFR Panel	1	£3,000
East Surrey ICP Total		10	£12,000
Guildford & Waverley ICP			
Quarter	IFR Outcome	Activity	Anticipated Cost
1	Withdrawn	1	£250
	IFR: Approved - No IFR Required	1	£350
2	Withdrawn	1	£1,610
3	IFR: Further information requested	1	£4,000
4	-	0	£0
Guildford & Waverley ICP Total		4	£6,210
North West Surrey ICP			
Quarter	IFR Outcome	Activity	Anticipated Cost
1	Withdrawn	1	£4,000
	IFR Ineligible for IFR Panel	1	£3,500
2	Withdrawn	1	£3,000
3	Withdrawn	3	£0
4	Withdrawn	1	£0
	IFR: Approved - No IFR Required	1	£0
	IFR: Further information requested	1	£0
North West Surrey ICP Total		9	£10,500
Surrey Downs ICP			
Quarter	IFR Outcome	Activity	Anticipated Cost
1	Withdrawn	2	£8,000
2	Withdrawn	2	£3,000
3	Withdrawn	1	£0
	IFR: Further information requested	2	£10,000
4	Withdrawn	1	£0
	IFR: Further information requested	4	£0
	IFR Ineligible for IFR Panel	1	£0
Surrey Downs ICP Total		13	£21,000

Surrey Heath CCG			
Quarter	IFR Outcome	Activity	Anticipated Cost
1	Withdrawn	1	£3,500
2	Withdrawn	4	£9,000
	IFR Ineligible for IFR Panel	1	£4,500
	IFR: Declined by IFR Panel	1	£8,000
3	IFR Ineligible for IFR Panel	1	£4,350
4	-	0	£0
Surrey Heath CCG Total		8	£29,350
Grand Total		44	£79,060

9. IFR Panel Attendance Log

The table below shows the attendance log for the GP's that were present at the IFR Panel meetings during 2020/21.

The IFR Panel meetings scheduled for June, November and December 2020, and January and February 2021 did not take place as there were no cases eligible for consideration.

Names	Organisation	Apr	May		Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct		Mar	
Dr Bethan Forgie	East Surrey ICP			No June IFR Panel					No IFR Panel between November 2020 and February 2021		
Dr Joe McGilligan	East Surrey ICP										
Dr David Eyre-Brook	Guildford & Waverley ICP										
Dr Philippa Woodward	North West Surrey ICP										
Dr Ruchika Gupta	Surrey Downs ICP										
Dr Phi Vo	Surrey Downs ICP										
Dr Rachel Darroch	Surrey Heath CCG										
Dr John Fraser	Surrey Heath CCG										

The table below shows the attendance log for the non-GP's that were present at the IFR Panel meetings which took place in 2020/21.

Names	Organisation	Apr	May		Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct		Mar	
Tejinder Bahra	Pharmaceutical Commissioning			No June IFR Panel					No IFR Panel between November 2020 and February 2021		
Liz Clark	Pharmaceutical Commissioning										
Sarah Watkin	Pharmaceutical Commissioning										
Hannah McDonald	Pharmaceutical Commissioning										
Nikki Smith	Pharmaceutical Commissioning										
Clare Johns	Pharmaceutical Commissioning										
Georgina Randall	Pharmaceutical Commissioning										
Dr Liz Saunders	Public Health Consultant, SCC										
Dr Iain Cruickshank	IFR Panel Chair										
Andrea Golding	ECI Team										
James Forbes	ECI Team										
Taylor Keech	ECI Team										
Peter Dawson	Public Health Lead, SCC										
Helen Raison	Public Health Lead, SCC										
Poppy Middlemiss	Public Health Lead, SCC										
Paul Barton	Lay Member										

10. 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 for eligible women who are aged 39 years and 0 days at the time of their referral to a fertility clinic from a secondary care provider. If the woman reaches the age of 40 during treatment, then their current cycle can be completed but no others must be initiated.

The table below shows the details of the 9 IFR applications received for an Assisted Conception procedure during this period.

Qtr	ICP/CCG	Request	Outcome
1	Surrey Heath CCG	Cryopreservation to preserve fertility in people diagnosed with cancer	IFR: Case Withdrawn
2	Surrey Heath CCG	Cryopreservation to preserve fertility in people diagnosed with cancer	IFR: Case Withdrawn
2	Surrey Heath CCG	Embryo freezing	IFR: Case Withdrawn
2	Surrey Heath CCG	IVF	IFR: Declined at IFR Panel
2	East Surrey ICP	Embryo transfer	IFR: Case Withdrawn
3	Guildford & Waverley ICP	Fertility preservation	IFR: Case Withdrawn
3	Surrey Downs ICP	Fertility preservation	IFR: Case Withdrawn
4	Surrey Downs ICP	Fertility Treatment ICSI	IFR: Ineligible for IFR Panel
4	North West Surrey ICP	Assisted Conception	IFR: Approved outside of Triage/Panel

11. European Economic Area Requests

European Economic Area (EEA) requests are for routine treatments which took place in a European country. ICPs/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 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.

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

Quarter	ICP/CCG	Request
1	-	-
2	Surrey Downs ICP	Septoplasty for a deviated septum and turbinate hypertrophy
3	Surrey Downs ICP	A& E Treatment including cast; Broken shin bone
	Surrey Heath CCG	Acute Urine Infection (Emergency)
	Surrey Heath CCG	Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy
4	-	-

12. 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.

4 requests for equipment were received during this period.

Quarter	ICP/CCG	Request	Cost
1	-	-	-
2	Surrey Heath CCG	Grandstanding frame	£6,389
2	Surrey Downs	Patient in need of a wig	£1,000
2	Guildford & Waverley	Funding request for IPAD and App	£509
2	Guildford & Waverley	Functional Electrical Stimulation for Dropped Foot	£1,610
3	-	-	-
4	-	-	-
Grand Total			£9,508

13. 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 2020/21.

14. 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. The table below shows details of the 4 complaints that were received during 2020/21.

Qtr	ICP/CCG	Complaint	Response
1	-	-	-
2	North West Surrey ICP	Funding removed for Inguinal Hernia and patient removed from waiting list.	Patient advised that they do not meet the criteria for Inguinal Hernia surgery and provided with an explanation of the process for developing policies
	Guildford & Waverley ICP	Issues with the Assisted Conception Policy. The complainant believes it is negatively impacting on her due the age restriction.	Patient provided with an explanation of the process for developing policies.
	Guildford & Waverley ICP	Funding for an inguinal hernia.	Patient provided with an explanation of the process for developing policies.
3	North West Surrey ICP	Removal of Lipoma - GP referred patient to Woking Community Hospital. Patient saw consultant on 5th November 2020 and was advised that the lipoma was too small for removal under the NHS as it currently is only 3.5cm.	Patient provided with an explanation of the process for developing policies.

15. 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 and timely manner. The table below shows the details of each KPI, all were met during 2020/21.

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

16. Next Steps

- All providers (NHS and Independent) continue to function within a block contract for IFR's until further notice.
- The Surrey Priorities Committee (SPC) will be moving to a less formal arrangement. The SPC will consider and agree a workplan for 2021/22; evidence reviews will be considered, and recommendations made to each ICP prior to ratification by the newly formed Health & Care Professionals Executive (HCPE) which has its initial meeting scheduled for April 2021.
- The ECI Team will continue to be part of the demonstrator community for the Evidence Based Interventions (EBI) and will contribute to the 3rd Wave of thresholds that will be implemented.