

Individual Funding Panel

Patient information leaflet

Introduction

The Integrated Care Board (ICB) in Devon is responsible for buying and paying for health services that are most effective and represent best value for money - this is called commissioning. The ICB has a limited amount of money to cover the whole population, and so this means that the ICB cannot commission all treatments or medications that might be available. The ICB wants to ensure that people with the greatest need receive the appropriate treatment and that outcomes for those in the poorest parts of society are improved the most.

There are some treatments or procedures which the ICB do not commission routinely. Usually this is because there is no or little evidence that the treatment offers clinical benefits to the patient. These are classed as 'low clinical value' policies and are not funded except in very specific circumstances. In other cases, costs and benefits are considered together, and the treatment may be available only to people with particular clinical circumstances, or after other things have been tried.

All commissioning pathways and policies can be found on the [ICB website](#).

The ICB recognises that everyone is an individual and that their clinical circumstances may be different. Everyone has the opportunity to discuss with their doctor whether to request a treatment that is not routinely available through an Individual Funding Request (IFR); this leaflet outlines the process for making an application and what to do if you are unhappy with the process.

When can an individual funding request be made?

An individual funding request (IFR) is a request for treatment or medication that is not normally available on the NHS, either in general or in your particular circumstances. For example, you may not meet the criteria for a particular operation or treatment, but you and your GP or consultant consider that there are reasons why it should be available to you.

An individual funding request can be made for a treatment that is not routinely offered by the NHS:

- when your clinician believes that your clinical circumstances are clearly different to other patients with the same condition, and

- when there is a reason why you would respond differently to other patients
- and therefore gain more clinical benefit from the treatment.

Who can make an application?

All applications to the IFR panel must be made by a clinician, usually the most senior clinician, who is directly involved in your care. Patients or their representatives cannot make an application directly as it is unlikely that they would be in possession of the relevant technical and clinical detail needed by the panel. The decision to be taken is about the use of NHS resources to give a clinical benefit. However, the IFR Panel will consider a statement in support of the application from patients or their representatives only if it relates to their clinical condition.

How is the application made?

There is a standard application form which must be completed by the referring clinician. Incomplete applications will be returned to the submitting clinician. Your consent will be requested for your information to be shared with the Panel and NHS staff.

What happens once my application has been submitted?

Your application will be considered by the next available panel, which meets monthly. Please note applications can only be considered when all relevant information has been provided by your referring clinician.

What does the panel consider?

In all cases the decision making takes into account:

- Clinical need
- Clinical and cost effectiveness
- Impact of refusal
- Exceptionality of clinical circumstances and of clinical benefit

If a commissioning policy or pathway exists, the panel will consider whether you have exceptional clinical circumstances that make you different from other people with the same condition and to whom the policy or pathway applies. Where no commissioning policy exists, the panel will also consider whether there is evidence that the treatment or medication would be clinically effective in your specific case.

It is important to understand that simply because the treatment or medication might be beneficial to patients is not sufficient, in itself, to fund the treatment. All the factors described above are considered as the ICB must be fair to everyone.

Can I attend the panel?

Patients, or their representatives are not able to attend the panel. This is because the decision is made purely on the clinical evidence and supporting information submitted.

How will I know the outcome of the panel?

The outcome of the panel will be communicated back to your clinician who submitted the application. You should allow up to 5 working days after the date of the panel for the outcome to be received. If you have not received an outcome, you should contact the clinician directly.

What happens if I am dissatisfied with the outcome of the panel?

If the IFR panel hasn't supported funding for a requested treatment, or if it has approved a treatment subject to conditions and you don't agree, you should speak to your clinician who may be able to request a review of the decision. The review can be requested if you and your clinician think that the process hasn't been followed correctly and must be made within 30 days of when you were informed of the decision.

What is the process for a review of the decision?

You, your representative, or the clinician who made the original application should make the request explaining the grounds for review.

You (or your representative with appropriate consent) may submit a statement to describe why you think there are grounds for a review, for example, the original evidence did not properly describe the clinical impact of your condition. The statement should be submitted with the request from the clinician.

If you request a review yourself, **you must have support for this from your clinician.**

The review panel will consider the review on the following basis:

- Whether the funding panel considered all of the original evidence correctly
- Whether there is new evidence since your case was considered that might change the original decision (this means your case may go back to the Individual Funding Panel)
- Whether the funding panel acted in accordance with the ICB policies

The review panel can uphold the Individual Funding Panel decision, or it can refer your case back for reconsideration with reasons why it considers this is the right thing to do. However, it cannot overturn the original decision.

If your situation changes or more clinical evidence becomes available about the effectiveness of your treatment, please discuss this with your clinician who may wish to make a repeat application, including any additional information for consideration by the IFR Panel.

How will I know the outcome of the Treatment Decision Review Panel?

The outcome of the Treatment Decision Review Panel will be communicated within 10 working days.

Should you remain dissatisfied, you are entitled to make a formal complaint. The formal complaint process cannot overturn the decision but will review the process followed and if fault is found, could recommend that your case is re-considered at the funding panel.

Following the outcome of the complaint there is no recourse to further local review, however you do have the right to present your complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman should you remain dissatisfied.

Contact details

Panel Contacts (for Review Panel correspondence only)

Email: d-icb.ifr@nhs.net

Patient Experience (complaints and feedback)

You can ask for further information, give feedback or make a complaint to the Patient Advice and Complaints team:

Tel: 0300 123 1672

Email: d-icb.patientexperience@nhs.net