

Plastic surgery

Individual funding requests (IFR)

What is an individual funding request?

The NHS exists to serve the needs of all patients but also has a duty not to exceed the resources allocated to it by central government (NHS Act 2006). Not all treatments are routinely funded by the NHS. Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) need to use their limited resources effectively to obtain the best healthcare possible for their population.

There may be occasions when a GP or consultant considers that a patient may benefit from treatment that is not routinely funded. In these circumstances, CCGs must have a clear system in place to assess whether the treatment can be funded, demonstrating a fair decision making process for all patients. These are referred to as Individual Funding Requests (IFRs).

Why are some treatments not routinely offered by the NHS?

There may be some cases where a treatment is not available because there is limited evidence for how well it works or because it is very expensive and offers limited clinical benefit. Many IFRs are for cosmetic surgical procedures which are generally effective but considered to be of low priority by local CCGs and will only be funded in exceptional clinical circumstances. Some people can have this type of surgery funded by the NHS if they meet certain clinical eligibility criteria.

When can an IFR be made?

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

Who makes an IFR?

Your clinical team can make an IFR on your behalf for a treatment which is not routinely funded by the NHS.

A treatment plan will be offered to you in your consultation. By agreeing to this plan you are giving your consent for an IFR to be completed and submitted. Should you not give your consent, treatment will not be available and you will be discharged to your GP.

Once you have consented, an application will be submitted to the IFR panel at your local CCG who will decide to either approve or decline funding.

How long will an application take?

As long as all the required information is submitted, it usually takes 30 working days from receiving an application to making a decision. It can often be quicker and urgent cases can be processed more quickly if needed.

Your local CCG will keep in contact with your clinical team during the application process and will let them know how the application is progressing and if there are any delays.

What will happen next?

After your consultation you will be added to the waiting list for surgery under the care of your consultant.

If your funding is approved then you will remain on the waiting list for surgery and be contacted when we are able to offer you a surgery date. Please note the IFR is only valid for the treatment mentioned and will not include any additions to this.

Should your funding be declined you will be discharged from Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation trust. A letter will be sent to your GP informing them of this decision. Unfortunately we will not be able to offer follow up appointments. You should discuss the next stages with your GP and whether an appeal would be appropriate.

Useful sources of information

Please refer to your local CCG website: www.nhsc.org/ccgs/

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline. **t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch. **t:** 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day. **t:** 111 **w:** 111.nhs.uk

NHS website

Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing. **w:** www.nhs.uk

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