Individual Funding Requests (IFRs):

A Patient's Guide

What is an Individual Funding Request (IFR)?

An Individual Funding Request (IFR) is an application to ask the NHS to pay for a treatment that is not paid for by the NHS.

In exceptional circumstances, a GP or other healthcare professional may believe a patient would benefit from one of these treatments. In such cases, the healthcare professional can ask the NHS to pay for that treatment by completing an IFR form on behalf of the patient.

Who can submit a IFR request?

IFR forms should be completed by the doctor or the healthcare professional with the most knowledge of the treatment being requested, and the most knowledge of the patient it is being requested for. IFR requests cannot be submitted by patients.

Are there requirements to receive funding for an IFR?

Yes, for certain procedures there are requirements that must be met for funding to approved. A patient must meet the criteria to be considered for funding or if criteria is not met evidence of exceptionality must be provided.

All IFR policies and criteria can be found at: West Yorkshire IFR Commissioning Policies

What is exceptionality?

Exceptionality means that your situation is very different from other patients with the same medical condition, or that you're likely to get more benefit from treatment than most people do.

What if there is no policy for my Individual Funding Requests?

There will not be a policy for all the treatments covered by IFR. In this case once the application is submitted the IFR team may request further information from your referrer to help come to a decision around your case.

Are the policies the same for the whole of West Yorkshire?

Yes, all the policies have been reviewed and aligned and are single West Yorkshire policies. This is to make sure everyone gets the same access to treatments, wherever they live in West Yorkshire

How often are policies reviewed?

Each policy has a different review date, and this is stated on individual policies. The most up-to-date policies will be available on the website.

What is the process for once a IFR referral is received by the team?

The IFR process is as follows:

- The referral is received by the West Yorkshire IFR team.
- The referral is reviewed to confirm if all the relevant and required information has been received.
- If any information is missing, then the IFR team will inform the referrer by email and request the information required.
- Once all the information is received. All identifiable information is redacted from all documents prior to being reviewed to make them anonymised.
- Once all the information has been received then the referral is sent to clinical IFR members.
- The clinical IFR members will then approve, decline, refer to panel or request further information.
- If the application is approved, declined or further information the referrer will be informed in writing.
- If a decision is unable to be agreed upon then the case will be discussed at panel.

Do all cases go to panel?

Each case is reviewed by a member of the IFR panel, who has a clinical qualification e.g a doctor or nurse. If a case clearly meets or does not meet the criteria, it will not be referred to the full panel. Instead, a decision letter will be sent directly to the referrer.

How often and who sits on the IFR panel?

The IFR panel sits once a month and consists of clinicians, specialists, lay members and commissioners.

Can I, or a clinician, attend the IFR or Review Panel in person?

No. Only IFR Panel or Review Panel members may be present. However, all evidence will be carefully considered before decisions are made.

How will I know what the decision is?

Your referrer will contact you to let you know what the decision is. A member of the IFR team can discuss the IFR process with individuals but we are unable to advise on a specific IFR case because, in line with the IFR procedure, we are not permitted to see patient identifiable data (IFR cases are anonymised prior to review by panel members.

What if I disagree with the decision made?

If you feel that not all evidence was submitted, then you can speak to your referrer and request that your case along with the further evidence is re-submitted to the panel.

To make an appeal against the decision of the panel, the doctor or the healthcare professional who made the original referral, must put an appeal in writing to the panel administrator. The appeals panel is made up of ICB board members and senior managers, they must be different members to the original panel.

An appeal will not be heard just on the grounds that you disagree with the original decision. Appeals can only be made if you think that:

- The panel didn't follow the agreed process.
- The panel did not consider all of the relevant information that was available to them. The panel acted outside of its authority, or a decision was made that was contrary to a principle of law.

The appeals process includes situations where the appeals panel identifies that there was additional evidence that was not made available. If the appeal is rejected, a clear explanation will be given to your GP / consultant.

If the appeal is accepted, it will be returned to the IFR panel to be considered again.

How can I make a complaint?

To raise your concern or complaint, you can contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service via the following ways:

- Email: wyicb.pals@nhs.net
- Telephone: 01924 552150 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm, excluding bank holidays)
- In writing: Patient Advice and Liaison Service, West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, White Rose House West Parade, Wakefield WF1 1LT.

I still have questions that this leaflet didn't cover?

If you have a query that has not been covered in this leaflet, then the IFR team can be contacted on:

- West Yorkshire IFR Team: ifr.wy@nhs.net

Please note that the members of the IFR team can discuss the IFR process with individuals, but we are unable to advise on a specific IFR case because, in line with the IFR procedure, we are not permitted to see patient identifiable data.