



# Individual funding requests

## a guide for patients



As medical technology advances, a large number of new treatments become available every year – including drugs, medical devices and new surgical techniques.

Some of these are introduced into the NHS in response to guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), while others are brought in after NHS England has evaluated them and found that they are both clinically effective and that they offer the best value for patients and taxpayers.

The NICE website has more information on their guidance: [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

In some cases, it may be possible to fund a treatment for an individual patient outside of the process described above. This is called an individual funding request (or IFR).

NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (NN) Integrated Care Board (ICB) commissions (or buys) high quality clinical care for its population. The treatments funded by NN ICB are those regarded as safe, effective and evidence based, giving the best value to patients in terms of health outcomes. However, NN ICB has a limited budget, it is inevitable that decisions need to be made about which healthcare treatments to commission for our local population.



### **What is an individual funding request?**

An individual funding request can be made by the clinician treating you if they believe that because your clinical circumstances are exceptional, you may receive benefit from a treatment or service that isn't routinely offered by the NHS.

### **Why are some treatments not routinely offered by the NHS?**

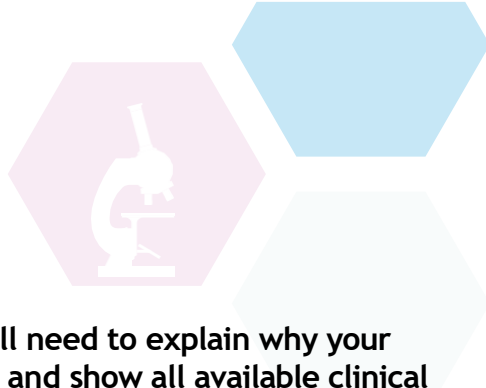
There may be some cases where a treatment is not available because there is limited evidence for how well it works or because it is very high cost and doesn't offer good value for money for taxpayers and the NHS.

### **When can an individual funding request be made?**

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.

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**In the application, your clinician will need to explain why your clinical circumstances are different and show all available clinical evidence for why they believe you would benefit more from the treatment than other patients with the same condition. They will also explain to you why they believe that a treatment that is not routinely offered by the NHS is the best treatment option for you.**

Patients understand their symptoms better than anyone and may be very well informed on their condition. If you're aware of a treatment that you think may help you, discuss it with your clinician who can advise you if an individual funding request would be appropriate. If there are likely to be other patients with similar clinical circumstances who might benefit from the treatment in a similar way, your clinician can request that NHS NN ICB consider introducing it as a routine treatment. If it is approved, the clinician can then make the treatment available to you.

### **Does the individual funding request process take into account any other patient circumstances apart from clinical exceptionalism?**

Every person has the same rights to treatment under the NHS no matter what their social, family or other circumstances are. For this reason, it's important that non-clinical factors are not considered in IFR decision making. For example, factors such as the effect of a treatment on a patient's ability to work or study, care for dependants, or meet financial commitments can't be considered as part of the IFR process. The decision is based on clinical circumstances only, which ensures the IFR process is fair, equitable and non-discriminatory.

## Who can make an individual funding request?

If your GP or Consultant agrees that a treatment would be of benefit to you, and that there are no alternative treatments or services available for your condition, they can then make a request to the NN ICB on your behalf but only if they consider your individual circumstances are exceptional.

Requests are made on a form which asks questions that allow your GP or Consultant to describe your personal clinical circumstances, how they think the treatment will specifically benefit you, the evidence that it is both safe and effective, the cost of the treatment and how commonly your condition occurs in the community

## Who considers the application?

Your application will first go through a screening process by NHS NN ICB and a member of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Public Health to make sure all relevant information has been submitted and the application meets the criteria for an individual funding request.

If the screening team agrees that there are grounds to consider your request as exceptional, your case will be considered by the CCGs IFR Panel within 40 working days of the screening decision, unless the clinical circumstances indicate that a quicker decision is needed.

The panel is made up of health professionals, lay members and NN ICB managers who consider the request against an agreed set of criteria to ensure the decision making is fair, consistent and transparent.

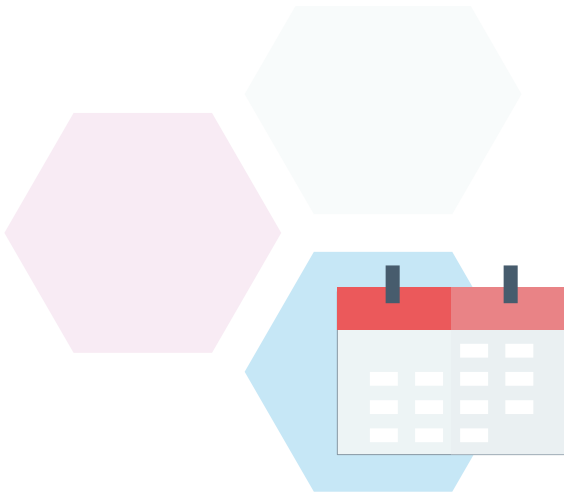
The panel reviews whether the treatment is likely to be beneficial and is safe (known as 'clinical effectiveness'), how much it will cost to

achieve the health benefit that is predicted (known as ‘cost effectiveness’) and the cost of the treatment in relation to the total CCG budget for providing health care (known as ‘affordability’).

Your personal details will be kept confidential.

NHS NN ICB will let your clinician know the outcome of the funding request and you will also be sent a letter to notify you of the decision.

If your application is unsuccessful, your clinician will discuss with you the reasons for the decision and what other treatment options may be available.



### **How long will an application take?**

As long as all the required information is submitted, it usually takes 40 working days from receiving an application to a decision, but it can often be sooner. Urgent cases can be processed more quickly if needed.

## How can I find out how my application is progressing?

NHS NN ICB will keep in contact with your clinician during the application process and let them know how the application is progressing and if there are any delays. You should therefore speak to your clinician in the first instance.

If you feel your application hasn't been considered within the timelines set out above, you can get in touch with NHS NN ICB Patient Experience Team. Contact details are below.



Telephone: **0115 8839570**



Email: **[nnicb-nn.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:nnicb-nn.patientexperience@nhs.net)**



Post: **NHS NN ICB, Sir John Robinson House, Arnold, NG5 6DA**

Please ensure you provide your full name, address and date of birth. Your request will be passed to the Individual Funding Request team who will respond as soon as possible.

## What do I do if I disagree with the decision?

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, in the first instance you should speak to your GP or consultant. You and your GP or Consultant can ask for a review of the IFR Panel's decision on the following grounds:

- The IFR Panel failed to follow due process and, as a result, the decision reached by the panel was different from the one that would be reached if due process had been followed.
- The IFR Panel did not take into account, or weigh appropriately, all the relevant evidence when making its decision.

The request for a review must be made in writing to the Chief Executive of the CCG within 20 working days of the date of the IFR Panel's decision letter. The CCG may accept requests outside this time limit if there are good reasons for the delay.

If the NN ICB does accept the grounds put forward then a Review Panel will be convened. To ensure a fair process, all reviews are considered by different people from those who made the original IFR decision.

If the NN ICB does not accept the grounds put forward for a review, a letter will be sent to the referring GP or Consultant explaining the reasons.

The Review Panel will not consider new clinical evidence. If new evidence becomes available your GP or Consultant should make a new Individual Funding Request submission.

The Review Panel cannot overturn the IFR Panel decision. However, if the Review Panel decides that the decision was not reached correctly then it can instruct the Individual Funding Request Review Panel to reconsider your case.

The review can be requested if you and your clinician think that the process hasn't been followed correctly and must be made within 28 days of when you were informed of the decision.

**If your situation changes or more clinical evidence becomes available about the effectiveness of your treatment your clinician may also be able to submit additional information which will be considered**

This information can be made available in alternative formats, such as easy read or large print, and may be available in alternative languages, upon request. Please contact [nnicb-nn.ifrteam-nottscountyccgs@nhs.net](mailto:nnicb-nn.ifrteam-nottscountyccgs@nhs.net)