

INDIVIDUAL FUNDING REQUEST PATIENT LEAFLET (Mental Health)

Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board

You have received this leaflet, as your Health Professional has identified that you need a treatment or intervention which is not routinely funded by the NHS and therefore requires approval from the Integrated Care Board (ICB), to be funded. This process is called an 'Individual Funding Request'. This leaflet provides you with more information about how the Individual Funding Request process works.

Introduction

NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB has a duty to spend the money it receives from the government in a fair and efficient way, taking in to account the health needs of the local community.

In some circumstances, your Health Professional may decide that you have 'exceptional' needs which would justify funding for a treatment which is not routinely available on the NHS. Requests for funding must be made through an Individual Funding Request (IFR). The same IFR Policy is used across Norfolk and Waveney to ensure that all patients are treated consistently and fairly.

What does 'exceptional' mean?

When deciding whether you are eligible for individual funding for a treatment or procedure, the ICB will need to decide whether your circumstances are 'exceptional'. To do this they will consider whether your care and treatment needs are significantly different to other patients with the same diagnosis/condition and whether you are more likely to benefit from the specialist treatment or intervention.

Decisions are made based on your clinical needs. Social factors, like your gender, ethnicity, age, lifestyle, employment status etc. cannot be considered as part of the IFR process.

Who can make an Individual Funding Request?

If your Health Professional agrees that a certain specialist treatment would be of benefit to you and there are no alternative treatments or services available for your condition, and that your needs are exceptional, they can apply to the ICB Mental Health IFR Team on your behalf.

As part of the IFR application, your Health Professional will be asked to describe your personal clinical circumstances, how they believe 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. All requests are treated in strict confidence and all personal details are removed from the paperwork before being submitted to the Mental Health IFR Clinical Reference Group (CRG) for consideration.

How is a decision made?

The ICB Mental Health IFR CRG is presided over by a clinical chairperson and is made up of Health Professionals. The CRG meet once a month to consider individual funding requests against an agreed set of criteria to ensure the decision making is fair, consistent and transparent. You will not be asked to attend the meeting.

What decision can the CRG make?

The CRG will either:

- Agree to the requested funding;
- Defer the decision until further information has been received (up to three months);
- Decline the request.

A letter will be sent to your Health Professional informing them of the CRG decision within 5 working days of the meeting explaining the reasons for the decision. Your Health Professional will contact you to discuss the decision so it can be fully explained. They can then discuss with you what it means for your care and the next steps which may need to be taken.

What can I do if the request is declined?

In the first instance you should speak to your Health Professional. If you or your Health Professional are unhappy with the CRG decision and it is felt that additional information is available to support the application, your Health Professional may request a review of the application within 30 working days of the date of the CRG decision. Your Health Professional must clearly outline the reasons as to why a review is requested. The CRG will then review the initial decision based on additional information received.

If all the relevant information was available to the CRG when the decision was made, but your Health Professional remains dissatisfied with the decision, they have 30 working days to request it to be reviewed by an IFR Appeals Panel on one of the following grounds only:

- Due process was not followed by the CRG or;
- The CRG failed to give a clear rationale for its decision.

The role of the IFR Appeals Panel is to determine whether the CRG has followed its own procedures, has properly considered the evidence presented to it and has come to a reasonable decision upon the evidence. The IFR Appeals Panel shall not have power to authorise funding for the requested treatment but shall have the right to make recommendations to the CRG.

Should you or your Health Professional remain dissatisfied with the IFR Appeals Panel decision, the matter may be pursued through the NHS Complaints Procedure. You can do this by contacting: nwicb.contactus@nhs.net or telephone 01603 595857.

Your Information

NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB is the statutory body responsible for local NHS individual funding decisions. Therefore, the application form containing your personal details and any other supporting information supplied, will be shared with the ICB and/or other trusted organisations acting on behalf of the ICB. Personal information may be retained only for the purposes of the IFR and, in some cases, may be used for invoicing and payment reconciliation. Your medical records may be used for the purposes of IFR quality audit which will be completed by a Health Professional. Your Health Professional will request your consent for information about your case to be used to process the application. They will also explain the funding process to you and will inform you of any funding decision made, including your right of appeal, if appropriate.

Anonymised information, which cannot identify you, may also be shared as part of ICB reporting processes e.g. number of IFR applications or types of treatment requested over a period of time.

How to contact us

If you have any questions about the information contained in this leaflet, please contact us at nwicb.mentalhealthcrg@nhs.net