

**Surrey Heartlands CCG  
and Frimley CCG  
(Surrey Heath only):  
Individual Funding Request (IFR)  
Service**

**IFR Activity Report 2021/22  
Quarter 1 (April – June 2021)**

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## 1. Introduction

The Effective Commissioning Initiative (ECI) Team at Surrey Heartlands Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) hosts the Individual Funding Requests (IFR) Service on behalf of East Surrey, Guildford & Waverley, North West Surrey and Surrey Downs Place-based Partnerships, and Frimley CCG (Surrey Heath only).

There may be individual cases where a patient's needs cannot be met through existing contracts and commissioning arrangements, but their consultant considers that their patient has a need for an un-commissioned treatment and wishes to request funding on their patient's behalf. When these requests occur, CCGs must have a robust and transparent system in place to assess and determine whether the request should be funded, demonstrating a rational decision-making process for an individual patient.

IFR applications for procedures and treatments which are not routinely funded on the NHS are submitted through an online database called Blueteq and each one is checked for completeness by the ECI Team. Applications are screened for eligibility for consideration by the IFR Panel on a weekly basis by the IFR Screening Group; this group consists of a minimum of 2 clinicians to guarantee a fair and transparent process. IFR applications can be submitted for both interventions and drugs; any received for drugs are processed by the Pharmaceutical Commissioning Team and are not included within this report.

IFR applications that are deemed to be eligible for consideration by the IFR Panel are processed and submitted to the next available Panel meeting for clinical discussion. Panel meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month and are attended by clinical representation from each of the 4 Surrey Place-based Partnerships/CCG as well as a pharmacist, a member of the Public Health Team, and a Lay Member. The IFR Panel will decide whether to approve or decline funding. Once a Panel decision has been made, the ECI Team will communicate the outcome to the applicant. If the applicant, or their patient, requests a review of the outcome following a declined decision, they have the option of sending a request in writing to the ECI Team; this must be received within one calendar month of the date of the IFR Panel decision email/letter.

In March 2020, NHS England issued guidance that all providers be on a block contract in order to minimise the burden of formal contractual documentation and contract management processes so that staff can focus fully on the COVID-19 response.

### 1.1 Evidence Based Interventions (EBI) Programme

The Evidence Based Interventions (EBI) programme was initiated by NHS England/Improvement in 2018 and aims to reduce harm and unnecessary interventions taking place by ensuring that those that are routinely available on the NHS are evidence-based and appropriate.

In addition, the programme aims to avoid needless harm to patients and free up scarce professional time for performing other interventions, including creating headroom for proven innovations. The time saved can, in turn, be reinvested in patient care.

NHSE/I compiled an initial list of 17 interventions, known as Wave 1, that had either none or limited clinical effectiveness based on clinical evidence and research including NICE guidelines, Choosing Wisely recommendations and academic studies which formed part of the NHS Standard Acute Contract.

Of the 17 interventions in Wave 1, 4 fell under the IFR category: Intervention for snoring (not OSA), Dilation and Curettage for heavy menstrual bleeding, Knee Arthroscopy for Osteoarthritis, and Injections for non-specific low back pain without sciatica. In December 2020, a further 31 interventions/tests/procedures were introduced, known as Wave 2, 2 of which were IFRs: Exercise ECG for screening for coronary heart disease and Helmet Therapy for treatment of positional plagiocephaly/brachycephaly in children.

Current contracts stipulate the requirement to comply with the EBI guidance. Although the guidance is not mandatory, CCG activity is monitored on a monthly basis by NHSE. A dashboard is used to present the data for all interventions across the country and can be used to identify providers/commissioners that are outliers against each intervention/test/procedure. The dashboard is currently accessible via the NHS Business Services Authority website however it is in the process of transitioning to ViewPoint.

## 2. Foreword from IFR Clinical Lead

This report demonstrates the scope of the IFR applications which have been received (for interventions only) by the ECI Team over the last quarter. The data within this report relates to all 4 Place-based Partnerships within Surrey Heartlands CCG: East Surrey, Guildford & Waverley, North West Surrey and Surrey Downs, and Frimley CCG (Surrey Heath).

The ECI Team continue to hold a joint weekly screening meeting with Pharmaceutical Commissioning Team, to screen cases for eligibility for consideration by the IFR Panel. Both teams continue to monitor requests and flag up potential commissioning gaps in a timely manner to the commissioners.

## 3. Surrey Heartlands Place-based Partnerships/CCG population sizes

These figures are taken from each individual Place-based Partnership/CCG Annual General Meeting June 2019. (\* figure taken from Surrey Heath CCG Annual Report 19/20).

Place-based Partnership/CCG	Population size
East Surrey Place-based Partnership	185,000 +
Guildford & Waverley Place-based Partnership	225,000 +
North West Surrey Place-based Partnership	370,000 +
Surrey Downs Place-based Partnership	305,000 +
Frimley CCG (Surrey Heath)	98,142 *

#### 4. IFR applications received by provider

During the same time period for the previous year, 2020/21, there has been just under a 1.4% increase, equating to an additional 3 IFR applications received.

Provider	Activity
Ashford & St Peters Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	1
Dorking Healthcare	1
Frimley Park Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	1
Guys & St Thomas's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	2
Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	1
Mayday Healthcare NHS Trust	1
Odstock Medical	1
Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	2
Surrey & Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>11</b>

#### 5. IFR applications received by procedure

The table below shows the procedures for which IFRs were submitted during Quarter 1.

Procedure	Activity
Investigation for suspected small bowel intussusception	1
Breast Implant Removal and Replacement	1
Carbon Dioxide Laser Ablation	1
Female Sterilisation	1
Functional Electrical Stimulation	1
Assisted Conception: IVF	1
Laser Hair Removal	1
Other facial procedures; Lower Lid procedure	1
Other Neurological/Neurosurgery; Transcranial Magnetic	1
Scar Revision	1
Shave of Rhinophyma	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>11</b>

#### 6. IFR applications received by Place-based Partnership/CCG

The table below shows the number of IFR applications received for each of the 4 Place-based Partnerships and Frimley CCG (Surrey Heath) during Quarter 1.

Place-based Partnership/CCG	Activity
East Surrey Place-based Partnership	2
Guildford & Waverley Place-based Partnership	2
North West Surrey Place-based Partnership	4
Surrey Downs Place-based Partnership	3
Frimley CCG (Surrey Heath only)	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>11</b>

## 7. IFR applications screened

All complete IFR applications are screened for eligibility for consideration by the IFR Panel. Where applications have been withdrawn, they are considered to be incomplete, and the applicant is advised that they can resubmit at any time.

Month	No of IFR's screened	Eligible for Panel	Ineligible for Panel	Further information required
April	2	1	1	0
May	1	0	0	1
June	2	1	1	0

## 8. IFR application outcomes

Although very few applications have been received during this period, 2 were withdrawn; the common themes being:

- There is a policy therefore an IFR application is not required
- Insufficient clinical detail was provided, or the request was uploaded onto the Blueteq database but not submitted

Cases that are 'Ineligible for Panel' are usually deemed not to be clinically exceptional, based on the evidence provided. Where the status of an application is 'Incomplete', the provider has only partially completed the details that are required in order for it to be submitted for consideration.

Status	Activity
Incomplete	2
IFR: Ineligible for IFR Panel	2
IFR: Case withdrawn	2
IFR: Further information required	2
IFR: Awaiting Eligibility Check by ECI Team	1
IFR: Approved outside IFR Panel	1
IFR: Prepared for IFR Panel	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>11</b>

## 9. IFR application outcomes by Place-based Partnership/CCG







The table below shows the outcomes for all the IFR applications that were submitted during this quarter. Where cases are incomplete, no costs are available.

Place-based Partnership/CCG	IFR Outcome	Activity	Anticipated Cost
<b>East Surrey Place-based Partnership</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>£2500</b>
	IFR: Ineligible for IFR Panel	1	£500
	IFR: Case Withdrawn	1	£2000
<b>Guildford &amp; Waverley Place-based Partnership</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>£1850</b>
	IFR: Ineligible for IFR Panel	1	£1600
	IFR: Approved outside IFR Panel	1	£250
<b>North West Surrey Place-based Partnership</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>£9000</b>
	Incomplete	2	£0
	IFR: Further information required	1	£1000
	IFR: Prepared for IFR Panel	1	£8000
<b>Surrey Downs Place-Based Partnership</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>£4800</b>
	IFR: Awaiting eligibility check	1	£1800
	IFR: Further information required	1	£2000
	IFR: Case withdrawn	1	£1000
<b>Frimley CCG (Surrey Heath)</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>£18,150</b>

## 10. IFR Panel GP Attendance Log

The table below shows the attendance log for the GP's that were present at the IFR Panel meetings during this time period.






The Panel meetings scheduled for May and June did not take place as there were no cases eligible for consideration.

Name	Organisation	April	May	June
Dr Bethan Forgie	East Surrey Place-based Partnership			
Dr Joe McGilligan	East Surrey Place-based Partnership			
Dr David Eyre-Brook	Guildford & Waverley Place-based Partnership			
Dr Philippa Woodward	North West Surrey Place-based Partnership			
Dr Ruchika Gupta	Surrey Downs Place-based Partnership			
Dr John Fraser	Frimley CCG (Surrey Heath)			

## 11. IFR Panel Non-GP Attendance Log

The table below shows the attendance log for the non-GPs that were present at the IFR Panel meetings during this time period.

The Panel meetings scheduled for May and June did not take place as there were no cases eligible for consideration.

Name	Organisation	April	May	June
Dr Iain Cruickshank	Independent Clinical Chair			
Tejinder Bahra	Pharmaceutical Commissioning Team, Surrey Heartlands CCG			
Dr Elizabeth Saunders	Consultant in Public Health, Surrey County Council			
Taylor Keech	ECI Team, Surrey Heartlands CCG			
Paul Barton	Lay Member			

## 12. Assisted Conception

Under patient choice, patients who are registered with a Surrey GP have the option of choosing where to undergo their Assisted Conception treatment, although there are 3 preferred providers that are commissioned by the CCG: Care Fertility (previously Nuffield Health, Woking Hospital), Croydon Health Services NHS Trust (Mayday) and Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

Up to 2 full cycles (consisting of 1 fresh and 1 frozen cycle) of IVF, with or without ICSI, are funded in eligible women who are aged no more than 39 years at the time of their referral to a fertility clinic. If the woman reaches the age of 40 during treatment, then that cycle can be completed but no others must be initiated.

The table below shows the details of the only IFR application received for an Assisted Conception procedure between April and June 2021. This application is currently pending a decision by the IFR Panel.

Place-based Partnership/CCG	Procedure	Activity	Expected Cost
<b>North West Surrey Place-based Partnership</b>		<b>1</b>	
	Assisted Conception: IVF	1	£8000
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>£8000</b>



### 13. European Economic Area Requests by Place-based Partnership / CCG

European Economic Area (EEA) requests are for routine treatments which took place in a European country. Place-based Partnerships/CCGs are responsible for reimbursing patients if the treatment would have been routinely available on the NHS. All EEA requests are managed by NHS England. When treatment takes place via this route, the designated team at NHS England submit a request for reimbursement of costs to the patients Place-based Partnership/CCG.

All EEA requests are managed by the ECI Team; each request is logged by the team and the patients Place-based Partnership/CCG makes the decision on whether the reimbursement should be made.

Requests received from NHS England contain minimal information and do not include the costs involved in the treatment. If a response is not submitted to NHS England within 7 working days, they have the authorisation to approved funding on behalf of the patients Place-based Partnership/CCG providing the treatment undertaken is funding locally. NHS England will then recharge the appropriate Place-based Partnership/CCG.

5 EEA reimbursement claims were made during this period for the treatments listed in the table below:

Month	Place-based Partnership /CCG	Treatment/Procedure
<b>April</b>	Guildford & Waverley Place-based Partnership	Laparoscopic 360 re-fundoplication with posterior hiatal plastic surgery
	North West Place-based Partnership	Chronic psychiatry, CT scan, Covid-19 Test
<b>June</b>	Guildford & Waverley Place-based Partnership	Hydatid Removal
	North West Place-based Partnership	MRI, first trauma & ortho consult, follow up consult, arthroscopic rotator cuff repair, follow up consult
	North West Place-based Partnership	Hip joint replacement

### 14. Non-IFR Funding Requests

Applications that are submitted for treatments/procedures/equipment that does not fall under the remit of IFR but still require from Surrey Heartlands CCG/Frimley CCG (Surrey Heath), are processed via an Outside Remit Request (ORR). The ECI Team log the request details onto a central document and then send the completed, anonymised ORR form to the relevant contracting team for a response.

During this period a request was submitted, for a Guildford & Waverley patient with a previous ankle fusion, for rocker custom shoes/boots made by Moore Bros Orthopaedic Footwear at a cost of £700. The request was reviewed by a Clinical Lead for Guildford & Waverley and subsequently approved.

## 15. Appeals (Process Review) Received

When the IFR Panel has not supported funding for a treatment, the patient or requesting clinician have the option of requesting that the process which led to the decision be subject to review. The request must be submitted to the ECI Team within 28 working days of the IFR Panel outcome and submitted in writing via email.

The IFR Review Panel will consider whether the process followed by the IFR Panel was fair and consistent, based on whether the decision reached:

- Was taken following a process which was consistent with the policies of CCG;
- Was a decision which a reasonable IFR Panel was entitled to reach;
- Understood, took into account and weighed, all the relevant evidence; and
- Did not take into account any irrelevant factors.

In the event that the IFR Review Panel considers that there was any procedural error in the IFR Panel's decision, they will consider whether there was any reasonable prospect that the IFR Panel could have come to a different decision had that error not been made.

If the IFR Review Panel considers that there was no reasonable prospect of the IFR Panel coming to a different decision, then the IFR Review Panel will approve the decision notwithstanding the procedural error. If the IFR Review Panel considers that there was a reasonable prospect that the IFR Panel may have come to a different decision had the error not been made, the IFR Review Panel will require the IFR Panel to reconsider the decision.

No appeals were received during this period.

## 16. Complaints Received

Complaints that relate to the IFR process are submitted directly to the Surrey Heartlands CCG complaints team who will, in turn, contact the ECI Team for a response to be drafted.

1 complaint was received during Quarter 1 from a couple that had encountered delays to their Assisted Conception treatment. The couple had made a complaint to their local acute trust around communications, appointments, and administration, that they felt had affected their care however were not content with the response they had received.

Upon review of the couples circumstances, it became apparent that the female patient did not fully meet the current thresholds for NHS-funded Assisted Conception as her BMI was above 30.

Due to the Surrey Heartlands-wide agreement that is currently in place, which allows an extension for any patients who were delayed within secondary care as an impact of the pandemic, the couple were advised that if the female could reduce her BMI to under 30 for a period of at least 6 months and they met all other thresholds prior to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021, funding would be approved.

## 17. Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

The ECI Team work to Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) in order to ensure that the IFR process is managed in a robust manner. The table below shows the details of each KPI and whether the target was met each month.

KPI	Target	April	May	June
IFR applications reviewed within 5 working days of receipt	100%	100%	100%	100%
Response sent to requesting clinicians within 5 working days when applications submitted incomplete	100%	100%	100%	100%
Applications received which are outside of the remit of the ECI Team, returned to the requesting clinician within 5 working days	100%	100%	100%	100%
IFR application outcome communicated to requesting clinician within 35 working days (from the date completed information is received)	100%	100%	100%	100%
Urgent requests receive a decision within 3 working days of receipt	100%	100%	100%	100%

## 18. Next Steps

- All providers (both NHS and Independent) will continue to be on a block contract, likely until 2022/23.
- The Surrey Priorities Committee (SPC) has moved to a less formal arrangement with a revised membership which includes representation from each of the 4 Surrey Place-based Partnerships, Frimley CCG (Surrey Heath), Medicines Management, and the Public Health Team.
- The SPC have considered and agreed their workplan for 2021/22; evidence reviews will be discussed, and recommendations made to each Place-based Partnership/CCG prior to ratification by the Health & Care Professionals Executive (HCPE).
- The ECI Team will continue to be part of the demonstrator community for the Evidence Based Interventions (EBI) lead by NHS England. The team will contribute to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wave of thresholds that will be implemented in due course following consultation.

- The Evidence Based Interventions (EBI) data will be moved to a new platform, ViewPoint, sometime during July/August 2021.