

Will the NHS in Leeds pay for my treatment?

Individual Funding Request process

This leaflet explains how the clinical commissioning groups (CCG) in Leeds make decisions about providing treatments which are not usually available on the NHS.

You should read this leaflet in conjunction with the 'Individual Funding Requests Policy' and the associated decision making frameworks including:

- Alternative therapies policy
- Cosmetics exceptions and exclusions policy
- End of trial treatment policy
- Private vs NHS targeted interventions policy
- High cost drugs policy

Funding health services

The three clinical commissioning groups in Leeds are responsible for planning and buying the health services that local people need. This includes hospital services, community services, mental health and learning disability services and emergency and urgent healthcare.

The demand for healthcare services is increasing, and new and often expensive treatments are regularly becoming available. We only have a set amount of money to spend, so we need to make sure that we make the best use of our budget so that people living in Leeds can access the healthcare services they need. Each year we identify our priorities and agree a plan for the following year. All CCGs have to make difficult decisions about whether to fund treatments for people outside that plan.

What if a treatment is not normally available?

We have a policy called an Individual Funding Request (IFR) policy that sets out how we should assess a request for funding to provide a treatment or service for an individual patient.

Underpinning this IFR policy is a range of other policies about the treatments and services that are not routinely available.

Your GP or NHS consultant can approach your clinical commissioning group to ask on your behalf for funding that is not routinely available for one of two reasons.

- 1 You have a medical condition that is rare or is not covered by general policies for treatment.
- 2 He or she feels that there are exceptional clinical circumstances in your case and would need to show that your circumstances differ greatly from that of the majority of patients with the same medical condition. They would also need to show that you are likely to gain more benefit than they would normally expect to see.

If your doctor can show that both of these applies in your case, then they can contact us on your behalf with an individual funding request to pay for a treatment that we would not normally provide.

Clinical commissioning groups aren't responsible for buying all health services, NHS England is also responsible for some services. Your doctor will know who to make the request to.

[More information at www.england.nhs.uk](http://www.england.nhs.uk)

Making an IFR

If you would like to request a treatment that we don't normally provide, please

discuss this with your GP or hospital consultant. They will complete an application form for you and send it to us, along with any supporting information. They will need to demonstrate why they feel that your request has exceptional clinical circumstances. Each request is considered individually and so we encourage you to provide us with supporting evidence, for example how your condition affects your daily life. You can also let us have photographs to support your request if this is appropriate.

How do we decide what treatment to fund?

We know that this can sometimes be difficult to define for each patient, and so the overarching Individual Funding Request Policy sets out how we assess each application and how we make our decisions. We aim to make these difficult decisions in a way that is fair and consistent by using the underpinning policies.

How will a decision be made?

We have a panel of specially trained people that meet once a month which considers each individual request. The panel members are a mix of clinically qualified people, non

clinical and independent members. They will consider each application against a clear check list, and they have the expertise to assess all the evidence that your doctor has provided. Sometimes we may go back to your doctor or consultant for additional information to support your request.

The panel does not see any information which identifies who the patients are, and all information is treated highly confidentially. You will not be asked to attend and so it is very important that your doctor includes all the relevant information and supporting evidence, and that you let us have all the additional information that you'd like the panel to have. Your doctor should be familiar with the underpinning policies and these are available on our website or by request.

Letting you know about the decision

Doctors feel that it is better that a patient and their own doctor should discuss the panel's decision together. This is so that the decision can be explained and you can immediately discuss what it means for your care and the next steps. The doctor who made the request will usually be informed of the panel's decision within x working days and they know that they need to contact you and tell you about it.

What happens if the panel does not agree to pay for the treatment?

You and your doctor can make an appeal if you think that the panel did not follow the proper process to reach a decision.

Appeals can only be made if you think that:

- The panel didn't follow the proper process.
- The panel didn't consider all the relevant all the 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.

If you wish to make an appeal you can contact us in writing. Your doctor has a copy of the form that you will need to complete together and send to us.

To ensure that a fair process is followed, all reviews are heard by a separate appeals panel. The appeals panel will not consider any new evidence. If new evidence becomes available, or if all the information was not sent to the panels first time round, your doctor should make a new IFR application.

Making a complaint

If you remain unhappy after making an appeal, you have the right to refer the matter to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

You can contact the Ombudsman by:

Website:

www.ombudsman.org.uk

Email:

phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

Telephone:

0345015 4033

Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm

Write to:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, Millbank Tower Millbank, London SW1P 4QP

Or you can contact the West Yorkshire Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on

Freephone:

0800 0525 270

Write to:

West Yorkshire PALS, Douglas Mill, Bowling Old Lane, Bradford, BD5 7JR

Email:

WestYorksPALS@nhs.net

Contact us

For general information about the IFR process, please write to:

The IFR Business Manager
NHS Leeds West Clinical Commissioning Group
Suites 2-4
Wira House
West Park Ring Road
Leeds
LS16 6EB

Tel:
0113 843 5470

This information can be made available in other formats, including large print, Braille or different languages. Please ask your doctor or contact the IFR business manager.

The clinical commissioning groups in Leeds websites:

www.leedswestccg.nhs.uk

www.leedssouthandeastccg.nhs.uk

www.leedsnorthccg.nhs.uk

www.england.nhs.uk