

Individual Funding Requests (IFRs)

Guidance notes referrers

GPs and Referring Clinicians

The online referral system is available at: <https://ifr.sotw.nhs.uk/>

A copy of the current Value Based Clinical Commissioning Policy is available from the homepage of the system.

Table of Contents

1. Frequently asked questions	3
Why does a GP or Consultant have to apply for Individual Funding	3
What is the referral process?	3
What are exceptional circumstances?	3
How can I access the on electronic request system	3
What is the criteria in place	3
2. How to Register	4
3. Terms and conditions	7
4. Forgotten Password	7
5. How to login	7
6. Creating a new funding request	8
7. Supporting Documents	10
8. Requests for more information	10
9. Communication of the Decision	11
10. Reconsideration of Decision	11
11. Support Arrangements	11
12. Local IFR Administrator contact details	12

1. Frequently asked questions

Why does a GP or Consultant have to apply for Individual Funding?

An IFR is a request to fund for a patient an episode of healthcare that currently falls outside the usual treatments and care routinely provided by the NHS.

The request may be for any type of healthcare, for a service, a piece of equipment/aid or a specific treatment or medicine. A GP or Consultant might consider their patient to have a condition that needs treatment where:

- There is no agreement to routinely provide a type of healthcare; OR
- It has been decided by the CCG that a treatment is not being funded; OR
- An individual has a specific healthcare problem.

A request must be received from a clinician to ensure that it is supported by a clinician involved in the patient's care and that the relevant clinical information can be provided as part of the request. This also ensures that a clinician has assessed the patient against any protocols in place and supported the patient through any existing commissioned pathways that may be available.

What is the referral process?

- The patient's clinical representative (usually a GP or Consultant) will submit an electronic request using the online system for funding for the treatment; link to system <https://ifr.sotw.nhs.uk/>.
- For requests that are covered by the Value Based Clinical Commissioning Policy the online system details a number of treatments that list the clinical criteria a patient needs to meet for funding to be approved. If the patient does not meet the clinical criteria the clinical representative would need to describe if the patient has any exceptional clinical circumstances.
- For all other requests details about what treatment is being requested and any exceptional circumstances must be provided as part of the 'other' category.

What are exceptional circumstances?

Exceptionality is defined as:

'The patient or their circumstances are significantly different from the general population of patients with the condition in question and the patient is likely to gain significantly more benefit from the intervention than might normally be expected for patients with that condition.'

How can I access the electronic request system?

The web based system can be found here <https://ifr.sotw.nhs.uk/> however this is only accessible via a secure N3 connection available to healthcare professionals.

What is the criteria in place?

The current copy of the criteria can be found here <https://ifr.sotw.nhs.uk/>

2. How to Register

The online referral system is available at: <https://ifr.sotw.nhs.uk>.

In order to use the system for the first time you will need to create an account.

Accounts can be created by GPs, referring clinicians or secretaries on their behalf. You can also create generic accounts for your organisation to utilise if you have a generic email address.

Once your account is created all funding requests can be submitted via the online system and you can login at any time to either enter a new referral or to view your existing referrals.

To create an account you must first select the link for 'DON'T HAVE AN ACCOUNT?' as shown below:

The image shows a login interface with three main elements: a black input field labeled 'EMAIL', another black input field labeled 'PASSWORD', and a grey button labeled 'SIGNIN'. To the right of the 'SIGNIN' button, there are two links: 'DON'T HAVE AN ACCOUNT?' and 'FORGOTTEN YOUR PASSWORD?'. These two links are circled in red, indicating they are the focus of the instruction.

You will then be taken to the following screen:

Sign up

Please register to enable you to submit electronic IFR referrals

Full Name

Email

Job title

Password

Re-type Password

Filter Organisation type by All CCG Hospital Other

Groups

- Cumbria CCG
- Darlington CCG
- Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgfield (DDES) CCG
- Gateshead CCG
- Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees CCG
- Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Newcastle North & East CCG
- Newcastle West CCG
- North Durham CCG
- North Staffs
- North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust
- North Tyneside CCG
- Northumberland CCG
- RJAH (The Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust)

Organisations

- A83034 "Blacketts Medical Practice"
- A83031 "Carmel Medical Practice"
- CDDAd "CDD Admin"
- CHS Ophthalmology "CHS Ophthalmology"
- RLN - OPH "CITY HOSPITALS SUNDERLAND"
- A83040 "Clifton Court Medical Practice"
- rx4 "Community MS Team"
- CPH "Connect Physical Health"
- A83047 "Denmark Street Surgery"
- A83070 "Felix House Surgery"
- A83010 "Moorlands Surgery"
- A83013 "Neasham Road Surgery"
- 0AR "NECS"
- 0AR - NECS "NECS"
- 0ARNECS "NECS"
- RTD "Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust"
- RX4 "Northumberland Tyne and Wear Mental Health Foundation Trust"

Terms and conditions

By signing in to and using this system I:

1. confirm that the information which I provide is accurate;
2. acknowledge that I will keep my log in details private and secure and that I will not permit anybody else to use it or any session established with the IFR System. I will take all reasonable steps to ensure that I always leave my workstation secure when I am not using it by logging out of the IFR System and/or engaging a password protected screen saver. If I suspect my log in has been compromised by a third party I will report this to the admin team as soon as possible;
3. agree that I will only use my log on to the IFR System and all personal information in accordance with The NHS Confidentiality Code of Practice (as available on the www.dh.gov.uk site) and (where applicable) in accordance with my contract of employment and with any instructions relating to the IFR System which are notified to me;
4. agree not to deliberately corrupt, invalidate, deface, damage or otherwise misuse information stored on the IFR System. This includes, but is not limited to, the introduction of computer viruses or other malicious software that may cause disruption to the services or breaches in confidentiality;
5. acknowledge that my log on details may be changed at any time without notice

I agree to the terms and conditions

Sign up

The following sections must be completed:

- Full name
- Email
- Job Title
- Password
- Re-type Password

You should enter your name, the email address which you wish the online system to send your referral alerts to and your job title.

You must also create a memorable password. Please note that the password must be at least 6 characters long and include one upper case, one lower case and one numerical.

If you wish to sign up as a practice rather than as an individual then you can use a shared generic NHS Mail email address to create an account.

Please note that any email alerts which are sent regarding the funding request will be sent to the email address which you use in this part of the registration process. However you can log into the system at any time to check the progress of your applications. There is an option to have a referral reassigned to another person who has an online account by contacting the IFR Administrator. This could be done if the original referrer is due to be unavailable for a period of time.

- Filter Organisation type by (All, CCG, Hospital, Other) you **must** select “**CCG**”

Groups

From the “groups” list it is imperative that you select a CCG at this point. If your organisation covers more than one CCG area then you should select as many CCGs as applicable. If your organisation does not fall under one of the CCGs listed then you need to select the CCG which is appropriate to the patient you are applying for funding for; for example if the patient is registered with a Sunderland GP practice then you would select Sunderland CCG from the groups list. If you are unsure what to select at this point please contact your local IFR Administrator (contact details can be found at the end of this document).

Organisations

This will then list all “Organisations” in that CCG section and you should select your organisation from the list. If your organisation does not appear in the list you should contact your local IFR Administrator (contact details can be found at the end of this document) with the following details:

- Organisation Name
- Code – this is your organisations ODS code, ie A83076 / ABC etc
- Full address including postcode
- The CCG or Hospital which your organisation is associated with

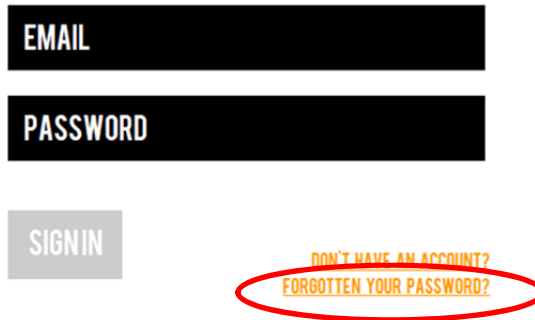
Your local IFR Administrator (contact details can be found at the end of this document) will confirm when your organisation has been set up within the system and you can then continue with the registration process.

3. Terms and conditions

Once you have selected your organisation from the list you must then read and confirm that you agree to the terms and conditions associated with the use of the system.


4. Forgotten Password

If at any time you forget your password from the home screen click the link "[FORGOTTEN YOUR PASSWORD](#)" as shown below.



The screenshot shows a login form with two input fields: 'EMAIL' and 'PASSWORD'. Below these fields is a 'SIGNIN' button. To the right of the 'SIGNIN' button, there are two links: 'DON'T HAVE AN ACCOUNT?' and 'FORGOTTEN YOUR PASSWORD?'. The 'FORGOTTEN YOUR PASSWORD?' link is circled in red.

This will take you to another page where you should enter the email address which you used when creating your account, and then selecting "reset password"(as below).

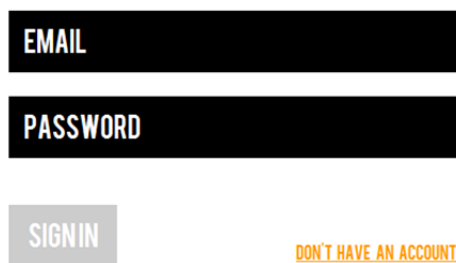


The screenshot shows a page titled 'Password reset request' with the subtitle 'Please enter your email address and we will send you a link enabling you to reset your password.' Below this is an 'EMAIL' input field. At the bottom right of the page is a 'Reset password' button.

You will receive an email with a link to the system where you can enter a new password. Once you have done this it will take you back to the home screen and you will be able to login as usual.

5. How to login

Once you have created your account go back to the home screen and enter your username (email address) and password.



The screenshot shows a login form with two input fields: 'EMAIL' and 'PASSWORD'. Below these fields is a 'SIGNIN' button. To the right of the 'SIGNIN' button, there are two links: 'DON'T HAVE AN ACCOUNT?' and 'FORGOTTEN YOUR PASSWORD?'.

6. Creating a new funding request

Once you have logged into the system you create a new request by selecting the “new referral” tab. This will take you to a screen where you need to select which treatment / procedure you are applying for funding for.

If the treatment is for a drug request then you should select “Drug Referral” from the treatments not listed section and then manually type in the title of the drug which is required.

If the treatment / procedure the patient requires is not listed then you should select “other” from the treatments not listed section and then manually type in the title of the treatment / procedure which is required.

If your patient requires more than one treatment / procedure from the list then a new referral should be submitted for each.

New Referral | My Referrals

Please select a treatment

Breast Procedures
Breast Augmentation (Enlargement)
Breast Prosthesis Removal and/or Replacement
Breast Reduction
Gynaecomastia
Inverted nipple correction
Mastopexy
Revision Mammoplasty
Breast Asymmetry

Dental Procedures
Apicectomy
Dental Implants
Orthodontic treatments for essentially cosmetic nature

Ophthalmic Interventions
Autologous Serum Eye Drops
Excimer laser for cases with poor refraction after corneal transplant or cataract surgery

Laser Treatments
Hair Removal (hirsutism)
Removal of tattoos
Resurfacing procedures: Dermabrasion, Chemical Peels and Laser Treatment

Plastic Surgery
Abdominoplasty / Apronectomy
Blepharoplasty
Circumcision
Face Lift or Brow Lift
Liposuction
Pinnoplasty
Removal of benign skin lesions
Removal of lipoma(ta)
Repair of lobe of external ear
Rhinoplasty
Thigh lift, buttock lift and arm lift, excision of redundant skin or fat?

Miscellaneous
Ganglia
Hair Grafting - Male pattern baldness
Cholecystectomy (for asymptomatic gall stones)
Hyperhidrosis treatment with Botulinum Toxin
Tonsillectomy
Varicose Veins
Reversal of Male Sterilisation
Reversal of female sterilisation
Infertility Treatment
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
Vaginoplasty, Labial Vulvoplasty and Vulvar Lipoplasty

Treatment not listed
Other
Drug Referral

For this example the treatment which has been selected is from the plastic surgery section, “Breast Reduction”.

For treatments where there is a value based clinical commissioning policy (VBCCP) a checklist will be attached to the request (see next page). The checklist should be completed as much as possible.

Background

Excessively large breasts can cause physical and psychological problems. Breast reduction procedures involve removing excess breast tissue to reduce size and improve shape.

Guidance for the Breast Reduction checklist

Breast reduction may only be funded in accordance with the guidance specified within the policy. Please answer the questions detailed below to demonstrate if your patient meets the guidance.

NB:

For the procedure to be effective at least 500 gms of tissue should be removed from each breast - this table provides guidance on assessment:

Chest Measurement Cup Size 32/34=> E 36=> EE (approx 0.5 inches difference between breast and bust measurement) 38=>F 40/42=>F

*Once women have reached this size, they are likely to have a significant weight problem which should be addressed prior to surgery.

Surgery for primarily cosmetic reasons is not eligible for NHS funding

Acceptance Criteria

YES to Q1 or Q2 and YES to Q3 and Q4.

Referral Checklist for Breast Reduction

Is there documented evidence of significant chronic or repeated neck ache or, backache that has not responded to conservative management and in the opinion of the surgeon, breast reduction is likely to significantly reduce the level of pain?

Yes No **Unknown**

Is there documented evidence of intractable intertrigo that has not responded to conservative treatment?

Yes No **Unknown**

Has the patient tried wearing a professionally fitted brassiere to relieve the symptoms?

Yes No **Unknown**

Does the patient have a preoperative body mass index (BMI) of less than 27.0 kg/m²?

Yes No **Unknown**

update checklist

Once the checklist has been completed you should select “save & continue” which will take you to the next stage of creating a funding request.

13558 Breast Reduction

Fields marked with a * are mandatory.

Referring Practice: Tees Admin

CCG: Please select
Title: Mr
Forename:
Surname:
Date of birth:
NHS Number:
Named GP:
Street:
Street 2:
Town:
County:
Postcode:
Bmi:

Reason funding is being requested - please provide as much detail as possible *

Detail all approved alternative treatments that have been tried and failed

Patient's clinical history relevant to the requested treatment *

Are there any other costs associated with this request outside the actual cost of treatment? (please provide details)

Additional Information
If the patient does not meet the specific criteria outlined against the criteria above the clinician should clearly demonstrate that:
* The patient is significantly different to the general population of patients with the condition in question and
* The patient is likely to gain significantly more benefit than might normally be expected for patients with that condition

Please tick this box if you have a letter of support from a local consultant and attach that letter to your submission

Please tick this box if you consider this referral to be urgent

Detail any exceptional clinical circumstances

Upload Supporting Documents (please do not attach photographs)

The patient understands that relevant (what is relevant will be decided by the referring clinician) health records may be shared with members of the IFR team within the North of England Commissioning Support Unit which processes requests on behalf of the Clinical Commissioning Group
 The patient understands that sharing their relevant health information is necessary for the purpose of processing this request
 The patient understands that their relevant health information will not be used for any purpose other than for processing this IFR request
 The patient understands that their relevant health information will be shared on a strict 'need to know' basis and will not be shared with any person other than those involved in processing this request
 The patient understands that their information will be held for no longer than is necessary for the purposes of processing this IFR request
 The patient understands that their data will be held securely and will be destroyed under confidential conditions once it has served its purpose
 The patient understands they have the right to withdraw their consent at any time.
 I confirm that for the purposes of processing this individual Funding Request I have discussed the preceding information with the patient

save submit

This is basically the IFR application form. You will see that the IFR reference number has been generated and can be found in the top left hand corner of the screen, next to the

treatment / procedure title (see above). You should provide the patient's details and as much supporting information as possible for the treatment / procedure you are requesting; with particular emphasis on the exceptional clinical circumstances regarding the request.

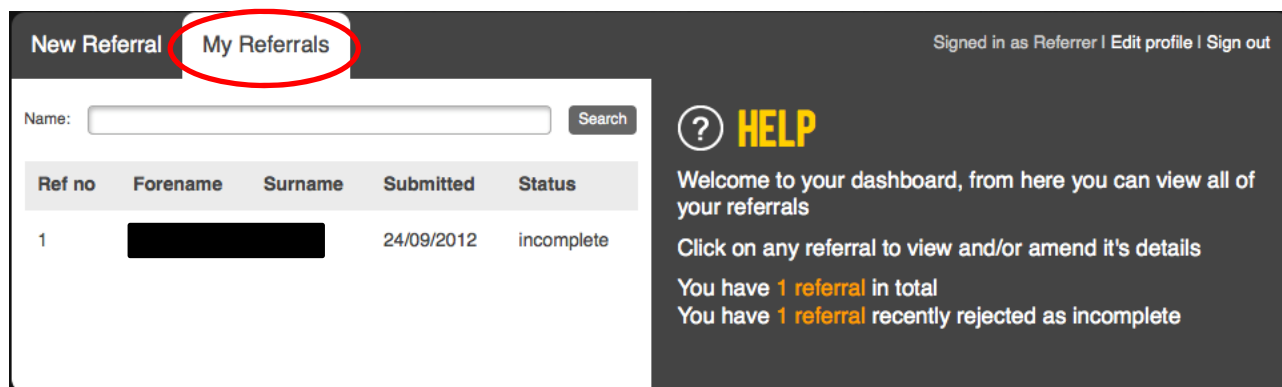
Exceptionality is defined as the patient or their circumstances are significantly different from the general population of patients with the condition in question or the patient is likely to gain significantly more benefit from the intervention than might normally be expected for patients with that condition.

All fields marked with a red asterisk are mandatory and must be completed before the request can be submitted.

The system also allows you to upload additional documentation / evidence in support of the application.

Once you have completed the application details you can either select "save" which will save the form for later if you are awaiting further information, or you can select "submit" which will submit the request to your local IFR Administrator (contact details can be found at the end of this document). Please note the IFR team do not have sight of applications until they have been submitted by the referrer.

Any requests you have pending or completed will sit in the "My Referrals" tab. The status of the application will advise you of what stage of the process the request is.



The screenshot shows a web interface with two tabs: 'New Referral' and 'My Referrals'. The 'My Referrals' tab is selected and circled in red. In the top right corner, it says 'Signed in as Referrer | Edit profile | Sign out'. Below the tabs is a search bar with the label 'Name:' and a 'Search' button. To the right of the search bar is a 'HELP' section with a question mark icon. The main content area contains a table with the following data:

Ref no	Forename	Surname	Submitted	Status
1			24/09/2012	incomplete

Below the table, there is a 'HELP' section with the following text:

Welcome to your dashboard, from here you can view all of your referrals
Click on any referral to view and/or amend it's details
You have 1 referral in total
You have 1 referral recently rejected as incomplete

7. Supporting Documents

If you have supporting documents they can also be saved to the referral. Documents that are held as part of your clinical system need to be closed and saved to a folder or your desktop to enable you to upload them. This process is the same as if you were attaching a document to an email. If you are not able to do this please contact your local IFR Administrator (contact details can be found at the end of this document) who will advise the best course of action.

8. Requests for more information

If the decision maker requires more information to allow for a decision to be made, then this will be done via the online system.

9. Communication of the Decision

The IFR Team communicates the decision to the referring clinician who made the initial application only; this is done via the online system.

It is requested that the referring clinician make contact with the patient to advise them of the outcome of this decision, taking into consideration the sensitive nature of the process and the distress the outcome may cause the patient.

Where applications for treatment are approved, it is the responsibility of the referring clinician to advise the patient of the outcome and make the necessary arrangements.

10. Reconsideration of Decision

Where cases are not supported by the Individual Funding Requests Panel, individuals have the right to request the Panel reconsider their decision, only on the presentation of new clinically significant information / evidence.

Requests for reconsiderations can only be made by the GP or referring clinician; they cannot be made by the patient themselves. They should be made in writing within 3 months of the date the decision was made and submitted by the referring GP or clinician stating why the reconsideration request is being made and what the new information / evidence is. You must ensure you use the original request when submitting further information for reconsideration a new referral request should not be created. This will ensure the IFR Team has access to all information pertaining to the application.

Requests for reconsiderations of decisions received from non-referring clinicians or directly from patients will be returned to the sender and advised of the procedure outlined above.

11. Support Arrangements

If you require any support please contact your local IFR Administrator (contact details can be found at the end of this document) who is based within Provider Management at North of England Commissioning Support (NECS). Contact details can be found at section 12.

12. Local IFR Administrator contact details

Cluster Area	CCG Area	Panel	NECS IFR Administrator
North of Tyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northumberland North Tyneside Newcastle North and East Newcastle West Gateshead 	North	Email: necsu.ifrnot@nhs.net Tel: 0191 217 2531 North of England Commissioning Support Unit Base: Riverside House, Goldcrest Way, Newburn, Riverside, Newcastle, NE15 8NY
South of Tyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Tyneside Sunderland 	North	Email: necsu.ifrsotw@nhs.net Tel: 0191 374 4156 North of England Commissioning Support Unit Base: John Snow House, Durham University Science Park, Durham, DH1 3YG
County Durham and Darlington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Durham Durham Dales, Easington & Sedgefield Darlington 	South	Email: necsu.ifrcdd@nhs.net Tel: 0191 374 4156 North of England Commissioning Support Unit Base: John Snow House, Durham University Science Park, Durham, DH1 3YG
Tees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees South Tees 	South	Email: necsu.ifrtees@nhs.net Tel: 0191 374 4220 North of England Commissioning Support Unit Base: Teesdale House, Westpoint Road, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees, TS17 6BL
Cumbria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cumbria 	Cumbria	Email: necsu.ifrcumbriaadmin@nhs.net Tel: 01768 245496 North of England Commissioning Support Base: 4 Wavell Drive, Rosehill, Carlisle, CA1 2SE