

Can I appeal against a decision?

If you or your doctor wishes to appeal against the panel's process, this can be done by writing to NHS Surrey. The letter should be received within one calendar month of the date on the decision letter and give a clear reason for the appeal.

An appeal can only be made if you or your doctor feel the correct process was not followed. If you are considering an appeal, you might want to ask yourself the following:

- Did the panel follow the correct process?
- Did the panel take all the information available to them into consideration?

To ensure a fair process, all appeals will be considered by a separate panel. If the appeals panel decides that one of these principles has been breached the funding request is referred back to the Individual Funding Request panel to be re-considered.

The appeals panel will not consider new evidence. If new evidence becomes available your doctor should make a new submission.

If after making a formal appeal you are still unsatisfied, you have the right to refer the matter through the NHS complaints procedure.

Patient choice

GPs are able to refer their patients for a non-urgent consultant outpatient appointment anywhere in England. This means patients can choose to be treated at any hospital or clinic that meets NHS standards.

However, patients cannot choose to see a particular doctor nor can they choose to have a particular treatment. If the treatment requested is not usually funded by NHS Surrey, funding must be approved before you are referred for treatment. We will not pay for specialist treatments unless it has been approved.

Are we speaking your language?

If you would like a copy of this leaflet in large print, on audio tape or translated into your language please contact us on 01372 201722.

More information

For general health information and more information about the NHS, including the NHS complaints procedure, call **NHS Direct** on 0845 4647 (or textphone 0845 606 4647) or see www.nhs.uk

Contact us

For more information about individual funding requests please contact us via our switchboard on 01372 201700.

- For queries relating to treatments not routinely funded you can email tnrf@nhs.net
- For drug funding queries you can email highcost.drugs@nhs.net

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Will the NHS fund my treatment?

A guide to how NHS Surrey considers funding for specialist or new treatments and treatments that are not routinely funded

Patient information

Every year NHS Surrey receives money from the Government to pay for healthcare for everyone registered with a GP in the county. Our job is to get best value for money by spending wisely.

Demand for healthcare is growing and new, and often expensive, treatments are becoming available all the time. However, we only have a set amount of money available to spend so difficult decisions may have to be made.

Our priority is paying for those medicines and treatments that are **clinically effective**, can **demonstrate they improve people's health** and offer **good value for money**.

As a result there are some treatments we do not normally fund. This leaflet explains how your doctor can ask us, on your behalf, to pay for a treatment that we would not normally fund.

How are policies about what to fund made?

We endeavour to make these difficult choices in a way which is fair, consistent and equitable.

This decision making process is informed by guidance from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) and other professional groups.

See www.nice.org.uk for more information.

Funding specialist treatments

Your GP or consultant may approach NHS Surrey to request funding for a specialist treatment. The treatment requested may not be routinely available for one of two reasons:

- 1) You have a medical condition that is rare and for that reason it is not covered by any NHS Surrey policy.
- 2) NHS Surrey does not routinely fund the treatment but your doctor feels there are 'exceptional clinical circumstances' related to your case. This is difficult to define but generally a case would be considered exceptional if the patient's clinical circumstances are different to those presented by at least 95% of patients with the same medical condition at the same stage of their illness.

If your doctor can demonstrate that either of the above apply your case is then considered through what is known as an Individual Funding Request.

When an Individual Funding Request is received, NHS Surrey:

- determines whether the request meets one of the reasons given above
- checks there is enough information included on which to come to a decision

In order to provide the required level of information, some conditions may need to be photographed and the photos submitted by your doctor with your funding request.

If the request is appropriate and the information is complete, the request will be considered by a special panel, which includes clinicians. To ensure a fair process, all cases are treated confidentially and anonymised. The panel meets regularly and all cases will be considered by the panel on an individual basis.

How does the panel make individual decisions?

Panel members have the expertise to assess the clinical information and evidence that your doctor has provided. The panel operates under an agreed ethical framework which states that any decisions must be fair, consistent and equitable.

The panel consists of a mix of clinically-qualified and managerial members including:

- A Surrey GP
- A public health representative
- A commissioning representative
- A lay member
- Head of Pharmaceutical Commissioning (drugs panel only)

The panel approve funding for the treatment if the following criteria are met:

- The patient has a rare condition for which there is no policy, however exceptional clinical circumstances were demonstrated.
- Funding the treatment can be justified in light of the clinical benefits likely to be gained.