

INTERVENTIONS NOT NORMALLY FUNDED

EXCEPTIONS POLICY

Introduction

The Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust (PCT) will not normally fund any of the treatments or interventions listed in the PCTs' list of Interventions that are Not Normally Funded (the 'INNF' list). There may, however, be individual patients whose clinical personal circumstances are sufficiently exceptional to warrant funding being agreed in an individual case.

For the guidance of prospective patients, their general practitioners and specialists / consultants, the PCT has set out below the process for considering individual circumstances and the factors which will be considered when an application under the Exceptions Policy has been received.

Applications should be submitted to the relevant PCT in writing. The PCT would usually seek the advice of the patient's GP and/or consultant(s) and/or other relevant specialists where this is not already indicated in the initial funding request.

Please note that this policy is not intended to cover decisions relating to the funding of treatments for wider groups or cohorts of patients.

Definitions (from the Oxford English Dictionary)

'Exception': A particular case which falls within the application of a rule, but to which the rule is not applicable

'Exceptional': Of the nature of or forming an exception; unusual or special.

Principles

The PCT recognises that every patient is an individual, and may consider their particular clinical or personal circumstances to be unique. However, for the purpose of this policy, the PCT is looking to identify whether there are sufficient grounds for funding to be provided in an individual case, contrary to the usual funding practice as outlined within the INNF list (i.e. where funding might reasonably be provided in one case, where it would not routinely be provided to the majority of other patients who might seek funding for that same treatment or intervention from the PCT).

To receive exceptional funding, a patient (or an advocate acting on the patient's behalf) will need to be able to demonstrate that:

- ❖ The individual's clinical or personal circumstances are significantly different to the wider group of patients who might reasonably be expected to consider the treatment or intervention concerned, such that the INNF policy is not reasonably applicable

Where a treatment or intervention has been included in the INNf list on the grounds that there is insufficient evidence of clinical and/or cost effectiveness, or on the grounds that there are concerns around patient safety, the patient's clinical circumstances will be considered in determining whether there are sufficiently exceptional grounds for funding to be provided in that individual case.

Where a treatment or intervention has been included within the INNf list on the basis of it being a relatively low priority for NHS resources locally, the patient's personal circumstances will be considered in determining whether there are sufficiently exceptional grounds for funding to be provided in that individual case.

Depending on the intervention concerned, it may be appropriate to consider both clinical and personal circumstances.

Where exceptional funding is agreed, the PCT will need to be able to demonstrate that there is a rational basis for differentiating between the individual for whom funding has been agreed, and the wider group of patients who might reasonably be expected to seek the intervention concerned, but for whom funding would not be routinely provided.

Application and Approval Process

In order for the PCT to consider an application for exceptional funding the referring practitioner (the patient's GP, a local NHS consultant/specialist, or both) should be of the opinion that the individual's circumstances may be sufficiently exceptional to warrant consideration of funding on exceptional grounds.

The application for funding must be forwarded to the PCT in writing and would usually be made by the patient's GP or consultant/specialist. The application must set out sufficient information to enable the PCT to gain a reasonable understanding of the patient's particular circumstances, the basis on which exceptional grounds are being argued, details of any pertinent research which might offer support for the basis on which the application is being made, and details of the benefits that the patient is likely to receive if the treatment or intervention were funded. Patients can also make a written representation to the PCT, should they wish to do so, along with the reports of the referring practitioner and/or specialist.

The decision on making an exception to the general INNf policy will be made on the basis of the submitted written evidence, unless other arrangements have been agreed in advance by the PCT. The PCT may request additional information from the patient's GP, consultant/specialist (if applicable) and other local or national specialists to enable an informed decision to be made.

Applications will usually be considered by a PCT INNf lead (usually a local GP, or a Public Health Doctor), assisted by a PCT manager. If required, the PCT may seek the advice of a wider GP or specialist panel, where appropriate.

Once completed applications are received, together with any additional information requested by the PCT, the patient can expect to have confirmation of the PCT's decision, in writing, setting out the issues considered and the reasons for the decision

made, within two weeks. A copy of the decision letter will usually be provided to both the requesting clinician(s) and the patient.

Where a funding request is turned down, the applicant will be advised of the PCT's appeals procedure, within the decision letter.

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