



PATIENT INFORMATION

Will the NHS fund my treatment?

How Hywel Dda University Health Board considers Individual Patient Funding Requests

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Will the NHS fund my treatment?

Every year, Hywel Dda University Health Board receives money from the Welsh Government to pay for healthcare for everyone who lives in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire or Ceredigion and is entitled to NHS care.

Our job is to get the best value for this money by spending it wisely on your behalf.

Demand for healthcare is growing. New and often expensive treatments are becoming available almost every week. However, we only have a set amount of money to spend and so very difficult decisions sometimes have to be made.

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

As a result, there are some treatments that we do not routinely provide and these fall into 2 main categories. These are:

- treatments that are new, novel, developing or unproven and are not normally available for any patients in Hywel Dda (for example, a medicine that has not been approved for use by the NHS in Wales)
- treatments that are provided by us in very specific clinical circumstances and not all patients with the condition meet the criteria (for example, a request for varicose vein treatment).

This leaflet explains how your GP or Hospital Consultant can ask us, on your behalf, to fund a treatment that we would not normally provide for you.

This is called making an **Individual Patient Funding Request** or 'IPFR' and NHS Wales follows a clear policy on how to deal with these requests. You can download it from www.hywelddahb.wales.nhs.uk

Making an IPFR

If you would like to request a treatment that we do not normally provide for you, please discuss this with your GP or Hospital Consultant. They will usually complete the application form for you and submit it to us, along with any supporting information.

When making this application, your GP or Hospital Consultant will need to demonstrate why they feel that your request has **exceptional clinical circumstances**. This may be difficult to define for each patient - we understand this - and so we follow the NHS policy which sets out very clearly how we assess this and how our decisions are made.

We will reply to you, normally within 10 working days of us receiving your request, to let you know what will happen next.

Sometimes, we may need to ask your doctor for more information and we ask them to provide this as quickly as possible.

How will a decision be made?

If the request is appropriate and all of the information requested has been supplied, your request will be considered by a special panel called the 'IPFR Panel'.

The IPFR Panel meets monthly and consists of a mix of clinically qualified people as well as a lay member who does not work for the health board.

The IPFR Panel considers each request individually and all information is treated confidentially. They do not see any patient identifiable information.

All Panel members have the expertise to assess the information and evidence that your doctor has provided and to ensure that they follow a fair and equitable process.

They follow a clear checklist when making their decisions and they do not consider the social circumstances of patients when deciding whether or not to approve a request.

Informing you of the decision

Doctors feel that Panel decisions are best discussed directly between a patient and their own doctor. This is so that the decision can be explained and you can immediately discuss what it means for the next steps in your care.

The doctor who made your request will usually be informed of the Panel's decision within 5 working days of the meeting and they know to contact you and tell you about it.

What happens if the Panel does not agree to fund the request?

If you and your doctor would like the decision of the Panel to be reviewed, you should notify us within 25 working days of the date that you received the decision letter. Your doctor has a copy of the review request form that you will need to complete together and send to us.

Reviews can only be requested in the following circumstances, called 'grounds':

- you feel that the Panel did not follow the agreed process and so acted unfairly
- you feel that the Panel considered irrelevant factors or did not take into account all relevant factors available to them and so acted irrationally
- you feel that the Panel exceeded its powers and so acted unlawfully.

To ensure that a fair process is followed, all reviews will be heard by a separate Review Panel.

If the Review Panel decides that the grounds for review are upheld, your request will be referred back to the IPFR Panel to be re-considered.

Please note that the Review Panel will not consider new evidence. If new evidence becomes available, your doctor should make a new IPFR submission.

Making a complaint

If you remain unhappy after your review decision, you have the right to refer the matter to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. Further information on how to do this is available on their website www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk

Further information

Upon request, Hywel Dda University Health Board has access to interpreters who can speak other languages. This leaflet can be made available in other languages, large print, Braille or on audiotape. Please contact the Corporate Department on 01437 771225

Contact the IPFR Manager

For general information on making an IPFR, please contact:

The IPFR Manager
Referral Management Centre
Hywel Dda Health Board
Withybush General Hospital
Fishguard Road
Haverfordwest
Pembrokeshire
SA61 2PZ
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