

the patient's behalf. The GP is not responsible for completing the PoLCE form and raising the referral in this situation.

If the conditions are not met

Please inform the patient if they do not meet the criteria and explain to them the reasons why.

A leaflet for patients explaining the IFR process and relevant patient letters for each stage of the process is available at www.ncl.nhs.uk/publications.aspx

There is also more detailed information which patients may find helpful, including policies and criteria for each procedure on our website www.ncl.nhs.uk/publications.aspx

We have created an index of the most common procedures. The electronic version of this index includes hyperlinks to all the relevant documents. Both this index and the Patient Leaflets referred to above are available on the NCL website: www.ncl.nhs.uk/publications.aspx

Further information

When emailing patient information only use an NHSmail (nhs.net). Using any other email account will breach NHS Caldicott principles. We recommend that you:

- Review the IFR website that has all current documents and information www.ncl.nhs.uk/publications.aspx
- Let the IFR team know if you would like regular establishment updates by e-mailing

ncl.ifr@nhs.net

To help us improve as we are constantly developing these processes and would welcome any comments and advice that you can give us as our aim is to improve services to reduce the burden on GP practices wherever possible.

Contact details

Please email us at: ncl.ifr@nhs.net

Need further help?

See: www.ncl.nhs.uk/publications.aspx

GPs and health care staff only answer calls during office hours.

Telephone: 0207 6253/ 6154

Patients and Carers can call the Patients Liaison Service on: Telephone: 020 3317 3003

Email: pals.ncl@nclondon.nhs.uk



NHS

North Central London

Procedures of Limited Clinical Effectiveness (PoLCE) and Individual Funding Requests (IFRs)

A guide for GPs in NHS North Central London

This simple step guide for GPs outlines what you need to do from October 2011 onwards, as a new process for PoLCEs and IFRs has been developed.

There are now new referral protocols for a number of procedures in order to ensure better access to services and use of resources.

These protocols replace previous PCT policies. Please replace any contact numbers, emails and referral forms with the details in this leaflet.

There is more background on PoLCE and IFR, including the full list of procedures and the policy documents on the NHS North Central London website www.ncl.nhs.uk.

NHS

North Central London

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Barnet Camden Enfield Haringey Islington

PoLCE: Referral process for patients needing a procedure that is routinely funded but where certain criteria or a threshold must be met before funding is approved.

- Check that the patient meets the evidence based criteria agreed in the PoLCE policy
- Complete the referral template for that specific procedure
- Email the form to ncl.ifr@nhs.net using your nhs.net account only

If the patient does not meet the evidence-based criteria in the PoLCE policy, then either consider making a full IFR application or tell the patient they do not meet the set criteria for funding.

You can give the patient an information leaflet that explains the reasons behind funding decisions. It may be appropriate to adopt a watchful waiting strategy and remind patients to inform you of changes in symptoms.



IFR: Referral process for patients needing a procedure available only via the IFR route, or for those that do not meet the thresholds but the GP decides to raise an IFR as their case is exceptional.

Evidence needs to be provided that supports the existence of an exceptional situation or set of circumstances. Examples of documentary evidence can include:

- Scanned letters from consultants, specialists, personal letters from patients, expert opinions etc
- Photographs (with measurement where relevant) such as skin lumps, varicose veins, hirsutism, scars, excess loose skin, breast asymmetry etc.
- Email the form to ncl.ifr@nhs.net

You can speak to a member of the IFR Team by calling 0207 685 6153 /6154 about any issue regarding the funding application.

The IFR team will triage referrals before they are submitted for a panel decision.

The IFR Panel will write to you and the patient about the outcome and pass on any approved applications to providers directly.

Where the IFR Panel declines funding, you will be duly informed, a letter sent to the patient and other relevant specialists involved in his/ her care. Information explaining how to appeal a decisions will be provided the letter.

When you need to obtain further clinical opinion before deciding if the patient meets the criteria.

NHS patients may require specialist opinion, but this can often be provided at greater convenience and lower cost by other routes than outpatient referrals.

Telephone or email advice from relevant specialist may help clarify useful investigations or treatment options. Consider asking colleagues in your practice or in community clinics.

Exceptionally, you may be unable to determine whether a patient meets the treatment thresholds. If this is the case then make an assessment only referral that outlining that you require an opinion only. The specialist will then provide an opinion or evidence that helps you to decide whether the patient meets the thresholds. You can then complete and submit the PoLCE referral form for approval to treat the patient.

When you need to refer to a specialist without knowing if the patient will require a PoLCE.

There will be occasions when only a specialist can determine if a PoLCE is the right procedure for the patient and whether the applicable thresholds are met.

If the specialist does decide that a PoLCE is required and that the patient meets all the thresholds, then the clinician making that decision will be responsible for completing the PoLCE referral form and seeking approval on