If the request is approved, what happens next?
The IFR panel will write to your GP or consultant informing them of the panel’s decision within 5 working days of the panel outlining the reasons for the decision.

You will also be sent a copy of the letter and then a referral will be made for an appointment to with an appropriate healthcare professional.

If the request is declined, is it possible to appeal?
In the first instance you should speak to your GP or Consultant. The IFR Panel’s decision can be appealed on the following grounds:

- The IFR Panel failed to follow due process and, as a result, the decision reached by the panel was different from the one that would be reached if due process had been followed.
- The IFR Panel did not take into account, or weigh appropriately, all the relevant evidence when making its decision.

The request for a review must be made in writing, by your clinician to MKCCGs Chief Executive within 20 working days of the IFR Panel’s decision letter. The CCG may accept requests outside this time limit in exceptional circumstances.

If MKCCG does accept the grounds of appeal then a Review Panel will be convened. To ensure a fair process, all reviews are considered by different people from those who made the original IFR decision.

If the Review Panel does not accept the grounds of appeal, a letter will be sent to the referring GP or Consultant explaining the reasons.

The Review Panel will not consider new clinical evidence. If new evidence becomes available your GP or Consultant should make a new IFR submission.

The Review Panel cannot overturn the IFR Panel decision. However, if the Review Panel decides that the decision was not reached correctly then it can instruct the IFR Panel to reconsider your case.

After the appeals stage
If the appellant feels that the appeal was not administered correctly or in a timely manner, they have the right to complain to MKCCG Complaints Service. If the requestor is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they can put it in writing to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman www.ombudsman.org.uk.

Complaints should be sent:
Email         mkccg.complaints@nhs.net
Telephone     01908 278684

By post to:
The Complaints & Patient Experience Lead
Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group
Sherwood Place
155 Sherwood Drive
Bletchley
Milton Keynes
MK3 6RT

Policies, applications and process can be viewed at:
http://www.miltonkeynesccg.nhs.uk/referrals-and-priorities-policies
Introduction
The NHS receives a fixed budget to buy and provide health services for the entire population. The treatments it routinely funds are those regarded as safe and effective, and give the best value in terms of health improvements for the available funding.

Treatments which Milton Keynes CCG (MKCCG) does not routinely fund are those likely to bring little or no health benefit, sometimes known as 'procedures of low clinical value'. Examples might be breast augmentation or skin tag removal, since these typically address cosmetic rather than medical concerns. Treatments initiated in the private sector are not routinely funded or extended.

Sometimes a drug might be known to be of some benefit but be prohibitively expensive. Sometimes MKCCG will fund a treatment for a particular 'patient group' - that is, patients with similar conditions and symptoms - but not for another patient group with less advanced symptoms, or a different condition.

Why does MKCCG have an Individual Funding Request (IFR) policy?
Patients’ medical and other circumstances vary widely, and sometimes doctors want to apply for a treatment which MKCCG does not routinely fund, or does not routinely fund for their patient group. Some conditions are so rare, or a treatment so new, that MKCCG does not have a commissioning policy on it.

How does someone make an Individual Funding Request?
Patients should first discuss this with their GP or other clinician, such as a hospital consultant to confirm whether the request meets guidance. If appropriate, the clinician will then apply, in confidence, to the IFR Service setting out the grounds for the request.

The IFR application will be made by your clinician and will set out clearly and concisely your health needs arising from your medical problem and why you should receive treatment which is not available to others with a similar condition. You can, if you wish, write a letter in support of the application. Any clinician not making the application themselves might wish to contribute a supporting letter.

All applications must demonstrate why the case is exceptional for treatment which is outside MKCCG's current funding arrangements.

All applications for IFR, for a procedure, drug or medication, must be submitted on the IFR application form available from:

http://www.miltonkeynesccg.nhs.uk/referrals-and-priorities-policies/

Additional information can be submitted, if appropriate, from other healthcare professionals involved in your care.

It is the responsibility of the requestor to show that it meets MKCCG criteria and to submit all appropriate evidence - letters of support, case studies, research papers, correspondence between clinicians - with the application. The requesting clinician should also state the level of urgency.

What about confidentiality and impartiality?
The application must contain the patient's initials, NHS number and date of birth in order to ensure safe and accurate identification. The IFR Service will make sure that the documentation is anonymised when presented to the panel, to ensure impartiality and patient confidentiality. The requestor should ensure that the patient’s name and other identifiable details are not repeated in the supporting documentation.

What happens when a request is received by the IFR Service?
When the IFR service receive a request, a check is made to ensure no service or treatment exists locally which your GP or Consultant may not be aware of. If treatment is available then we will inform your GP or Consultant so they can discuss it with you.

If there is no service or treatment then the request is screened by a Consultant in Public Health (or their deputy) and the CCG's IFR Manager to decide whether the conditions for being considered 'exceptional' have been met. A decision will normally be sent to your GP or Consultant within ten working days.

If the screening team agrees that there are grounds to consider your request as exceptional, your case will be considered by the CCG's IFR Panel within 20 working days of the screening decision.

The IFR Panel
The IFR Panel is chaired by a member of the CCG’s Governing Body health and includes professionals, lay members and CCG managers. It can accept or decline a request, or defer while further information is requested. The IFR Service informs the clinician who made the application of the reasons and outcome of the panel's decision. It is the clinician's responsibility to inform the patient of the outcome.