

Policy statement:	Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
Status:	Group Prior Approval

M&SECCGs commission specialist treatment for chronic fatigue syndrome / myalgic encephalomyelitis (CFS/MS) on a restricted basis.

All specialist treatment for chronic fatigue syndrome / myalgic encephalomyelitis (CFS/MS) is accessed through a referral from the patient's clinician to the Essex CFS/ME Service.

Patients should be managed by GPs as recommended by NICE clinical guideline number 53 – Chronic Fatigue syndrome/ myalgic encephalomyelitis (or encephalopathy) – Diagnosis and management of CFS/ME in adults and children.

Patients can be referred for unexplained fatigue lasting at least 4 months once the following alternative diagnosis have been considered and excluded:

- Obesity (BMI >40kg/m²).
- Organ failure.
- Chronic infections.
- Chronic inflammatory diseases.
- Major neurological diseases.
- Systemic treatment for neoplasms.
- Untreated endocrine diseases.
- Primary sleep disorders.
- Alcohol/Substance abuse.
- Reversible causes of fatigue (medications, infections or recent major surgery).
- Psychiatric conditions.

The clinical guideline also states the following:

- Do not use the following drugs for the treatment of CFS/ME: monoamine oxidase inhibitors, glucocorticoids (such as hydrocortisone), mineralocorticoids (such as fludrocortisone), dexamphetamine, methylphenidate, levothyroxine or antiviral agents.
- There is insufficient evidence for the use of supplements – such as vitamin B12, vitamin C, co-enzyme Q10, magnesium, NADH (nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide) or multivitamins and minerals – for people with CFS/ME, and therefore **they should not be prescribed for treating the symptoms of the condition**. Some people with CFS/ME have reported finding these helpful as a part of a self-management strategy for their symptoms, and in which case should purchase such products.
- People with CFS/ME who are using supplements should be advised not to exceed the safe levels recommended by the Food Standards Agency.

M&SECCGs do not provide funding for NHS prescribing of these medicines/supplements and therefore GPs must not prescribe these medicines/supplements on FP10s for this condition.

M&SECCGs do not fund referral to secondary care specialists in CFS/ME care for assessment or treatment on either an in-patient or outpatient basis outside this commissioned service.

Funding for patients not meeting the above criteria will only be made available in clinically exceptional circumstances.

Individual funding requests should only be made where the patient demonstrates clinical exceptionality.

Further information on applying for funding in exceptional clinical circumstances can be found on the CCGs' website.