

## Request for an INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL Explained

Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust follows the NHS Executive's recommended practice in respect of the implementation of the NHS complaints procedure.

The Independent Review process is provided for complainants who remain dissatisfied with the Trust's response at the end of local resolution stage of the complaint procedure – usually a letter from the Chief Executive.

You, the complainant, must make your request for an Independent Review within twenty-eight days from the completion of the local resolution stage. This request should preferably be in writing and addressed to the Chief Executive of the Trust whose address is De La Court House, Queen Alexandra Hospital, Southwick Hill Road, Portsmouth PO6 3LY. If possible set out your grievances as in (iii) below.

The procedure works as follows:

- (i) Following an acknowledgement of your letter a non-executive member of the Trust Board, qualified to act as a 'Complaints Convenor', will be assigned to undertake a review of your complaint.
- (ii) Complaints staff contact the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic Health Authority to request an independent 'Chairperson' to be assigned to the case. The Health Authority holds a list of people independent of the NHS who have been trained to act in this capacity.
- (iii) The Convenor must obtain a signed statement from you which sets out your remaining grievances and why you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the local resolution stage. It is important that you prepare this statement quickly, and in as much detail as possible. This is to enable the Convenor to deal with your request within the twenty working day time limit laid down in the NHS complaints procedure, to ensure that your complaint is dealt with in a timely fashion.
- (iv) The overall target for the Independent Review process is six months from the date when you first request a panel, to the date when the Chief Executive writes to you following the panel's report (if a panel is convened).

The independent Chairperson and the Convenor will discuss your request and decide whether or not to grant an Independent Review. The NHS Executive provides some very specific criteria which the Convenor and the independent Chairperson must apply:

“In deciding whether to convene a panel, the Convenor will consider in consultation with an independent Lay Chairperson from the regional list, whether:

- The Trust can take any further action short of establishing a panel to satisfy the complainant.
- The Trust has already taken all practical action and therefore establishing a panel would add no further value to the process.

If either of the circumstances referred to above apply, the Convenor should not convene a panel.

A panel should only be convened if the Convenor considers that it may be able to resolve the complaint and nothing short of setting up a panel will do so”

Following a discussion with the Lay Chairperson, the Convenor will write to you personally giving you the decision and explaining how that decision was reached.

If you have any further questions about the Independent Review procedure please contact  
Complaints Officer, at St Mary's Hospital

**Code A**

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