

1 HOW TO REQUEST A REVIEW OF THE PROCESS

If an IPFR is declined by the panel, a patient and/or their NHS clinician has the right to request information about how the decision was reached. If the patient and their NHS clinician feel the process has not been followed in accordance with this policy, a review hearing can be requested in line with the following:

1.1 The 'review period'

There will be a period of **25 working days** from the date of the decision letter during which they may request a review by the review panel ('the review period'). The letter from the Health Board that accompanies the original decision will state the deadline for any review request. In calculating the deadline, Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays in Wales will not be counted.

1.2 Who can request a review?

A review can be requested either (a) by the original requesting clinician on the patient's behalf or (b) by the patient with the original requesting clinician's support. **The review request form must be completed by the clinician.** Both the patient and their clinician must keep each other informed of progress. This ensures the patient is kept informed at all times, that the clinician/patient relationship is maintained, and review requests are clinically supported. Patients are able to access advocacy support at any stage during this process.

1.3 What is the scope of a review?

It does not constitute a review of the merits of the original decision. It has the restricted role of hearing review requests that fall into one or more of three strictly limited grounds. A review request on any other ground will not be considered.

The 3 grounds are:

Ground One: *The Health Board has failed to act fairly and in accordance with the All Wales Policy on Making Decisions on Individual Patient Funding Requests (IPFR).*

The Health Board is committed to following a fair and equitable procedure throughout the process. A patient who believes they have not been treated fairly by the Health Board may request a review on this ground. This ground relates to the procedure followed and not directly to the decision and it should be noted that the decision with which the patient does not agree is not necessarily unfair.

Ground Two: *The Health Board has prepared a decision which is irrational in the light of the evidence submitted*

The review panel will not normally entertain a review request against the merits of the decision reached by the Health Board. However, a patient may request a review where the decision is considered to be irrational or so unreasonable that no reasonable Health Board could have reached that conclusion. A claim that a decision is irrational contends that those making the decision considered irrelevant factors, excluded relevant ones or gave unreasonable weight to particular factors.

Ground Three: *The Health Board has not exercised its powers correctly.*

The Health Board is a public body that carries out its duties in accordance with the Statutory Instruments under which it was established. A patient may request a review on the grounds that the Health Board has acted outside its remit or has acted unlawfully in any other way.

Reviews which may require a significantly disproportionate resource relative to the health needs of the local population may be rejected at the Chief Executive's discretion.

1.4 **How is a review request lodged?**

A review request form should be completed and logged with the IPFR Co-ordinator of the Health Board within the review period. The review request form must include the following information;

- The aspect(s) of the decision under challenge and
- The detailed ground(s) of the review request

The review request form should be sent to the IPFR Co-ordinator so that the signatures of both the patient and their clinician are recorded. A scanned version sent electronically will also be acceptable as long as signatures are present.

If the patient signature cannot be obtained in a timely manner or at all, the requesting clinician can sign to indicate that the patient is aware and agrees with the submission of the request. In doing so, the clinician is providing confirmation that the patient is fully informed of the treatment request and all its associated implications.

1.5 **Initial scrutiny by the IPFR Senior Officer**

The review documents lodged will be scrutinised by the IPFR Senior Officer who will look to see that they contain the necessary information. If the review request does not contain the necessary information or if the review does not appear to the IPFR Senior officer to fall under any one or more grounds of review, they will contact the referrer (patient or their clinician) to request further information or clarification.

A review will only be referred to the review panel if, after giving the patient and their clinician an opportunity to elaborate or clarify the grounds of the review the Chair of the review panel is satisfied that it falls under one or more of the grounds upon which the review panel can hear the review.

The Chair of the review panel may refuse to consider a review that does not include all of the above information.

1.6 **What is the timescale for a review to be heard?**

The review panel will endeavour to hear a review **within 25 working days** of the request being lodged with the Health Board. The date for hearing any review will be confirmed to the patient and their clinician in a letter.

This review process allows for clinically urgent cases, as deemed by the referring/supporting clinician, to be considered outside of the panel process by the Health Board's Chair together with a clinical member of the review panel. Any such decisions will be made in line with the principles of this policy.

1.7 Who will sit on the Review Panel?

The Health Board will appoint members of the review panel. The panel will comprise (see Terms of Reference at Appendix 6 for full details);

- Health Board Independent Board Member – Lay (Chair of the Review Panel)
- Health Board Independent Board Member (with a clinical background)
- Health Board Executive Director, or deputy (with a clinical background)
- Chief Officer of the Community Health Council, or deputy
- Chair of the Local Medical Committee, or deputy
- WHSSC Representative at Director level (where applicable)

The Health Board will intend to inform the patient and their clinician of the membership of the review panel as soon as possible after a review request has been lodged. None of the members of the review panel will have had any prior involvement in the original submission.

In appointing the members of the review panel, the Health Board will endeavour to ensure that no member has any interest that may give rise to a real danger of bias. Once appointed, the review panel will act impartially and independently.

1.8 Can new data be submitted to the review panel?

No, because should new or additional data become available then the IPFR application should be considered again by the original panel in order to maintain a patient's right to review at a later stage.

1.9 Can patients attend review panel hearings?

At the discretion of the panel, patients and/or their unpaid representative may attend review panel hearings as observers but will not be able to participate. This is because the purpose of a review hearing is to consider the process that has been followed and not to hear new or different evidence.

If new or different evidence becomes available, the case will automatically be scheduled for reconsideration by the IPFR Panel. Patients and/or their unpaid representatives are able to make their written representations to this IPFR Panel in order for their views to be taken into account.

It is important for all parties to recognise that review panel hearings may have to discuss complex, difficult and sensitive information in detail and this may be distressing for some or all of those present. Patients and/or their unpaid representatives should be aware that they will be asked to retire at the end of the review panel discussion in order for the panel to make their decision.

1.10 The decision of the review panel hearing

The IPFR Senior Officer will complete a record of the review panel's discussion including the decision and a detailed explanation for the reason for the decision. They will also prepare a standard decision letter to communicate the decisions of the panel to the patient and referring/supporting clinician.

The review panel can either;

- uphold the grounds of the review and ask the original IPFR Panel to reconsider the request; or
- not uphold the grounds of the review and allow the decision of the original IPFR Panel to stand.

There is no right to a further review unless new and relevant circumstances emerge. Should a patient be dissatisfied with the way in which the review panel carried out its functions, they are able to make a complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

1.11 **After the review hearing**

The Chair of the review panel will notify patients and their clinicians of the review panel's decision in writing. This letter should be sent **within five working days** of the panel and will also include information on how to make a complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk.

1.12 **How will WHSSC undertake a review?**

As the WHSSC is a collaborative committee arrangement to support all Health Boards in Wales, it will not be able to constitute a review panel. WHSSC will therefore refer any requests it receives for a review of its decisions to the Health Board in which the patient resides. A WHSSC representative who was not involved in the original panel will become a member of the review panel on these occasions.

The Health Boards IPFR Senior Officer will be present at these review hearings to advise on proceedings as per their governance role. In the interests of transparency, and not to confuse the applicant, the WHSSC Senior IPFR Officer will be responsible for circulating the review documentation to review panel members, clerking the hearing and preparing the standard decision letter to communicate the decision of the review panel to the patient and clinician.

1.13 Nothing in this section shall limit or preclude an individual patient's right to bring Judicial Review proceedings if they are unhappy with a decision of the IPFR Panel.