

Independent recommendations will have positive impact on the IPFR process says Vaughan Gething

The NHS Wales IPFR process is the mechanism used by all health boards in Wales to make decisions on access to treatments that are not routinely available for individual patients.

The review was established in July 2016 with a particular focus on considering the “clinical exceptionality” decision making criteria for IPFR and the scope to reduce the number of IPFR panels in Wales. Central to the review was the patient perspective.

The review’s comprehensive findings were published in January and are available here.

Ahead of his Oral Statement in the Senedd this afternoon, Vaughan Gething said:

“My approach to this review has been to be open, inclusive and transparent from the outset involving all political parties, the public and the NHS in Wales.

“I’m pleased that the consensus is that this is a helpful piece of work that makes thoughtful and pragmatic recommendations that will help health boards deal with what are sensitive and very often complex decisions. I am particularly pleased that the patient voice has centre stage in the report.

“The good news from the report is that many aspects of the system are working well and the review group have made helpful recommendations to strengthen those and improve upon other aspects of the process.

“The review concluded that the principle for making decisions at an individual patient level about access to a treatment should be based upon the level of expected clinical benefit and whether the treatment offers reasonable value for money.

“With regards to reducing the number of IPFR panels, the review group have recommended it would not be the best way forward.

“The review has suggested improvements to the overall process to support health boards make these highly complex and sensitive decisions. This includes clarifying when it is appropriate to use the IPFR process, and strengthening quality assurance.

“I would like to thank the review group, once again, for their hard

work and commitment in completing this complex piece of work. I would also like to express my gratitude to all of the patients who have been involved in the review process. The evidence they've provided in the workshops that have taken place across Wales has been invaluable.

"I have written to all of the health boards to confirm the implementation of the recommendations by September.

"I believe the recommendations in this report, when implemented, will have a positive impact on the IPFR process. It will make the system more easily understandable and less prone to being misused. Something I'm sure the people of Wales will welcome."