

News story: Review launched to respond to patient concerns about NHS treatments



Health and Social Care Secretary Jeremy Hunt has announced a review into how the health system responds to reports from patients about side effects from treatments.

The review comes after patient-led campaigns on 3 NHS treatments:

- the hormone pregnancy test Primodos, which was used up until 1978
- the anti-epileptic drug sodium valproate
- the use of vaginal mesh

Mr Hunt said that the response these groups of patients received from the NHS and its regulators was “not good enough”.

Baroness Julia Cumberlege will lead the review. She will consider:

- whether any further action is needed relating to the complaints around Primodos, sodium valproate and vaginal mesh
- the processes followed by the NHS and its regulators when patients report a problem
- how to make sure communication between the different groups involved is good

Mr Hunt has asked the review to set up an independent committee to help ministers decide on the best approach to resolving these issues.

He said:

Over the years, there have been significant concerns raised by individuals and campaign groups about the potentially harmful effects of 3 products used by the NHS. The response they have received from those in positions of authority has not always been good enough.

From Primodos to mesh and sodium valproate, patients and their

families have had to spend too much time and energy campaigning for answers in a way that has added insult to injury for many. I want to see if we can establish a fairer and quicker way of resolving these concerns both now and in the future.

Chair of the review, Baroness Cumberlege, said:

I look forward to undertaking this tremendously important review and in particular to working with patients to ensure that our health system learns from those it may have failed. It's essential that voices aren't just listened to, but properly heard, and that whenever appropriate, the system promptly learns lessons and makes changes.

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