

**Press release
6th November 2012**

IRP undertaking independent health review

The Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP), the independent expert on NHS service change, has started a full review to consider whether the *Safe and Sustainable* proposals for children's congenital heart services will enable the provision of safe, sustainable and accessible services.

The IRP provided initial assessment advice in September 2012 following two referrals from the Health Scrutiny Committee for Lincolnshire, and from the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee. The Health Secretary, Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, accepted the IRP's advice that a full review should be undertaken.

Lord Ribeiro, Chairman of the IRP, said: "The Panel's key focus throughout the review will be children with congenital heart disease and the quality of care they need to receive. During the course of the review we will gather evidence from a range of people and listen to all interested parties to ensure that the recommendations we make are in the best interests of the children - and their families - across England that need to access these services."

As part of the review process the IRP will visit the hospitals currently providing children's congenital heart surgery to see the facilities and meet patients, clinicians and other staff. Over the coming weeks, Health and Overview Scrutiny Committees and MPs in England and Wales will be invited to share their views and any new evidence they may have with the IRP. IRP panel members will also hold a series of meetings to hear directly from a range of interested parties, including local authority representatives and interest groups.

The IRP strives to ensure that its reviews are open and accountable to the people using the services that are affected by this review. Anyone wishing to share their views or provide new evidence as part of this review can contact the IRP in the following ways:

- By email: info@irpanel.org.uk
- In writing: IRP, 6th Floor, 157-197 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9SP
- By leaving a voice message on: 020 7389 8046

The IRP is not able to respond to individual emails, letters or phone calls, however all information and views will be taken into account by the IRP and contributors will be acknowledged in the final report.

The IRP will make recommendations to the Health Secretary by 28 February 2013 in relation to the changes (subject to any changes of date that may be made). The final decision on changes to services will be made by the Health Secretary.

ENDS

For further information, contact the IRP press office on 020 7478 7835 or email press@irpanel.org.uk

Notes to editors:

1. The IRP will publish the findings of this review on the website - www.irpanel.org.uk - once they have been considered by the Health Secretary
2. The IRP was set up in 2003 to provide advice to the Secretary of State for Health on contested proposals for health service change in England
3. The Local Authority (Overview and Scrutiny Committees Health Scrutiny Functions) Regulations 2002 require NHS organisations to consult their Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs) on any proposals for substantial changes to local health services. If a Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee is not satisfied that either a thorough consultation process has taken place or that the proposal meets the needs of the local community, it may refer the proposals to the Secretary of State for Health under regulation 4(7) of the Local Authority (Overview and Scrutiny Committee Health Scrutiny Functions) Regulations 2002
4. IRP panel members have wide ranging expertise in clinical healthcare, NHS management, public and patient involvement and handling and delivering successful changes in the NHS
5. Further information, including details of all panel members, is available from www.irpanel.org.uk