

Questions

1. Do you agree that an expert panel is the most effective way to provide independent scrutiny? If not, what would be your preferred choice?

Yes - The Expert Panel provides accountability in decision making, improves public confidence and brings specific skills, knowledge and experience to the particular issue being considered.

It also offers transparency in decision making in relation to specific issues.

2. Do you agree that the role of the panel should be to assess the safety, sustainability, evidence-base and value for money of proposals for major changes to local NHS services?

Yes - but it should also consider any impact on potential patients arising from the effect of any decisions taken.

3. Do you agree that the chair should be a lay person appointed by Scottish Ministers?

Yea - a lay person as chair improves public confidence.

4. Do you agree that the panel should have a lay majority among its members?

Yes - again this improves public confidence, avoids question of bias and improves transparency in decision making.

5. Do you agree that the panel should assess the evidence and options during the process of public engagement prior to consultation, and provide a commentary on these that would be available to the Board and to Ministers in reaching decisions?

Yes - the nature of this commentary needs to be carefully considered to ensure that there remains the opportunity for the panel to review it's conclusions in the event that additional evidence is made available after the process of public engagement prior to consultation.

6. Do you have any other comments on how independent scrutiny should be carried out, or on the guidance on "Informing, engaging and consulting the public in developing health and community care services" at Annex 3?

There should be further emphasis on involving the specific group or groups who will be most closely affected and who may have the least voice through being in socially excluded groups.

7. Do you have any other comments on either the consultation process or your preferred choice?

No