be worthwhile contacting your department of health, or national professional body or association, to suggest they set up an external review service.

Testimonials from UK hospitals

“The review report highlighted shortcomings within the service and other safety issues. All recommendations taken on board and implemented. No safety or service related problems have since been identified. A well run system is in place with high level of patient satisfaction. Extremely valuable for safe and efficiently running service meeting all national standards for care.”

“The review has been a very useful exercise in terms of getting an external opinion on the service. It has instigated discussion within the team and enabled us to formulate our own action plan to take forward the recommendations. This has coincided with a change in the management team, which has had a positive impact, in terms of enabling change.”

“Our main worry was that the review would only highlight our weak areas, but this was not true.”

How to provide a review service

For a review to be credible and realistic, a review service must retain its independence, objectivity and impartiality, and it must be open and transparent in all its dealings.2

It is important to develop a framework that sets out how the service will be governed and what processes will be followed. Aspects to consider include data security, training for reviewers, how to generate useful reports, and fees. A review may take anything from two days to more than two weeks, so consider the resources and expenses needed and plan for the costs accordingly.

Who should be on the review team?

It is a privilege and a responsibility to be a member of a review team. In the UK, feedback from reviewers...