

Written Ministerial Statement

The content of this written ministerial statement is as received at the time from the Minister. It has not been subject to the official reporting (Hansard) process.

Department of Health

PUBLICATION OF THE INI ACTION PLAN

Published at 12.00 noon on Thursday 7 March 2024.

Mr Swann (The Minister of Health): I wish to inform Members that the Department of Health has today published the Independent Neurology Inquiry (INI) Action Plan, outlining how the 76 recommendations of the Independent Neurology Inquiry Report are being addressed.

It is recognised that the events which led to the Inquiry and the recall of patients of Dr Michael Watt, a former consultant neurologist, let many patients and their families down. The INI Implementation Programme is a significant programme of work to improve healthcare services and systems in Northern Ireland, to enhance patient safety and help to restore public confidence.

An overarching INI Implementation Plan, establishing the themes and workstreams to progress the 76 recommendations, was published on 27 July 2023. Since then, work has progressed to outline the specific actions required against each INI recommendation and further engagement with wider INI stakeholders has taken place to support this.

The INI Action Plan outlines a series of coordinated actions across a range of organisations, including the Department of Health, the General Medical Council (GMC), Healthcare Organisations and the Independent Sector. The Plan sets out the actions required to implement the 76 recommendations and outlines the relevant owners and the progress and current status in respect of each recommendation.

Many of the actions to implement the INI Report are aligned or interdependent with other Departmental work programmes and work being undertaken in parallel by other organisations. Although significant progress has already been made towards implementation of INI recommendations, further coordinated action is required to ensure full implementation of the INI Report. The publication of the INI Action Plan is a key milestone in taking this forward.

My Department is committed to overseeing the implementation of the INI Implementation Programme, through the Inquiries Implementation Programme Management Board (IIPMB) which is chaired by the Permanent Secretary, and will work in partnership with stakeholders to take forward each of the INI recommendations.

An Assurance Framework has been developed which provides details on the structure and process for identifying and mapping the main sources of assurance for the successful implementation of the INI recommendations.

To further strengthen the assurance process, the IIPMB Assurance Subgroup has been established to provide independent scrutiny to support the INI Implementation Programme.

Additionally, the Independent Neurology Liaison Group has been established to ensure the views of service users, carers, former patients and families inform the assurance process.

My Department has launched a new INI Implementation Programme webpage to provide relevant information and contact details. It is intended that future updates on the progress of the INI Implementation Programme will be made available on the website during the lifetime of the INI Implementation Programme. The INI Implementation Programme webpage can be accessed at [Independent Neurology Inquiry \(INI\) - Implementation and Action Plans | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/independent-neurology-inquiry-ini-implementation-and-action-plans)