

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

Mr Colm Gildernew MLA
Chair, Committee for Health
Room 410
Parliament Buildings
Stormont
BT4 3XX

Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
BELFAST, BT4 3SQ
Tel: 028 9052 2556
Email: private.office@health-ni.gov.uk

Your Ref: C225/21
Our Ref: CORR/3130/2021
Date: 27th September 2021

Dear *Colm,*

Thank you for your letter dated 13th September 2021 requesting an update on the progress of the Neurology Cohort 3 Patient Recall and the RQIA Expert Review of Records of Deceased Patients of Dr Watt.

Neurology Cohort 3 Patient Recall

Following my announcement of the Neurology Cohort 3 Patient Recall, on 20 April 2021, the Belfast Trust has advised that the Cohort 3 Recall has now been completed and next steps include the development of an outcomes report.

I can advise that preparations to support the publication of the Cohort 3 Outcomes Report and the appropriate stakeholder engagement will be considered and arranged in due course.

The Neurology Patient helpline (0800 980 1100), provided by the Belfast Trust, remains available from 9am to 5pm from Monday to Friday each week for anyone who has concerns or has been affected by the neurology recall.

RQIA Expert Review of Records of Deceased Patients of Dr Watt.

Further to the detailed update provided by RQIA to the Health Committee on 8 June 2021 ([RQIA-Neurology-Workstreams-Update-NIA-Health-Cttee-8-Jun-21.pdf](#)) I am pleased to advise that Phase 2 of the RQIA Expert Review of Records of Deceased Patients of Dr Watt remains on target to be completed by April 2022.

I am confident that robust oversight arrangements are in place, including the RQIA Project Steering Group, Clinical Advisory Group and Ethical Advisory Group. The Royal

College of Physicians has been commissioned to support the review and has identified an Expert Review Panel of experienced consultants, from outside of Northern Ireland, to review the records selected for Phase 2. On completion of the review of these records, the Royal College of Physicians will provide RQIA with a report of their findings, highlighting any lessons to be learned; and will recommend appropriate actions. They will also provide an individual case summary for each patient reviewed, which RQIA will use to provide feedback to those families who have expressed an interest in receiving this.

In conjunction with my statement on 20 April 2021, RQIA commenced an engagement exercise which included advising some individuals that their relative's records had been selected for this current phase (Phase 2) of the Expert Review. Those family members contacted had an opportunity (should they wish) to meet members of the Review's Family Liaison Team. I understand RQIA have since provided the Health Committee with a detailed update relating to family engagement and the additional family support services which have been made available.

I would like to acknowledge the sensitive nature of this work and in order to support those wishing to find out more, RQIA has ensured that detailed information is made available on the RQIA website at www.rqia.org.uk/neurology-review/

As a large number of deceased patients have been identified as falling within the scope of the Review, the RQIA and my Department will give careful consideration to the future of this work, and as learning emerges from the work on Phase 2.

Yours sincerely



Robin Swann MLA
Minister of Health



Committee for Health

Wendy Patterson
DALO
Department of Health

By email: Wendy.patterson@health-ni.gov.uk

Our Ref.: C225/21

13 September 2021

Dear Wendy,

At its meeting on 9 September, the Committee for Health agreed to seek a written briefing from the Department on progress in the work relating to neurology services and the work of Dr. Watt, including progress in the Cohort 3 patient recall and the work of the Department and the RQIA on the Expert Review of Records of Deceased Patients of Dr Watt.

I would appreciate a response by 24 September 2021.

Yours sincerely,

Keith McBride
Clerk
Committee for Health

Cc: Suzanne.Howe@health-ni.gov.uk
Craig.Murray@health-ni.gov.uk