

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



Colm Gildernew MLA
Chairperson Health Committee

Committee.Health@niassembly.gov.uk

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

Our ref – SUB-2222-2020

Date: ^{3rd} December 2020

Dear *Colm,*

I am writing to advise you that work has commenced on the development of a health-related Advance Care Planning policy for adults in Northern Ireland.

Advance Care Planning (ACP) is an umbrella term covering personal, clinical and legal planning to prepare for a person's future care. It is an on-going process of discussion between the person, those important to them and their health and social care professionals focusing on what matters to the person in their living and when the time comes, their personal wishes and preferences for their care as they approach the end of their life.

The development of a health-related ACP policy for adults supports the work that my Department is progressing, in partnership with the Health and Social Care Board, Public Health Agency and Palliative Care in Partnership programme, to implement a public health approach to palliative care. A key element of such an approach is increasing awareness of what palliative care is and how it can support people living with a progressive life-limiting condition. Importantly, a public health approach also recognises and promotes the need for community-based support for people with palliative and end of life care needs and the importance of Advance Care Planning for future care, including wishes and preferences for care, Advance Decisions to Refuse Treatment and decisions around cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The development of a health-related ACP policy will focus on the health aspects of advance care planning and support this public health approach. Implementation of the policy will be underpinned with a suite of supporting documentation, comprehensive staff training and public messaging.

An early stakeholder engagement process is planned to commence shortly to ensure input and comments are captured from across the region, including community, voluntary, statutory and independent sectors and people who use services in order to inform the policy development process.



Robin Swann MLA
Minister for Health