

Written Ministerial Statement

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Department of Health

CLINICAL CONCERNS WITHIN UROLOGY AT SOUTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST

Published at 12.00 pm on Tuesday 27 October 2020.

Mr Swann (The Minister of Health): The Southern Health and Social Care Trust notified my Department on 31 July 2020 that it had identified clinical concerns in relation to the work of a consultant urologist who no longer works in the health service.

An internal exercise was immediately initiated by the Trust and is ongoing in order to ascertain the number of patients whose care may need to be reviewed. At this stage, a small number of patients have been contacted in this regard.

As Health Minister, I am extremely concerned about any issue that involves the potential for patients to come to harm within our Health and Social Care system. However, it is important to stress that the vast majority of urology patients in the Southern Trust will be unaffected by the issues that have come to light. I want to assure all patients and their families that the investigation into these matters will be comprehensive, and that anyone whose care needs to be reviewed will be contacted as quickly as possible.

My Department has been kept updated by the Southern Trust regarding progress with this exercise, and I intend to make an oral statement in the Assembly as soon as practicable in order to provide further details about this matter.

My Department's immediate priority is to ensure that the Southern Trust completes this initial phase of work in the weeks ahead in order to minimise and prevent any potential risk or harm to patients.

My Department has therefore established a Urology Assurance Group to provide external oversight to the Southern Trust's ongoing process, and the future management plan for the issues arising from it. The Assurance Group comprises senior officials from the Department of Health, Health and Social Care Board, Public Health Agency, Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority, as well as the Southern Trust. I will publish final terms of reference for the Assurance Group alongside my Assembly statement.

If any urology patient or their carer has concerns about their treatment and would like information they should contact the Southern Trust on 0800 4148520.