

# 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

### THE APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF THE SOUTHERN TRUST UROLOGY PUBLIC INQUIRY

*Published at 3.00 pm on 8 March 2021.*

**Mr Swann (The Minister of Health):** In my oral statement to the Assembly, on 24 November 2020, I advised Members of my intention to establish a Public Inquiry, under the Inquiries Act 2005, into the concerns raised about the clinical practice of a former hospital urology consultant in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

It remains my belief that a Public Inquiry offers the most appropriate method to ensure that the full extent of the concerns are identified and for the patients and families affected to be confident that matters are being pursued in a transparent and independent manner.

I am pleased to confirm that I have appointed Christine Smith QC as Chair of the Inquiry, with the aim of getting the inquiry fully underway by summer 2021.

Ms Smith is a very experienced Queen's Counsel with a background in public inquiry work. She is Senior Counsel to the Independent Neurology Inquiry and was Senior Counsel for the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry. She also appeared for the Department of Finance in the RHI Inquiry. I believe that her professional expertise and recent involvement with inquiries equips her to chair the Urology Inquiry.

The next steps will include developing the terms of reference for the inquiry, following engagement with the Assembly's Health Committee and the patients affected by the lookback, and finalise the members of the Inquiry Panel.

The patients and families affected remain my focus as we move to establish the inquiry. I trust that the actions taken here will help to address their concerns and I will endeavour to ensure that they obtain the appropriate treatment, support and the care that they need.