



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Mike Farrar
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19 February 2026

Cc: Stuart Stevenson, TOA

Dear Mike

**MEMORANDUM OF REPLY: ACCESS TO GENERAL PRACTICE IN
NORTHERN IRELAND**

At its meeting on 12 February 2026, the Public Accounts Committee considered the Memorandum of Reply (MOR) to its report on “*Access to General Practice in Northern Ireland.*”

The Committee was unanimous in its view that the MOR is deeply unsatisfactory.

While the Department has formally accepted or partially accepted the Committee’s recommendations, the response lacks urgency, clarity and credible delivery timelines. In several critical areas, projected implementation dates extend years into the future, without adequate justification or evidence of meaningful interim action.

Members are particularly concerned that:

- Core reforms, including workforce planning and service redesign, are attached to extended timelines with no clear acceleration plan;
- There is an absence of defined short-term improvements while longer-term strategies are being developed;

- Actions are repeatedly made conditional on future funding or contractual processes, with no clear mitigation or contingency measures;
- Accepted recommendations are not accompanied by specific, time-bound commitments.

The Committee's inquiry was informed by extensive evidence from stakeholders and over 15,000 members of the public. That evidence pointed to a system under significant strain, with serious implications for patients and for the wider health service. The MOR does not reflect the level of urgency that such evidence demands.

The Committee will not accept prolonged strategic planning in place of tangible progress.

The Committee therefore requires you and relevant senior officials to attend before it on **Thursday 26 March 2026** to address Members' serious concerns in full and to provide a full account of the Department's position and to respond directly to Members' concerns which include:

1. A detailed explanation for the extended implementation timelines;
2. A revised action plan setting out clear and credible milestones;
3. Specific interim measures that will deliver improvements in the short term;
4. Clear accountability arrangements for delivery;

Please respond by email using the address above by **Friday, 27th February 2026**.

Yours sincerely,



Daniel McCrossan
Chairperson
Public Accounts Committee