

**From the Interim Permanent Secretary  
and HSC Chief Executive**



Cheryl Brownlee MLA  
Chairperson  
Public Accounts Committee

Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
Upper Newtownards Road  
BELFAST  
BT4 3SQ

[committee.publicaccounts@niassembly.gov.uk](mailto:committee.publicaccounts@niassembly.gov.uk)

Tel: 028 90 520559

Email: [mike.farrar@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:mike.farrar@health-ni.gov.uk)

Our Ref: SCORR-0118-2025

Date: 28 August 2025

Dear Cheryl

## **MEMORANDUM OF REPLY: MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN NORTHERN IRELAND - INFORMATION REQUIRED IN AUGUST RETURN**

Thank you for your letter of 20 June 2025 requesting that the Department provide the Committee with further clarification on several points when providing its August 2025 quarterly update on the Memorandum of Reply to the PAC Report on Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland.

I am pleased to submit the August 2025 quarterly update (attached **Annex** refers). It incorporates the requested clarifications which I have summarised below, for ease:

### **Recommendation 8 - Status, timeline, and scope of the planned public consultation (CYP Emotional Health and Wellbeing Framework):**

The CYP Emotional Health & Wellbeing draft (EHWB) Framework launched for consultation in May 2025 and closes on 26 September 2025, following requests for the consultation period to be extended. The Framework envisages a shift from diagnostic/condition specific referral pathways to a more holistic assessment pathway, based on presenting need. An implementation plan will be developed

based on feedback from the consultation and will be included in the final version of the Framework. The Framework including an implementation plan will be approved and published in April 2026.

The EHWB Framework is promoting a system wide review of service provision. The implementation plan will be over 10 years, with a 2-year and 5-year review. It is anticipated that the implementation plan will help prioritise future investment to drive transformation and effectiveness of services. This may include reconfiguring current funding to better meet the needs of service users. The EHWB Framework and the implementation plan will be live documents and as such will be reviewed and revised to meet changing needs or the population.

**Recommendation 10 - Confirmed timescales, responsible leads, and mitigation plans for the evaluation of pilot crisis services:**

An evaluation of the 'Hear and Treat' Pilot is currently in progress. It is due to be completed by end of Quarter 4 of the 2025/26 financial year, but the aim is to bring this forward to end of Quarter 3, if possible, to enable decisions to be made by SPPG regarding funding for 2026/27, as the current funding stream is only available until March 2026. PHA has been tasked with carrying out the evaluation and is currently working with NIAS and SEHSCT to ensure appropriate data collection and ensuring the necessary Information Governance arrangements are in place to enable sharing of this data with the PHA.

The PHA has also worked with the Multi Agency Triage Team (MATT) pilot service providers to improve data collection to ascertain service usage and outcomes of the services. Data is now available for a 5-month period (covering February 2025 – June 2025). This data is showing lower activity than anticipated. Options are currently being considered for the optimisation of activity in-year.

**Recommendation 12: Key outcomes and actions arising from the April 2025 Cawdery Task and Finish Working Group meeting, including indicative timelines for deliverables:**

The Task and Finish Working Group last met in June 2025, to review progress and to consider its proposed end date, with any remaining actions to be taken forward through Right Care Right Person structures. While significant progress was noted, it

was agreed not to stand down, pending the outcome of the public consultation on the revised Mental Health Order Code of Practice. The Group will reconvene in late August 2025 to discuss progress and specifically the draft Mental Health Order Code of Practice ahead of a 12-week consultation and will meet again in November/December 2025 to consider the outcome of consultation and, if appropriate, endorse publication of the revised Code. A review of any outstanding Coroner's recommendations will also be undertaken at that stage to inform a decision on when the Task and Finish Group should be formally stood down.

**Confirmation that the delays to the Encompass and MyCare roll-out have been resolved and MyCare is now fully operational across all Trust Areas:**

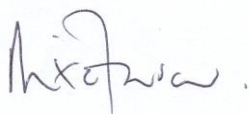
I note that this concern relates to delays reported previously to the PAC in respect of progressing the embedding of Mental Health Outcomes Framework measures and operationalisation of these on the Encompass System for clinical use via MyCare. I can confirm that 95% of the outcomes measures have now been embedded within the Encompass System, with the remaining measures due to be in place by the end of August 2025.

**Confirmation as to what action is being taken to address the continued impact of staff shortages on the collection and processing of data which is key to resolving a number of the issues raised by the report into Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland:**

A Regional Mental Health Outcomes Lead took up post on 7 August 2025. Recruitment to fill other key posts within the Regional Mental Health Business Unit has also been completed. Subject to standard HR processes, these positions are expected to be filled by the end of August 2025.

I trust that this information is helpful to the Committee.

Yours sincerely



**MIKE FARRAR**

Enc