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Dear Daniel

MEMORANDUM OF REPLY: MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Thank you for your letter dated 13 December 2024, following the Committee's meeting of 12 December, during which the Department's first quarterly update on all recommendations outlined in the Department's Memorandum of Reply to the recent PAC Report on Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland was reviewed.

The Committee has asked about the Department's approach to recording and monitoring in-year spending and outcomes as work to implement Encompass fully continues. The approach we take is to require each Trust to submit monthly performance figures in relation to commissioned activity to the Strategic Planning and Performance Group. In cases where further funding is to be allocated during the financial year, there are robust mechanisms in place to monitor service delivery including post project evaluations.

As requested in your correspondence, I am pleased to provide as an attachment, the most recent quarterly update in relation to the Regional Mental Health Service Team's work around the collection of outcome data, which was provided to the Department on 31 October 2024.

I trust that this is helpful.

Yours sincerely



PETER MAY

Outcomes Framework – Progress Report

ACTION: Recruitment of a Mental Health Outcomes Coordinator to lead implementation of the Framework by December 2024.

UPDATE: Recruitment of the Regional Mental Health Service Mental Health Outcomes Framework Programme Lead commenced with interviews taking place in November 2024. [Note: the position was not filled during the initial interview process. The job is currently re-advertised with an application closing date of 31 January 2025.]

ACTION: Pending permanent appointment and within existing resources including within the encompass team, progress priority work on the implementation and development of the Mental Health Outcomes Framework on the encompass platform, including commencing work on the development of the Mental Health data reporting system for Northern Ireland as part of the encompass design and wider work on the Regional Mental Health Service timescales aligned to timetable for rolling out encompass System.

UPDATE: Work is continuing to implement the Mental Health Outcomes Framework in line with the roll out of the encompass system. Within the reporting period, the Regional Mental Health Service core team has established formal check point meetings, involving Performance and Service Improvement Directorate and encompass colleagues. This is in response to previously cited concerns regarding encompass staff having to prioritise supporting the clinical functionality of the new system over other development work such as the Mental Health Outcomes Framework. Significant turnover of key contacts within the encompass team has impacted on timely delivery of actions arising from these check point meetings. In light of this position, issues and delays have once again been escalated to Digital Health and Care Northern Ireland to seek a resolution. In parallel, work is also underway to re-establish a formal governance structure for overseeing delivery of this action.

ACTION: Commence engagement with services and networks on the use of the Mental Health Framework by March 2025.

UPDATE: Engagement with Network Leads is ongoing as part of broader work to establish the Regional Mental Health Service. This has included undertaking a detailed scoping exercise of existing networks, the findings of which will inform the agenda of the workshop involving Network Leads in November 2024. An update on the work on the Mental Health Outcomes Framework and exploration of how associated outcomes can be integrated into the Networks' wider work programme, will be a primary focus of the planning workshop.