

Written Ministerial Statement

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Department of Health

WRITTEN STATEMENT TO THE ASSEMBLY BY HEALTH MINISTER MIKE NESBITT MLA – 26 FEBRUARY 2025 - PUBLICATION OF AUTISM STRATEGY 2023-2028 MONITORING REPORT 23/24

Published at 3pm on Wednesday 26 February 2025

Mr Nesbitt (The Minister of Health): In recent months departments and arms length bodies have contributed to a report, being collated by the Department of Health, which monitors the progress achieved in implementing departmental actions to achieve the strategic outcomes of the Autism Strategy 2023-2028. A copy of this report has been provided for your information. I intend to publish this report on the Department of Health website to demonstrate the progress which has been made and the commitment across all government departments in delivering against the responsibilities of the Autism Act (NI) 2011 and the Autism (Amendment) Act (NI) 2022).

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all contributors for their engagement in the work to support the strategy and also in contributing to the development of the Autism Strategy 2023-2028 and the Autism delivery plan 2023 to 2025. I appreciate that these are challenging times for us all and that difficult decisions are being taken to address the financial constraints being experienced, therefore, we must be innovative in how we continue to demonstrate our commitment to fulfilling our legislative responsibilities in meeting the requirements of the Act.

You will be aware that a requirement of the Autism (Amendment) Act (NI) 2022 was the appointment of an independent Autism Reviewer for Northern Ireland. I am pleased to advise that as per my written ministerial statement on 21 August 2024 this appointment has now been made.