

# Written Ministerial Statement

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## Department of Health

### **BY HEALTH MINISTER, MIKE NESBITT – WEDNESDAY 9 JULY 2025 – NEUROLOGY DECEASED PATIENTS REVIEW (DPR) UPDATE**

*Published at 11am on Wednesday 9 July 2025*

**Mr Nesbitt (The Minister of Health):** Following on from my previous Written Statement on 03 July 2024 in which I announced the commencement of a further phase of the Neurology Deceased Patient Review (Phase Three), I believe it is timely to provide Members with an update on the progress of this final phase of the Neurology Deceased Patient Review (DPR).

It is important however that I continue to acknowledge the exceptionally difficult circumstances which the families of deceased patients have experienced. I wish to apologise once again for the hurt caused to the neurology recall patients and the families affected by these matters, and I would like to reiterate my thanks and appreciation to them for their cooperation and patience.

In my previous statement I indicated I had offered to meet with a number of the DPR Phase Two families. This meeting took place on 29 October 2024 with 29 members of 15 families. Hearing the testimonies from those in attendance was extremely moving and I had the opportunity to acknowledge the great emotional cost for the families in providing their testimonies to the Royal College of Physicians (RCP). I sought to reassure them that this input was both insightful and invaluable in the approach taken to Phase Three.

#### **DPR Legacy Commitments Update**

The RCP made a number of recommendations from the expert review of the cases of deceased patients in DPR Phase Two and in addition the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) made nine additional commitments to take actions that would help ensure there would be a tangible 'legacy' from the DPR work. The RQIA published its [Progress Report on Commitments in the Neurology Deceased Patients Review](#) on the DPR legacy commitments on 24 October 2024.

#### **DPR Phase Three Update**

Families of 18 deceased patients indicated they wished to proceed with a review of their deceased family member's clinical records (Phase Three Group 1). Under the direction of my Department the RQIA formally commissioned the RCP to commence this work in July 2024. In parallel I announced a further 6-month period for any additional families to come forward to explore involvement with the DPR by contacting the RQIA by 31 December 2024.

A total of 9 families came forward by 31 December 2024. The RQIA engaged with these families to better understand their expectations, needs and concerns; whether their deceased relatives' case was likely to fall within the scope of the review and to provide information on work undertaken in this area to date. Following this engagement, 8 families (Phase Three Group 2) indicated they wished to proceed with a review of their deceased family member's clinical records.

#### **Phase Three Group 1**

By March 2025 the RCP Expert Review Panel had completed the review of the clinical records for the 18 deceased patients as well as the family testimonies submitted by all families participating in this

phase of the review. The RQIA's Family Liaison Team (FLT) provided support to families who wished to avail of it, in preparation for their testimonial meetings with the RCP's Expert Review Panel.

It is anticipated the RQIA will receive the individual case summary reports as well as the RCP overall report for the 18 deceased patients by early autumn 2025, with completion of the overall Phase Three Group 1 work expected by December 2025. RQIA are continuing to liaise with families to provide updates on progress via written monthly updates. Procedures are in place to support families in processing the findings of their case summary reports once received. There will also be provision in place to support families who may experience potential distress after receipt of an individual case summary report through referral to independent counselling should they wish to avail of this.

### **Phase Three Group 2**

I have approved funding for this final phase of the Deceased Patient Review to commence the work required in relation to the expert review of clinical records of the additional 8 deceased patients. The same processes used for the 18 families in Phase Three Group 1 will be used for this phase. This approach will ensure RQIA retains robust continuity in terms of knowledge, experience and understanding of this complex review, in addition to the reassurance of a sensitive and supportive approach to the bereaved family members

The RQIA's Family Liaison Team will continue to support the families participating in a clinical record review process, will remain in regular contact with families and will ensure families are aware of how to access counselling and advocacy support.

Families can contact the RQIA by:

- Freephone number 0800 052 0012 between 10am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, to speak to a member of the Family Liaison Team;
- Emailing an enquiry to: [expert.review@rqia.org.uk](mailto:expert.review@rqia.org.uk); or
- Filling in an online form on the RQIA website and a member of staff will be in touch.

### **DPR Completion**

The RQIA will now take forward the process for the Phase 3 Group 2 and aim to complete it by spring / early summer 2026.