

EXPERT REVIEW OF RECORDS OF DECEASED PATIENTS OF DR WATT

PHASE TWO OBJECTIVES

Background

On 02 May 2018, the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Health (DoH) issued a statement on the Belfast Trust's neurology patient recall, directing the Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) to undertake a review of the governance arrangements of outpatient services in the Belfast Trust. This was published in February 2020.

The Permanent Secretary's statement also directed RQIA to *"commission a parallel piece of work to ensure that the records of all patients or former patients of Dr Watt who have died over the past ten years are subject to expert review"*.

On the 10 May 2018 RQIA received further detailed terms of reference which included a direction to *"commission an expert review of the records of all patients (current and former) of Dr Watt who have died over the last ten years to include deaths from more than ten years ago if concerns identified during this process indicating further retrospective review required" (the Review)*.

RQIA have agreed with the Department of Health to take a phased approach to this Review, given the significant scale of work involved.

Phase One

The first preparatory phase of this Review has now completed with the formal adoption of a Legal Framework to ensure access to the relevant deceased records. This framework has been agreed and signed by the Chief Executives of all required Health and Social Care (HSC) Bodies.

Phase Two

RQIA will conduct Phase Two in accordance with the following objectives:

1. Obtain and validate a dataset of all patients who died during the 10-year period prior to May 2018 (the Defined Period).
2. Identify individual deceased patients whose records will be reviewed during Phase Two of the Review, clearly setting out the rationale for this selection (see below).
3. Obtain and validate a dataset of the patients whose records have been selected for review during Phase Two.
4. Take reasonable steps to contact the next-of-kin or family members of the deceased patients whose records have been selected for review during Phase Two, to provide an opportunity to share their experiences and for RQIA to make available support where needed.

5. Commission an external Expert Panel to review the records selected for Phase Two and to consider any information shared with RQIA by next-of-kin or family members.
6. Produce a report on the findings of the expert review, including identifying learning and making any such recommendations considered necessary to the Department of Health.

Deceased patient records selected for expert review during Phase Two of the Review:

Two groups of deceased patients' records have been selected for expert review during Phase Two of the Review, in accordance with the RQIA Proposal to the Department of Health, October 2020.

- Group 1:** Those deceased patients whose family members have approached the RQIA with concerns about their care since the Department of Health's announcement of the Review in May 2018.
- Group 2:** Those patients whom Belfast Trust identified as part of Cohort 1 of the neurology patient recall in 2018, however, unfortunately died before they had either the opportunity to take part or before their re-assessment was completed.

Future Phases

The specific objectives for future phases of the Expert Review will be informed by the outcomes of Phase Two and in agreement with the Department of Health.