



The Regulation and
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Authority

press release

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Independent Expert Review of Records of Deceased Patients of Dr Watt

Following successful resolution of legal issues, which had prevented RQIA from accessing records of deceased persons, we have commissioned the Royal College of Physicians to establish an independent expert panel of experienced neurology consultants from outside Northern Ireland, to begin the review of the case notes of those patients of Dr Watt who died in the 10 years preceding or during the recall in 2018.

This review is being taken forward in a phased manner, commencing with the first group of 45 deceased individuals whose family members have approached RQIA with concerns about their loved one's care; or who were included in the Belfast Trust's Cohort 1 neurology recall, but unfortunately died before either attending or completing their re-assessment.

The independent expert panel will also consider any information shared with us by the families of these patients. We have written to families who have provided us with their details, asking them to contact our Family Liaison team on Freephone: 0800 052 0012 or email: expert.review@rqia.org.uk to enable their experience to be shared with the independent expert Panel.

We are particularly keen to hear from those whose relative died whilst part of the Cohort 1 recall, as we have not as yet been able to identify family members of all of these deceased patients.

On completion of the review, the independent expert panel will provide a report of their findings, and make recommendations. This report will be shared with the families and with the Department of Health, before being published.

In addition to this ongoing review, we have completed work on two other reviews in response to the issues raised by the Belfast Trust's neurology patient recall. These are: Review of Governance Arrangements of Outpatient Services, published in February 2020; and Review of Governance Arrangements in Independent Hospitals and Hospices in Northern Ireland, which will be published shortly.

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