THE EXPERT REVIEW OF RECORDS OF DECEASED PATIENTS OF DR WATT

MINUTES OF PHASE THREE STEERING GROUP - MEETING NO. 5

Held on Monday 27 April 2026 at 14.00 via MS Teams

Members:	Mrs Caroline Lee	Lead Director / SRO (Chair)
	Dr Nazia Latif	RQIA Authority Member
	Dr Seamus O'Reilly	Interim Responsible Medical Officer
	Mr Brian O'Hagan	Ethical Advisor / PPI
	Mr Ray Martin	Lay Representative
	Mr Stewart Finn	Director of MS Society / Vice Chair of NINCA
In Attendance:	Mrs Linda Rafferty	Project Lead
	Mrs Briege Donaghy	RQIA Chief Executive
	Mr David Silcock	Senior Communications Manager
	Mr Sean Green	Project Support Officer
Apologies:	None	

1.0 Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

Mrs Lee welcomed members to the meeting; no conflicts of interest declared.

2.0 Minutes of the previous meetings of the Steering Group held on 19/05/2025 and 01/12/2025

Minutes from meeting 19/05/2025 and 01/12/25 approved without amendment. Arrangements will be made to publish both sets of minutes on RQIA website.

3.0 Updates on Progress

3.1 Phase 3 Group 1 (P3G1) x 18 cases

Mrs Rafferty provided the following update:

- RQIA received the P3G1 RCP report along with individual case summaries in September 2025.

- The Family Liaison Team (FLT) offered to engage with each of the 18 families who had participated in P3G1, in order to discuss the expert team's findings within individual case summaries. 15 families availed of this opportunity. The FLT agreed to share with the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) comments provided by 7 of the families in relation to the expert team's findings and conclusions within case summaries, including two factual inaccuracies. The RCP reviewed the comments, and responded in writing to RQIA with their position on each case for sharing with the families, advising that minor amendments would be made to two of the individual case summary reports in relation to factual inaccuracies. RQIA shared the RCP responses with the families in writing in March 2026, which included the re-issue of two amended case summary reports. No further queries have been received by FLT from the 7 families in relation to RCP's responses.

- FLT provided families with a written update in March 2026, advising that RQIA anticipated completion of the review of Group 2 over the summer months, and plans to publish the overall

reports of both groups as soon as practicable thereafter. An updated information leaflet was enclosed outlining further options and signposting, for example, PSNI 'Operation Begrain' and the Department of Health (DoH) Neurology Compensation process.

3.2 Phase 3 Group 2 (P3G2) x 7 cases

Mrs Rafferty provided the following update:

- P3G2 individual family testimony virtual meetings with RCP expert team representatives were supported and facilitated by the FLT at the Europa Hotel, Belfast, in January 2026.

- FLT provided families with a written update in March 2026, advising that, given RCP's robust quality assurance and factual accuracy checking process, the earliest RQIA could expect to receive P3G2 individual case summary reports was June 2026. The update further advised that RQIA anticipated completion of Phase 3 over the summer, with consideration of publishing the overall reports for both groups at the earliest practicable opportunity thereafter.

4.0 Communications Update

4.1 Closure of RQIA Neurology Deceased Patients Review Programme/ publication of reports – for discussion

Members acknowledged that RQIA's work in terms of the Department of Health commissioned review of records of deceased patients, Neurology, was ending, pending receipt of RCP's report on Phase 3 Group 2 along with individual case summaries, and discussion of the expert team's findings with the bereaved families who participated in the review.

A discussion ensued, during which the following points were noted and agreed:

- Programme closure should incorporate formal acknowledgement and appreciation of all Phase 2 and Phase 3 families in recognition of their contribution and commitment to the Expert Review.
- Closure activities should include reflective consideration of the key findings, the work undertaken, and the overall process, with a view to capturing and embedding learning.
- Engagement with deceased patient families should continue to be conducted in a sensitive and appropriate manner.
- A small, measured and sensitive event for families to mark closure of the expert review should be considered, the purpose being to acknowledge the families input to the review, in honour and memory of their deceased relatives.
- Whilst the RQIA record review should be brought to a close, families should be appropriately signposted to further options and next steps.
- It was acknowledged that, while RQIA may formally conclude its role, it will be important to recognise the continuation of related work streams, as for many families the process remains ongoing and cannot yet be regarded as fully "closed".
- A closure report should clearly evidence the adaptation in approach following the independent evaluation of Phase 2, underlining the need for ongoing adaptation, learning and responsiveness to feedback from a range of stakeholder groups.

- Closure activities should include the development of post-review evaluation and lessons learned reports.

4.2 Update on RQIA Website/ Neurology page

Mr Silcock advised that work continues at pace to rebuild the RQIA website and provided assurances that Expert Review documentation previously published can be retrieved and re-published on the website, along with publishing any new expert review-related documentation that arises. Mr Silcock and Mr Green will continue to work together on this matter.

5.0 Any Other Business

5.1 Engagement with Coroner's Office – for information

Mrs Rafferty advised that four P3G1 cases have been referred to the Coroner's Service for consideration of amendments to the death certificates. Following a meeting with the Coroner's Medical Advisor on 01/04/26, Mrs Rafferty and Mr Green await further advice on the next steps in relation to each individual case.

5.2 DoH INI Update Bulletin March 2026 – for information

LR advised that colleagues from DoH had provided the FLT with verbal updates on (1) a meeting between the Health Minister and a number of Phase 2 families held on 29 January 2026, and (2) a meeting between representatives from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) and a number of Phase 2 families held on 11 March 2026 with the Health Minister in attendance, as follows:

- The Minister expressed continuing commitment to engaging with deceased patient review families, noting that the INI focused on live patients;
- BHSCT have offered one-to-one engagement with families, to be facilitated by DoH; representatives in attendance included the BHSCT Chair, Deputy Chair, Chief Executive and a member of BHSCT communications team.
- Families expressed a clear desire to be involved in the overall process and to provide input prior to publication of final review outcomes.

RQIA received the March 2026 Neurology INI Update Bulletin from DoH colleagues, and have shared it with both groups of Phase 3 families. Families have been encouraged to join the DoH mailing list in order to receive information regarding future publications directly from DoH, should they wish to do so.

It was further noted that for those families seeking compensation via the Neurological Claims process, the deadline for making a claim has been extended from June 2026 to December 2027. FLT will notify Phase 3 families of this update via written correspondence.

6.0 Date of next meeting, thank you and close

Next meeting to be held at an agreed date in August 2026.

Mrs Lee thanked members for their valuable contribution and closed the meeting.