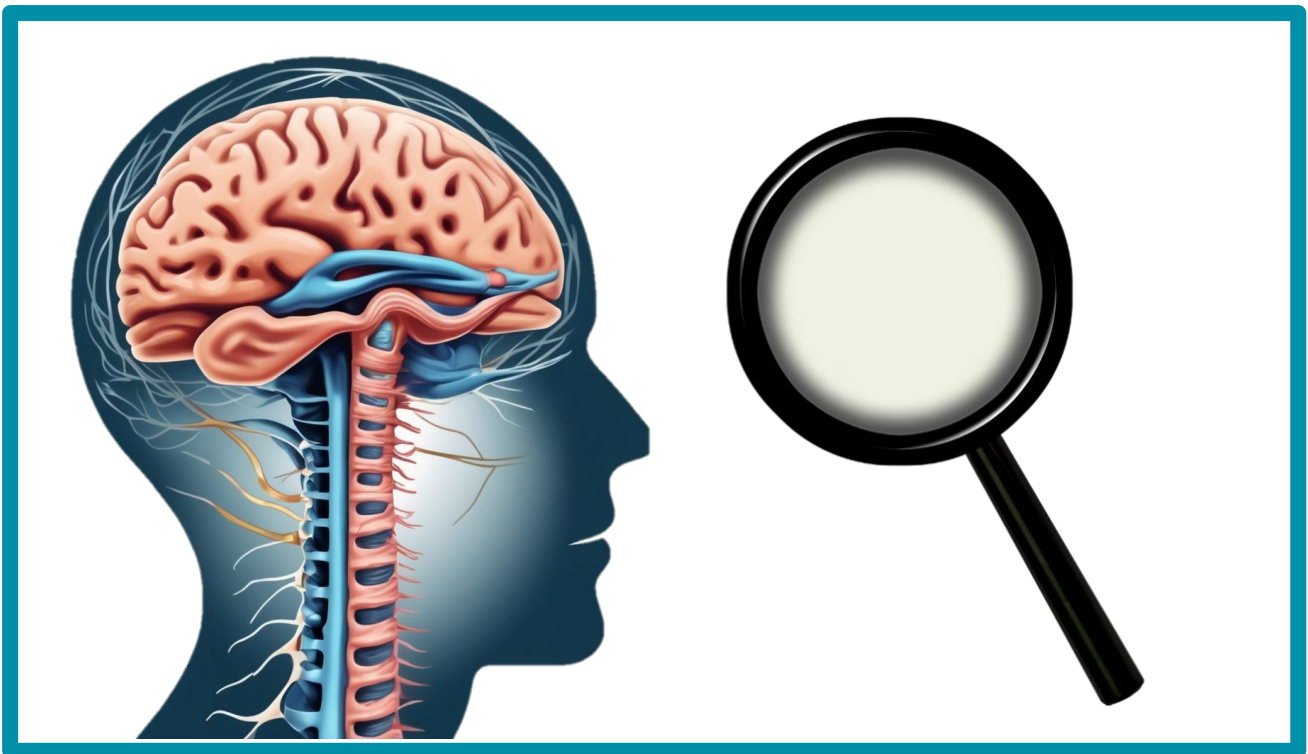




Department of  
**Health**

[www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

# Neurology Services Review



Looking at neurology services in  
Northern Ireland.

Saying how to make them better.

# What is neurology?



**Neurology** is the study and treatment of brain, nerve, and spinal cord problems.



**Neurologists** are doctors who help people with neurology problems.



**Neurology Services** give care, support and treatment to people with neurology problems.

# Neurology in Northern Ireland



Lots of people in Northern Ireland have long-term brain and nerve problems.

About 40,000 people need help from neurology services.

This includes people with

- epilepsy
- multiple sclerosis and
- Parkinson's Disease.



People with migraines, dementia, or strokes may also need help from neurology services.



Neurology services in Northern Ireland have big problems such as

- not enough appointments
- long waiting lists and
- everyone getting the help they need no matter who they are or where they live.

# Neurology Review



The government started a Review in 2018.

The Review looked at

- how neurology services work



- what patients think about the service



- how many staff there are



- how services can be made better.



The review also looked at how things work in other parts of the UK and Ireland.

# Problems we found



## Not enough neurology staff



There are not enough neurology staff.  
More staff are needed.

This will help patients to be seen quicker by  
the right person.

## Not enough hospital services or beds



In an emergency, 1 in 4 people are given a  
bed in a hospital that has no neurologist  
working there.

This is a lot more than in England.



There are only 18 neurology beds for  
neurology patients in Northern Ireland.  
All these beds are in Belfast.

We need 36 neurology beds to make sure  
everyone gets the care they need.

# A need for better ongoing care and support



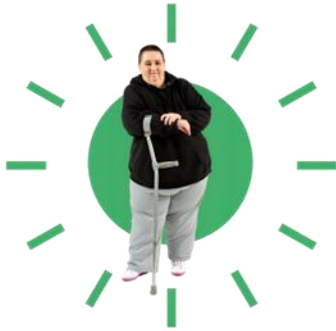
Patients need a service that is

- Well planned and runs smoothly
- has the right staff
- works well with other services.



Mental health support is difficult for many people with neurological conditions to get.

# Our Vision - What we want



We want services that are

## 1. Person Centred

This means we put patients needs first.



## 2. Joined-up

This mean working together with other services.



## 3. Responsive

This means quick to help people.



## 4. Based on evidence

This means using research to make decisions.



## 5. Properly resourced

This means having enough neurology staff and money for services to run well.



To make this happen 4 things are very important.

1. Person-centred care
2. More neurology staff
3. Fixing gaps in services
4. Better use of **resources**

We call these **priorities**.



For each priority we say what we think needs to be done to help make them happen. We call these **actions**.

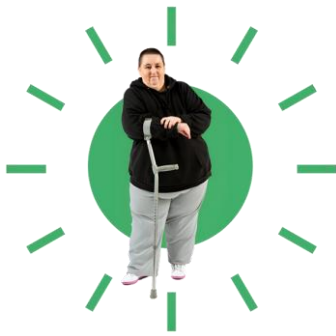


**Resources** are things that help us give care to people. This includes

- Staff, like doctors, nurses, and therapists.
- Equipment, like brain scan machines.
- Medicine and treatments.
- Money to fund services.
- Places where care is given, like hospitals and clinics.
- Information and support for patients and families.



## Priority 1. Person-centred care



- Care should always meet the needs of the patient.

Using the **House of Care Model** will help.

The **House of Care Model** supports people with long-term health conditions. It looks at the teamwork between patients, their families, and healthcare professionals.



- People and their families should understand the care and support available.



- Patients should have a **designated person** to help sort their care.

This means 1 person has the job of sorting out your care.

## Priority 2. More neurology staff



- We need 20 more **neurologists**.

We need better training and research jobs so more doctors want to be **neurologists**.



- We need 41 more neurology nurses by 2028.



- Each Trust area should have a Neurology Nursing Team.



- We need 38 extra **Allied Health Professionals**.

**Allied Health Professionals** are healthcare workers who help people stay well and independent.

For example, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists and dieticians.



- We need 22 more **psychologists**.

**Psychologists** help people with their thoughts, feelings, and behaviour.



- We need more hospital staff to help people get tests and **diagnosis** quicker.

**Diagnosis** means finding out what illness or health problem someone has.



- We need more staff who are trained to give care to neurology patients.

## Priority 3. Fixing gaps in services



- We need hospitals taking emergency patients to be able to get advice from neurologists



- We need 18 more hospital beds.

Neurology hospital beds should not be used for other emergencies.



- We need specialist clinics in every Trust area.

For example, clinics for epilepsy and multiple sclerosis.



- We need **care pathways** for patients.

A **care pathway** is a plan for your care and treatment.



- We need local neurology teams in every Trust area.



- We need mental health support for neurology patients when they need it.



- We need patients in Northern Ireland to get the same special services as people in England.

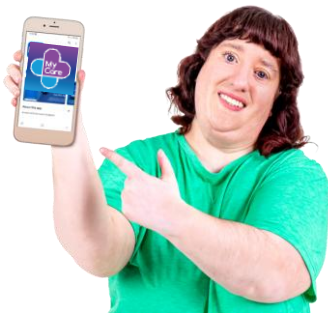
This will help make sure everyone gets treatment fairly.

## Priority 4. Better Use of Resources



- We need better patient **referrals** so people get the right care sooner.

**Referrals** are when your doctor sends you to see a specialist who knows more about your health problem.



- We need new ways to check how patients are doing.

For example, patients could

- report their own symptoms
- ask for check-ups when needed.



- We need appointments for patients who need to see someone urgently.



- We need to collect better information to help us make services better.



- We need to work with charities and community groups to plan and deliver care.



- GPs should be supported to provide care to neurology patients.



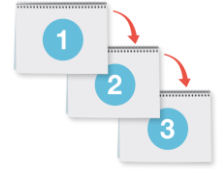
- We need neurology training for doctors and nurses in other specialties.

This will help them better support people with neurological conditions.



- We need hospital environments designed to meet the needs of neurology patients.

# What happens next?



Our plan for neurology services will take a few years to happen.

A Neurology Delivery Team will be set up to make sure changes happen.