

## FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



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Our ref – SUB-2124-2020

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Dear

### **Muckamore Abbey Hospital- Public Inquiry**

You will, I am sure be aware that I announced on 8<sup>th</sup> September that I intended to call a Public Inquiry into the abuse at Muckamore Abbey Hospital.

Public inquiries investigate issues of serious public concern, scrutinising decisions and events. The rules that govern Public Inquiries are set out in the Inquiries Act 2005.

Public Inquiries are different from criminal investigations or disciplinary hearings. Parallel criminal investigations and disciplinary hearings are being carried out by the PSNI and the relevant HSC Trust, respectively, separately from this inquiry. The Public Inquiry will not itself result in any criminal prosecutions: it is intended to ensure a full and rigorous investigation into what happened at Muckamore, and what lessons need to be learned to ensure there can be no repeat of these events.

You may recall that I said on 5<sup>th</sup> August following publication of the Report of the Leadership and Governance Review that it was my intention to establish an inquiry on Muckamore Abbey Hospital and that this report would help determine the nature and scope of a future inquiry – which must focus on the questions that remain unanswered and how we stop this happening again.

I also said that after considering the report in detail that I would consult further with families, patients and former patients about the most appropriate terms and format for an inquiry. I am writing to you now to update you on the arrangements for this consultation.

I have asked the Patient Client Council to facilitate a number of engagement meetings on my behalf which will give you an opportunity to share your views on the Terms of Reference, which set out the scope and remit of the Inquiry. The meetings will be organised so that you can attend remotely, in line with the current public health guidance on social distancing. I expect these meetings to be held in late November or early December, and I will write to you again once the dates for these have been agreed.

I do appreciate that this will be a difficult process for you, and that you may have concerns about whether your relative was subject to any abuse during the time they spent in the hospital. I also appreciate that not everyone may wish to discuss this in a public forum, so I am also putting in place arrangements that will allow you to provide your views on a one-to-one basis, if that is your preference. Further detail on these arrangements will also be provided shortly.

In the interim if you wish to discuss any concerns, please contact Eleanor Good, Patient Client Council in the first instance on 028 9536 1708 or via email at [Eleanor.Good@pcc-ni.net](mailto:Eleanor.Good@pcc-ni.net).

I hope this update is helpful, and I would strongly encourage you to participate in this work, in whatever way you feel comfortable, so that your views will help shape the remit and scope of the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robin', is positioned below the text 'Yours sincerely'.

**Robin Swann MLA**  
**Minister for Health**