

NEWS FLASH

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Major changes to NI health and social care take effect

Health and Social Care reform became a reality today as a number of new HSC organisations were established replacing previous health and social care bodies.

Health and Social Care has now completed its structural reform as part of the Review of Public Administration. The first phase involved the establishment of the 5 new integrated HSC Trusts (replacing 18 Trusts) and the retention of the NI Ambulance Trust 1 April 2007. In all 38 health bodies will be reduced to 17.

Today sees the establishment of the new Health and Social Care Board, the Public Health Agency, the Patient and Client Council and the Business Services Organisation - all are fully functional and held their inaugural board meetings today.

The key functions of each body are:-

- The single **Health and Social Care Board for Northern Ireland** will replace the existing four Boards. It will focus on commissioning, resource management and performance management and improvement. It will identify and meet the needs of the local population through its five Local Commissioning Groups that will cover the same geographical area as the HSC Trusts.

Chair: Dr Ian Clements and **Chief Executive:** John Compton

- The new **Public Health Agency** will incorporate and build on the work of the Health Promotion Agency, but will have much wider responsibility for health protection and screening and health improvement and development to improve overall public health and address existing health inequalities.

Chair: Mary McMahon and **Chief Executive:** Eddie Rooney

- The new **Business Services Organisation** will provide a range of support functions for the whole of the health and social care system. The Central Services Agency will be dissolved and the majority of its services, along with other functions, will be undertaken by the new organisation.

Chair: Alex Coleman and **Chief Executive:** David Bingham

- The single **Patient and Client Council** will replace the current Health and Social Services Councils, with five local offices operating in the

same geographical areas as the existing Trusts, thus providing a strong voice for patients, clients and carers.

Chair: John Keanie and **Chief Executive** – Maeve Hully

Other changes that come into effect today see the functions of the Mental Health Commission will transfer to the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority. The NI Medical Regional Medical Physics Agency will also merge with the Belfast HSC Trust. The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service is unaffected.

In launching the new organisations in Farset International on the Springfield Road, West Belfast, Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety Michael McGimpsey MLA said:

“It is quite clear that in Northern Ireland, health is everyone's number one priority. It is important therefore that we are fit for purpose to meet the ever-increasing demands and expectations of a growing population. The reforms that come into effect today will help us do just that.”

He also stated that at the heart of the new structure will be public health, reducing health inequalities and *“engaging all of us in decisions about our own health”*.

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