

## **FOREWORD**

In the summer of 2002, I was invited to chair this independent Review, commencing in October of that year. Shortly after this Professor Roy McClelland was appointed Deputy Chair. It took about 6 months to clarify our terms of reference, guiding principles, high-level objectives, strategic framework and even our title, which became “The Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability (Northern Ireland)”. By March 2003 it was clear that the work consisted of several interlinked reviews under one overarching title, and encompassing policy, services and legislation.

The Review Steering Committee presides over the work of ten major Expert Working Committees. Four Committees commenced their work by April 2003, and a further six by November 2003. In consultation with Government, we agreed to produce our reports separately in a phased manner.

This report on Adult Mental Health will be followed by the report of the Learning Disability Committee in the Autumn, with further reports available at various times through to Summer 2005. The Committee likely to have the longest life is Legal Issues, because of the complexity of the task around replacing the Mental Health (NI) Order 1986, and to consider any legal implications arising from the recommendations of the other Committees.

All of our Committees have adopted an evidence-based approach, drawing upon existing relevant information and research, and where necessary commissioning research. Exemplars of best practice local, national and international, is informing our Reports.

We have maintained a clear vision for mental health and learning disability services in this jurisdiction. Widespread consultations with stakeholders has endorsed our vision and the strategic direction of the Review. A feature of the Review process is the contribution of Users and Carers across both Mental Health and Learning Disability. Their insights, advice and guidance continue to be invaluable. The recommendations for service reform have been underpinned by a sound economic appraisal carried out by our Needs and Resources Committee. As recent research by the Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health has shown, the cost of mental health needs of the people of Northern Ireland are considerable and extend well beyond the direct cost of health and social care.

I thank all involved in this Review for their efforts. An immense amount of work is in progress.

**David R Bamford (Professor)**

**Chairman**

June 2004

