

Foreword

As Minister of Health I am determined to ensure that services are safe, improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities and, at the same time, make best use of available resources. In addition, I believe it is important that services, as far as possible, meet the needs and preferences of people and are accessible to all regardless of where they live or who they are.

To make this happen, my Department has started work on the development of a set of Service Frameworks which set out explicit standards for health and social care to be used by patients, clients, carers and their wider families to help them understand the standard of care they can expect to receive. These Frameworks will also be used by health and social care organisations in planning and delivering services.

The first group of Frameworks which we are developing focus on the most significant causes of ill health and disability in Northern Ireland – cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, cancer, mental health and learning disability. Two further service frameworks - children and young people, and older people are also being developed.

This first Service Framework is for Cardiovascular Health and Wellbeing and was chosen as first service framework because this disease group is the biggest cause of death and disability in Northern Ireland.

The Framework sets standards in relation to the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, care, rehabilitation and palliative care of individuals and communities at a greater risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

Each standard is supported by levels of performance to be achieved over 3 years and the Framework will be subject to regular review and refinement in the light of new evidence. This will ensure that it provides a sound basis for continued improvement in the quality of health and social care services.

The development of this Framework has been an inclusive process involving people from all aspects of health and social care, patients, clients and carers, all of whose support has been invaluable.

The application of the standards set out in this Framework has the potential to transform the quality of service provision in relation to cardiovascular disease for all our people.

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