

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

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## **MINISTER INVESTS £12MILLION IN BETTER SERVICES FOR HEART DISEASE**

Health Minister, Michael McGimpsey has set new standards for the treatment and care of people suffering and at risk from cardiovascular disease.

Cardiovascular disease is the class of diseases that involve the heart or blood vessels.

Mr. McGimpsey said that £12million was being invested in the Cardiovascular Framework, which sets out 44 standards in relation to the prevention, assessment, diagnosis, treatment, care, rehabilitation and palliative care of people and communities who currently have, or are at greater risk of developing, cardiovascular disease.

The Framework has been issued for consultation until the end of September 2008.

Speaking during a visit to the Cardiac Unit at the Royal Victoria Hospital, the Minister said: **“In 2005, 4,633 people died from cardiovascular disease. Many of the diseases that affect the cardiovascular system have a similar cause and risk factors. This framework has been developed to provide an integrated approach to transform the quality of service for people who have been diagnosed or are at risk from cardiovascular disease.**

**“In order to ensure that the framework is effective, I have allocated a total of £12million over the next three years and then £7million recurrently from year four.**

**“This investment, along with the £14million I announced recently for stroke services, is a total of £26million which will have a significant impact on developing better services and consequently improve the health of people at risk from cardiovascular disease.”**

The Minister outlined the type of projects which will be supported by this investment: **“There will be more heart failure nurses who will enable people with heart failure to maintain their independence and avoid unnecessary admissions to hospital.**

**“There will be better access to cardiac rehabilitation services which will improve the quality of life of people after heart attack. People who have suffered heart attacks will get more timely access to investigations and therefore reduce the time they spend in hospital. And there will be an additional 700 cardiac procedures and cardiological interventions.”**

He added: **“An unhealthy diet and lack of exercise as well as smoking are major causes of cardiovascular disease. People can make healthier choices about what they eat and the exercise they take to reduce the risk of developing serious illnesses.”**