

**FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH**



Department of

**Health**

An Roinn Sláinte

Máinnystrie O Poustie

[www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

**FROM ROBIN SWANN MLA**

**DATE** 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022

**TO: All HSC & ALB staff**

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Colleagues

Ahead of the current Assembly being dissolved, I wanted to once again thank everyone across the HSC family and other DoH arm's length bodies for all their work in the past two years.

As the attached press release issued today states, (Annex A), this has been a hugely challenging and stressful period.

I have seen up close the dedication of staff, the long and exhausting hours put in, the incredible commitment and expertise.

I am deeply grateful to each one of you for your contribution.

The task of rebuilding our services is a daunting one. However, I am confident that better times are achievable.

My confidence is bolstered by the fact that the system is blessed with such great staff.

Yours sincerely

**Robin Swann**  
**Minister of Health**

**PRESS RELEASE**

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

24 March 2022

**Swann reflects on past two years as Health Minister**

We can build a better future for health and social care services in Northern Ireland, Health Minister Robin Swann has vowed.

Ahead of the current Northern Ireland Assembly being dissolved, the Minister today reflected on his two years in office.

**“It has been an extremely stressful and challenging period for our health and social care system and all those who work in it,”** he said.

**“The pandemic has left deep scars on our health service and wider society that will take many years to heal.**

**“As we marked National Day of Reflection on Wednesday, our thoughts were very much with all those who lost loved ones to COVID-19. This solemn event also served to remind us that the threat from the virus has not disappeared.”**

Mr Swann continued: **“There is colossal job of work ahead of us to rebuild health and social care services. Many of the serious problems long predated the pandemic but have undoubtedly been made even worse by it.**

**“However, we must not surrender to despair about the future. I have the utmost faith in the great people who work in health and social care. In the last two years, I have witnessed time and time again the excellence, dedication, innovation and resilience of staff.**

**“We saw how, despite all the pressures, the system was able to successfully deliver an unprecedented mass vaccination programme, bringing us real hope in the battle against COVID.”**

The Minister added: **“Rebuilding services will of course require sustained investment, reform and political stability.**

**“I am confident we now have the necessary building blocks in place for the required large-scale reconstruction work. These include the newly published cancer strategy for Northern Ireland, as well as the strategies for mental health and dealing with elective care waiting lists. The public consultations on social care and urgent and emergency care, will similarly chart a new direction for those vital areas.**

**“Important progress and initiatives have also been achieved in other areas. These include the appointment of a Mental Health Champion, the passing of Daithi’s law on organ donation, and the banning of smoking in cars when children are present.**

**“We must continue to make things better. We have a health service worth defending and it has been one of the greatest privileges of my life to serve it.”**

**Notes to editors:**

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