

26 November 2025

Neurology Recall (2016-2025) Pertains to FOI/35102

1. Equality and Human-Rights Screening

You confirmed that “no Equality Screenings, EQIAs or Human Rights Impact Assessments were undertaken.”

Please confirm:

- **Whether the Trust sought or received advice or exemption from the Department of Health regarding this omission**

The Trust was directed by the Department of Health to undertake a review of neurology patients. The review was not subject to an equality screening.

- **Who authorised proceeding with the recall and triage process without Section 75 or Human Rights Act compliance**

The review was carried out and prioritised on the basis of clinical need.

- **Whether any retrospective screening or risk assessment has since been Undertaken**

No retrospective screening or risk assessment has been undertaken in relation to the Neurology Recall.

2. Classification and Coding of Functional Diagnoses

You stated that for cohorts 2 and 3, ICD-10 codes were used and that “patients with a diagnosis of a functional neurological condition were offered different forms of support.”

Please provide:

- **The ICD-10 codes used for those classifications and which clinical staff or committees agreed their use.**

The ICD-10 code classifications were used in accordance to the International Statistical Classification and Related Health Problems, World Health Organisation. The classification for Functional Neurological Diagnoses used was; F44. For the purposes of the Neurology Recall Cohort 2B and Cohort 3,

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it was agreed with the Health & Social Care Board (HSCB) that ICD-10 codes be incorporated on the Consultation Outcome Proforma for data analysis.

- **Any protocols, guidance, or briefing papers that defined when a recall patient should be coded as “functional.”**

There was no protocol, guidance or briefing paper relating to the coding of a patient’s diagnosis as “functional”. Each individual patient was given an ICD-10 code classification once their consultant made a clinical decision on their diagnosis.

- **The number of recall patients coded under these categories, or an explanation of why this data is not centrally retrievable given the use of electronic systems.**

At the time of the neurology recall the Trust’s electronic Patient Administration System did not capture ICD-10 data for any outpatient activity. ICD-10 codes were not used as part of Neurology Recall Cohort 1 or Cohort 2A. Therefore, this information is not held electronically or centrally. Patients who attended for a Neurology Recall (Cohort 2B and Cohort 3) appointment will have been provided with one or more (in instances where a patient had more than one diagnosis) ICD-10 codes.

3. Pre-Recall and Oversight Structures

Your reply states that “there was no Trust steering/oversight group relevant to recall pathways/triage/classification.”

Please therefore specify:

- **What formal or informal steering, oversight or advisory groups Belfast Trust staff participated in prior to the public recall (2016-2018).**

A Neurology Recall Oversight Group was set up in April 2018, prior to the recall of patients.

- **The titles, membership, and meeting dates of any such groups or committees, including but not limited to those that discussed Dr Michael Watt, patient safety, or neurology service governance.**

The titles of attendees at the Neurology Recall Oversight Group:

- Dr Cathy Jack, Deputy Chief Executive
- Mrs Bernie Owens, Director
- Mr Peter Watson, Senior Manager, Medical Director’s Office

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- Dr Mark Mitchelson, Chair of Division Neurology
- Mr Frank Young, Co-Director Unscheduled & Acute Services
- Dr John Craig, Clinical Director Neurosciences
- Mr Gerry Atkinson, Service Manager Neurosciences
- Mrs Clare Lundy, Assistant Service Manager Neurosciences
- Mrs Joanne Westwood, Assistant Service Manager Neurosciences
- Mrs Brid Farrell, Deputy Director of Public Health
- Dr Miriam McCarthy, Director of Commissioning HSCB
- Mrs Bronagh Dalzell, Corporate Communications Co-Director
- Mrs Jennifer Thompson, Planning and Performance Co-Director
- Mrs Denise Lynd, Health Records Service Manager
- Mrs Patricia McAteer, Health Records Assistant Service Manager
- Mrs Marion Armstrong, Patient Access Manager
- Mrs Caroline Parkes, Occupational Health Manager
- Mrs Gillian Allen, Planning and Performance Manager
- Mr Seamus Trainor, Logistic/Support Services Manager
- Mr Jonathan Sims, Information Technology Service Manager
- Dr Adrian Mairs, Director of Public Health, PHA
- Mr Iain Deboys, Assistant Director of Commissioning, HSCB
- Band 7 <5
- Band 6 <5

There was a total of 18 Neurology Recall Oversight Meetings:

16 April 2018
20 April 2018
24 April 2018
26 April 2018
27 April 2018
30 April 2018
01 May 2018
03 May 2018
08 May 2018
09 May 2018
09 May 2018
17 May 2018
24 May 2018
01 June 2018
07 June 2018
14 June 2018
21 June 2018
28 June 2018

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There was a Regional Coordination Group set up in 2018 by the Department of Health (now Strategic, Planning and Performance - SPPG) which provided oversight for the Neurology Recall in 2018. The SPPG, as organisers, would need to be contacted for this information: foi.sppg@hscni.net

- **Whether Belfast Trust representatives were members of the RQIA Neurology Review Steering Group, PSNRAG (Public Safety Neurology Recall Advisory Group), or any similar multi-agency structures before or during the recall period.**

No Belfast Trust representatives were members of the RQIA Neurology Review Steering Group, PSNRAG or any similar multi-agency structures before or during the recall period.