

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride



The Chair and Board of Invest in ME Research

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Your Ref:
Our Ref:
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Dear Chair and Board,

Thank you for your email of 13 December 2018.

I attended the annual conference of Hope 4 ME & Fibro Northern Ireland (a local charity devoted to the condition) in September past. Consequently, I am mindful of the emergent evidence and the plight of sufferers. I was impressed by the presentations on the night and, consequently, of the need to maintain an open mind on the nature of the condition and its treatment.

In Northern Ireland, it is intended that a ME/CFS clinical specialist will shortly be recruited. Developing the job plan for this post has involved clinicians with an interest in this condition and service users, carers and voluntary organisations such as Hope 4 ME & Fibro Northern Ireland (a local charity devoted to the condition). The post has been advertised nationally and the appointment process is underway, with an announcement anticipated in the near future.

When appointed this clinical specialist will lead the development of the ME/CFS service in Northern Ireland and support GPs in the diagnosis and treatment of patients. This will be a significant step towards equity of access to ME/CFS services across Northern Ireland. At present care for ME/CFS patients is provided by a range of health and social care professionals from different clinical disciplines. Formalising arrangements for multi-disciplinary team care for these patients will be a priority for the newly appointed ME/CFS specialist.

For non-clinical support, the Northern Ireland Neurological Charities Alliance (NINCA) offers information, advice and support for adults living with a neurological condition. It serves patients, relatives and carers right across Northern Ireland offering a friendly, free and confidential service and acts as a single point of contact to help guide users through the range of services available in Northern Ireland. This includes information about relevant charities and voluntary services for people with neurological conditions, answers to access and mobility questions, and information on sports and leisure activities available in Northern Ireland. The care advisors also

provide guidance on benefits that patients and families may be entitled to and other supportive services which can improve a patient's quality of life. They work closely with local health providers and organisations to offer a co-ordinated service to meet the individual needs of patients with neurological conditions.

I hope you find this information useful.

Yours sincerely



DR MICHAEL McBRIDE
Chief Medical Officer