



12-22 Linenhall Street
Belfast
BT2 8BS

[REDACTED]
ICP Department
Health and Social Care Board,
Tower Hill,
Armagh
BT60 1JD

29th May 2014

Dear [REDACTED]

Re: Improving Dementia Diagnosis Rates in NI

We are writing to you in our capacity as co-chairs of the regional Dementia Strategy Implementation Group (DSIG) regarding published data on dementia prevalence rates (QOF).

Diagnostic rates for dementia have increased over the past two years and it is encouraging to note that two of our local HSC Trusts were ranked within the top five highest ranking authorities for diagnosis across UK in 2012.

The regional diagnostic rate (63.2%) is significantly higher than the UK average however, figures show considerable variations across all five Trusts, from 52% (NHSCT) to 75.1% (BHSCT). Please refer to the attached document on diagnostic rates.

These figures have attracted a lot of media and political attention recently and in response to several enquiries, the Board has emphasised its commitment to further continued improvement in diagnosis rates.

We recognise the difficulties of getting a diagnosis, especially in the early stages however, a timely assessment and early diagnosis can provide access to information and support that maximises the person's ability to live well with dementia.

The regional strategy "*Improving Dementia Services in Northern Ireland*" (2011) addresses the importance of early diagnosis and includes a

recommendation on the development of criteria and clear protocols for referral from GPs to memory services.

Over the past two years the Board has provided an additional £2m (recurrent) towards the development and enhancement of memory services. A key objective for the regional Dementia Strategy Implementation Group would be to raise diagnosis rates to 75% and above, across all Trusts.

In keeping with the regional commissioning plan and the specification for frail older people, can you please advise us by **Friday 27th June 2014** of the plans you are making to improve diagnostic rates in your locality.

Yours sincerely

Seamus McErlean
Seamus.McErlean@hscni.net
Social Care Commissioning Lead
HSCB

Eleanor Ross
Eleanor.Ross@hscni.net
Nurse Consultant
PHA

cc:

