

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

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MINISTER SETS GOALS FOR BETTER HEALTH AND PERSONAL SOCIAL SERVICES

Funding allocations for health and social care over the next three years must deliver the best possible outcomes for patients, Health Minister, Michael McGimpsey said today.

Resource allocations to Boards for 2008 to 2011 have increased by 14% following the Minister's successful negotiation of extra funding in this year's budget. The four health boards are now required to produce detailed spending plans which must achieve key targets in improving services for patients and deliver on efficiencies.

He said: **"Almost £3billion has been allocated to Boards for each of the next three years. This represents some £355million of additional funding which I will expect to be put to the best possible use. The allocations for each of the four health boards do not just take account of population size but also address the needs of the population. This is to ensure that areas with, for example, a growing population will have the funding to deliver appropriate and rapid services, tailor-made to meet the particular needs of their community."**

"As part of the budget settlement, I have ensured that my Department is the only one to have secured flexibility in the way it spends its funding – an element of this flexibility will transfer to Boards and Trusts. However, there will be no flexibility in achieving the efficiencies and delivering on challenging targets which have been set by my Department and those in the Programme for Government."

Key goals contained in the Department's allocation of funding to the Health and Social Care Service (HSC) are those dealing with; mental health and learning disabilities; new arrangements for Primary Care; improved access to, and increased capacity in, hospital and community services; improving family and child care support; raising the quality of services and the efficiency of their delivery.

Mr McGimpsey said: **"Although these resources cover a wide range of services, for all sections of the community, I am particularly keen to see real progress on implementing the recommendations of the Bamford review of mental health and learning disability. I want to see real improvements in the level, quality and delivery of services for this most vulnerable group."**

"Significant funding has been made available to the HSC for the next three years and I expect it to be spent effectively in a way that will bring about real improvements in people's lives."

"Delivering on these improvements at a time of major upheaval and restructuring will be a real challenge. However, I am confident that our staff remain committed to the ideals and values of the HSC and are well placed to deliver these priorities which will help deliver the world-class health service we all deserve."