



**Urology Services Inquiry**

# **Guide to Completing the Urology Services Inquiry Questionnaire**

[www.urologyservicesinquiry.org.uk](http://www.urologyservicesinquiry.org.uk)

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## Background to the work of the Urology Services Inquiry

The Inquiry Chair is Christine Smith QC who is a Senior Barrister, called to the Bar of Northern Ireland in 1985 and took silk in 2011. She is assisted in her task by Dr Sonia Swart, a medical governance expert and Mr Damian Hanbury, a consultant urologist.

The Urology Services Inquiry (USI) commenced its work on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and now wishes to hear from the public to assist with its investigations. The Inquiry would like to hear in particular from patients and/or their family members regarding concerns or complaints that they may have had in relation to the provision of Urology Services within the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. The remit of our work is set out in detail in the USI Terms of Reference which can be accessed on our website [www.urologyservicesinquiry.org.uk](http://www.urologyservicesinquiry.org.uk)

This guide is to assist you in understanding our work and to provide you with the necessary information to make an informed decision on whether or not you wish to complete the USI Questionnaire and how to complete it.

We expect that it will be of interest to patients and/or their families who have availed of these services but we also welcome comment from anyone else who may have had concerns regarding Urology Services whether they brought these concerns to anyone's attention or not. This would include staff or others who worked in or alongside the health service and all those healthcare providers or others connected in any way to the work of urology services within the SHSCT.

The USI inquiry is independent of all other organisations and is inquisitorial in nature.

## What this Inquiry is investigating

This inquiry is investigating whether appropriate action was taken in light of the information that was known, or ought to have been known, by those with responsibility for decision making and oversight. Following investigation into this matter the Inquiry intend to issue a report with recommendations and learning points that can be identified.

Our Terms of Reference set out what this Inquiry is investigating in detail but in short the Inquiry is investigating whether the Southern Health and Social Care Trust's handling of complaints or concerns brought to its attention prior to May 2020 were adequate and whether there was anything that should have alerted the Trust to instigate an earlier more thorough investigation. The Inquiry is to evaluate the corporate and clinical governance procedures and arrangements within the Trust and the circumstances which led to the Trust conducting a "lookback review" of patients seen by the urology consultant, Mr Aidan O'Brien, for the time period January 2019 to May 2020. Our focus will be on the governance of patient care and safety within the Trust's urology specialty.

It is likely that these investigations will result in the Inquiry reviewing the role and input of other organisations such as the Health and Social Care Board, the Public Health Agency, the Department of Health, the Regulation Quality and Improvement Authority (RQIA) and independent care providers.

## What the Inquiry is NOT investigating

- Our Terms of Reference clearly state that this Inquiry is NOT tasked to make decisions on the clinical practice or employment status of Mr Aidan O'Brien. That is a matter for the General Medical Council (GMC) and it would be entirely inappropriate for this Inquiry to encroach on the GMC's remit.
- This Inquiry is NOT responsible for the conduct of the "lookback review" which is the responsibility of the Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

- The Urology Services Inquiry would also like to make it clear that it is NOT involved in any compensation scheme for anyone who may be dissatisfied with the level of Urology service received.

## **Other related reviews**

There are a number of other reviews and investigations currently ongoing and relating to either Urology Services or arising out of the same circumstances which led to the establishment of this Inquiry (e.g. the GMC investigation). Whilst some of the reviews and investigations may overlap with the work of this Inquiry and some of their outcomes may be of interest to the work of this Inquiry at a later stage, the work of this Inquiry is distinct from, and independent of, any other reviews.

## **Information of relevance from the public**

The Inquiry is specifically interested in concerns or complaints raised relating to patient care and safety within Urology Services and it is in this area that we invite input from the public.

## **How can you assist?**

### **Completing Section A – Personal details**

By completing this questionnaire you can greatly assist the work of this Inquiry. We would encourage you to complete all questions that are relevant to you. Section A is a request for personal details. If you are providing information in relation to a deceased relative (or responding on behalf of a patient or relative who cannot for whatever reason reply on their own behalf) you should discuss the position with other relatives and agree in advance that there are no objections to information being shared with this Inquiry. There is a box to tick to confirm that you have the necessary agreement(s) or permission.

## **Completing Section B – Contact with Urology Services**

We have requested details of all contact with Urology Services within the Trust and sought dates of all contact. We would ask that you attempt to give some indication of when you were in contact with Urology Services even if you cannot recall the exact dates of your attendance.

## **Completing Section C – Details of concerns raised/complaints reported**

This section of the questionnaire allows you to provide information relating to any concerns you raised in the past relating to Urology Services. You should complete this section if you raised complaints or concerns regardless of whether you did this formally or informally. Please provide as much information as possible. You can continue on a separate sheet if necessary which you should attach to the questionnaire once completed.

If you hold documentation or can obtain documentation relating to the information you have provided (eg. if you forwarded a letter of complaint or received any response(s) to your complaint(s), please attach a copy of that documentation to your questionnaire. We would ask that you do NOT forward the originals of these documents to the Inquiry at this stage but ensure that you retain them in your possession.

We do not require you to forward your (or your relatives) medical notes and records when you return this questionnaire so please do not send these documents to us.

## **Completing Section D – Details of concerns held but NOT raised/reported**

Even if you did not report your concern(s) or complaint(s) either informally or formally we still want to hear from you if you had concerns but, for whatever reason, failed to raise them at the time. If you fall into this category the Inquiry is particularly keen to understand why the concerns were not raised. We would like to know and to better understand what led to those concerns not being shared with others. The Inquiry will not judge you for not raising these concerns at the time. We understand that there

may have been many reasons for a failure to raise a concern at the time. Please provide as much information as possible and attach any additional sheets to the questionnaire once completed.

### **Completing Section E – Personal impact/additional information**

This Inquiry is very interested to hear how your experience impacted upon you or your relative personally and whilst we appreciate this may be a difficult section to complete we would encourage you to do so as the information provided will greatly assist our work. If you require additional sheets to provide this personal impact statement or any other additional information that you want this Inquiry to consider then please attach these additional sheets to the questionnaire once completed.

### **Completing Section F – Sharing information/Other related reviews**

It is important to explain that there are a number of other reviews and investigations currently ongoing and relating to Urology Services within the Trust or arising out of the same circumstances which led to this Inquiry being established. Whilst some of these reviews or investigations may overlap with the work of this Inquiry and some of their outcomes may be of interest to our work at a later stage, the work of this Inquiry is distinct from and entirely independent of other reviews.

### **Completing Section G – Signature**

We would ask you to ensure that you have signed and dated the questionnaire when completed. Please also ensure that you print your name in block capitals so that we can ensure we have your correct details on our records.

## Completing Section H - Returning your questionnaire

Completed questionnaires can be emailed to [evidence@usi.org.uk](mailto:evidence@usi.org.uk) or returned by post to:-

The Urology Services Inquiry  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor Bradford Court  
1 Bradford Court  
Belfast  
BT8 6RB

## Relevant USI documents

The following documents are available on the Inquiry website [www.urologyservicesinquiry.org.uk](http://www.urologyservicesinquiry.org.uk) which you may find of assistance in advance of completing this questionnaire:

- Terms of Reference
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Privacy Notice

## Contact details – help and support

We appreciate that completing this questionnaire may be a difficult task for some and we are happy to help in any way we can to assist with its completion.

If help and support is required please do not hesitate to contact us directly either by email at [info@usi.org.uk](mailto:info@usi.org.uk) or on our contact telephone number 028 90251005.