

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

HSS(MD) 14/2019

For Action:

Chief Executives of HSC Board, PHA and BSO

(for distribution to all relevant staff)

Chief Executives HSC Trusts

(for distribution to all relevant staff)

All General Practitioners and GP Locums *(for onward distribution to relevant practice staff)*

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Your Ref:

Our Ref: HSS(MD) 14/2019

Date: 25 June 2019

Dear Colleague

STANDARDS FOR THE NORTHERN IRELAND BOWEL CANCER SCREENING PROGRAMME

ACTION REQUIRED

The Public Health Agency, Health and Social Care Board, Business Service Organisation and Health and Social Care Trusts to note the Bowel Cancer Screening Programme revised standards have been endorsed by the Department of Health and the Northern Ireland Screening Committee as the standards to be adopted by the Northern Ireland Bowel Cancer Screening Programme.

The Public Health Agency, Health and Social Care Board, Business Service Organisation and Health and Social Care Trusts should work towards reporting on all of the standards and should ensure that the Northern Ireland Bowel Cancer Screening Programme meets these standards.

The Public Health Agency should develop and maintain appropriate external quality assurance arrangements. The Health and Social Care Trusts should develop and maintain appropriate internal quality assurance arrangements and implement quality assurance recommendations made by the Public Health Agency.

Summary

I am writing to inform you that the Department of Health and the Northern Ireland Screening Committee (NISC) have formally endorsed the revised national standards for the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme updated in August 2018 as the standards to be

adopted by the Northern Ireland Bowel Cancer Screening Programme. They are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bowel-cancer-screening-programme-standards/bowel-cancer-screening-programme-standards-valid-for-data-collected-from-1-april-2018>

It is recognised that the programme is currently unable to report on a number of these standards and that work will be required to deliver this capability.

Background

The aim of the Bowel Cancer Screening Programme is to decrease mortality from colorectal cancer in the general population through early detection, appropriate monitoring and treatment. The programme offers screening every two years to all men and women aged 60 to 74 to detect bowel cancer at an early stage when treatment is more likely to be effective.

Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance (QA) is an essential component of screening programmes. In order to maximise benefit and minimise harm to the public, it is necessary that such programmes should operate within the agreed standards. The Public Health Agency (PHA) should provide an external QA function to the Bowel Cancer Screening Programme. HSC Trusts should develop and maintain appropriate internal QA arrangements and implement quality assurance recommendations made by the PHA.

Monitoring

The Northern Ireland Bowel Cancer screening programme should be subject to ongoing quality assurance and audit. These new standards are to be adopted to support performance monitoring of the programme.

Appropriate fail-safe mechanisms should be in place to ensure that screening is offered to all eligible men and women ensuring those who require referral are followed up in a timely and appropriate way.

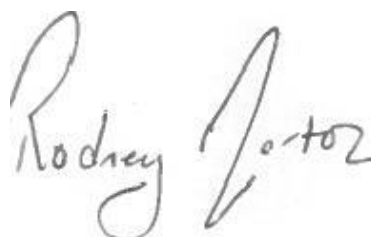
Further Information

Further information can be obtained from Dr Carol Beattie, Senior Medical Officer, Department of Health – email: carol.beattie@health-ni.gov.uk

Yours sincerely



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<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/professional-medical-and-environmental-health-advice/hssmd-letters-and-urgent-communications>