

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride
HSS(MD)3/2016



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

PATIENT SAFETY ALERT

For action by:

Chief Executives, HSC Trusts
Chief Executive, HSC Board
Chief Executive RQIA
Chief Executive, NIMDTA
Chief Executive PHA

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Our Ref: HSS(MD)3/2016
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Implementation:

Immediately and to be completed by
31 March 2016

Summary of Contents:

The purpose of this circular is to highlight the challenge of antimicrobial resistance and to signpost toolkits that can support the HSC in improving antimicrobial stewardship in both primary and secondary care.

Dear Colleagues

ADDRESSING ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ANTIMICROBIAL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMME

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) has risen alarmingly over the last 40 years and inappropriate use of antimicrobials is a key driver¹. The consequences of AMR include increased treatment failure for common infections and decreased treatment options where antibiotics are vital, such as during certain cancer treatments². Antimicrobial stewardship is key to combating AMR and is an important element of the Strategy for Tackling Antimicrobial Resistance³ and the UK Five Year Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy⁴.

Antimicrobial stewardship embodies an organisational and system-wide approach to promoting and monitoring the judicious use of antimicrobials by:

¹ Start Smart - Then Focus. Antimicrobial Stewardship Toolkit for English Hospitals (2015);

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/antimicrobial-stewardship-start-smart-then-focus>

² Davies S. Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer 2011: Volume Two. Infections and the Rise of Antimicrobial Resistance (2013). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officer-annualreport-volume-2>

³ <https://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/star-doc.pdf>

⁴ UK Five Year Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy 2013 to 2018; (2013) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-5-year-antimicrobial-resistance-strategy-2013-to-2018>

- optimising therapy for individual patients;
- preventing overuse and misuse; and
- minimising the development of resistance at patient and community levels.

This stage 2 alert was jointly issued by Health Education England, NHS England and Public Health England (PHE) in August 2015 to highlight the challenge of AMR and to signpost the toolkits developed by PHE to support the NHS in improving antimicrobial stewardship in both primary and secondary care. The alert was distributed at that time by the Public Health Agency (PHA) and Health and Social Care Board for information to healthcare professionals across the HSC and is available at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/psa-amr-stewardship-prog.pdf>

The alert highlights the TARGET (Treat Antibiotics Responsibly, Guidance, Education, Tools) toolkit which includes a range of resources to support prescribers specifically in primary care settings. The toolkit has been refreshed recently and is available on the Royal College of GPs website at:

<http://www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/toolkits/target-antibiotics-toolkit.aspx>

To support GPs and other healthcare providers in improving antimicrobial stewardship, in addition to the toolkits developed by PHE, local stewardship resources are available on the PHA's website and on the primary care intranet on GP computers at the links below:

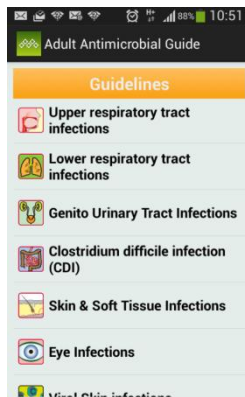
<http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/antibiotic-awareness>

http://primarycare.hscni.net/PharmMM_PubHealth_Antimicrobials.htm

The publication Northern Ireland Management of Infection Guidelines for Primary Care 2015, which is intended for use also in community care settings, is now available. The guidelines can be accessed in one of the digital formats below, including through smartphone app. A hardcopy booklet and summary of the refreshed guidelines will also be available and widely distributed early this year.

To access the guidelines on a smartphone or tablet:

1. Download the free '**MICROGUIDE**' app in the App Store or Google Play-search for it by name or use the QR codes/links below
2. Select '**Northern Ireland Primary Care**' when prompted for trust.
3. Use the app to support and guide your prescribing
4. You will be automatically prompted to update if any changes are made



<http://kaywa.me/T1hzb>

<http://kaywa.me/7leWs>

The content from the App is also available **via Web Browser on PC/Desktop** through the [NI Formulary website](#) and the direct link below:

<http://cms.horizonsp.co.uk/viewer/nipha>

In secondary care settings, antimicrobial prescribing guidelines are accessible on Trusts' websites, and in some Trusts are also available to download as an app.

[Start Smart - Then Focus](#), an antimicrobial stewardship toolkit for English hospitals, provides an outline of evidence-based antimicrobial stewardship practice for use in secondary care settings. The toolkit provides information on strategies to improve antibiotic use within secondary care as well as suggested audits to improve practice. It states that 'improving antimicrobial prescribing and stewardship is dependent on strong clinical leadership. Within local Trusts, medical teams, in particular consultants, should take a leadership role for antimicrobial quality improvement in their specialist areas. This should be done in collaboration with a consultant microbiologist/infectious diseases specialist and the antimicrobial pharmacist. Such initiatives should also seek to engage with junior doctors in order to develop a wider understanding of antimicrobial stewardship throughout the organisation'.

Action Required

Chief Executives of HSC Trusts should:

- bring this letter and alert to the attention of those holding leadership roles for antimicrobial stewardship in their Trusts;
- review resources signposted in this alert and identify how these resources and local resources can be used to support your local antimicrobial stewardship programme; and
- ensure that all staff are aware of the key antimicrobial messages and resources relevant to their clinical practice.

Chief Executive, RQIA should:

- disseminate this letter which provides a link to local resources and the alert to all relevant independent sector providers.

Chief Executive, PHA should:

- disseminate this letter and the alert to all relevant staff

Chief Executive, HSCB should:

- disseminate this letter which provides a link to local resources and the alert to all relevant Primary Care providers, community pharmacies and General Practitioners, and
- with PHA, consider this letter through the existing arrangements for monitoring implementation of patient safety alerts.

Chief Executive, NIMDTA should:

- disseminate this letter which provides a link to local resources and the alert to doctors in training in all relevant specialities.

Yours sincerely



Dr Michael McBride
Chief Medical Officer



Mrs Charlotte McArdle
Chief Nursing Officer



Dr Mark Timoney
Chief Pharmaceutical
Officer

For Information to:

Chief Executive, BSO
Director of Public Health/Medical Director, PHA
Director of Nursing, PHA
Director of Integrated Care, HSCB
Dir of Performance Management & Service Improvement, HSCB
Assistant Director of Performance Management, HSC Board
Safety & Quality Alerts Team, HSC Board
Prof. Sam Porter, Head of Nursing & Midwifery, QUB
Prof. Pascal McKeown, Head of Medical School, QUB
Prof. Donald Burden, Head of Pharmacy School, QUB
Prof. Mike Tomlinson, Head of Social Work School, QUB
Prof. Sean Gorman, QUB
Professor David Woolfson, Head of School of Pharmacy QUB
Dr Owen Barr, Head of School of Nursing, UU
Prof. Paul McCarron, Head of Pharmacy School, UU
Prof. Mary McColgan, Head of Social Work School, UU
Post Graduate Dean, NIMDTA
Staff Tutor of Nursing, Open University
Director, Safety Forum
Lead, NI Medicines Governance Team
NI Medicines Information Service
NI Centre for Pharmacy Learning and Development
Clinical Education Centre

This letter is available on the DHSSPS website at
www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/phealth/professional/cmo_communications.htm