

6th December 2016

Dear Colleague

Updated Guidance from DOH: Early Alert System
Reference: HSC (SQSD) 64/16

The enclosed circular provides updated guidance on the operation of the Early Alert system to ensure that the Department of Health is notified in a timely fashion of significant events which may require the immediate attention of the Minister, Chief Professional Officers or policy leads and /or require urgent regional action by the Department.

FPS practices should notify the HSC Board about events within the services that they provide that meet one or more of the following criteria. The HSC Board will then notify the Department.

- Urgent regional action
- Contacting patients / clients about possible harm
- Press release about harm
- Regional media interest
- Police involvement in investigation
- Events involving children
- Suspension of staff or breach of statutory duty

You will note that the protocol requires a senior person from the practice to **speak in person** to the Director of Integrated Care (or deputy) in the HSC Board in such circumstances. **However, if you are unsure whether the incident meets the required criteria, I**

would encourage you to contact your local office in the first instance and staff will be able to advise you accordingly.

The contact details for local offices are listed below:

Northern Office: Marlene Drummond
Email: Marlene.drummond@hscni.net
Telephone: 028 9536 2823

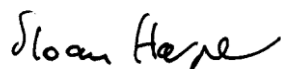
Southern Office: Finola Powell
Email: Finola.powell@hscni.net
Telephone: 028 9536 2135

Belfast /
SE Offices: Denise Taylor
Email: denise.taylor@hscni.net
Telephone: 028 9536 3100

Western Office: Tom Coyle
Email: tom.coyle@hscni.net
Telephone: 028 9536 1052

The next steps and any follow up action can be agreed by the relevant parties and using the content of the information provided, the HSC Board will then complete the Early Alert Proforma and send to the Department within 24 hours of the notification.

Yours sincerely



**DR SLOAN HARPER
DIRECTOR OF INTEGRATED CARE**

CC: Dr Margaret O'Brien
Linda McIlroy
Claire Logan
Marlene Drummond
Finola Powell
Denise Taylor
Tom Coyle