

From the Chief Medical Officer  
Dr Michael McBride



Department of  
**Health**

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

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**HSS(MD) 2/2019**

**For Action:**

Chief Executive PHA

Chief Executives HSC Trusts/NIAS (for onward cascade to all relevant staff)

Chief Executive HSCB (for onward distribution to All General Practitioners, Practice Managers and Community Pharmacies)

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

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Our Ref: HSS(MD) 2/2019

Date: 25 February 2019

Dear Colleague

**THE MISUSE OF DRUGS ACT 1971 (AMENDMENT) ORDER 2018  
THE MISUSE OF DRUGS AND MISUSE OF DRUGS (SAFE CUSTODY)  
(AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2019**

I am writing to advise of forthcoming amendments to Misuse of Drugs legislation. These changes mirror amendments being made in GB.

The above Order, coming into force on 1 April 2019, will bring a number of substances under the control of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 namely Pregabalin and Gabapentin which will become Class C drugs.

The above Regulations, also coming into operation on 1 April 2019, will add Pregabalin and Gabapentin to Schedule 3 to the Misuse of Drugs Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002. Pregabalin and Gabapentin will also be added to Schedule 1 to the Misuse of Drugs (Safe Custody) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 1973, that is, those drugs which are exempted from the statutory secure storage requirements.

On the date that the Regulations come into operation, Pregabalin and Gabapentin will be subject to the usual controls applied to Schedule 3 drugs by the Misuse of Drugs Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Michael McBride**  
**Chief Medical Officer**

## CIRCULATION LIST

Executive Medical Director/Director of Public Health, Public Health Agency  
*(for onward distribution to all relevant health protection staff)*  
Assistant Director Public Health (Health Protection), Public Health Agency  
Director of Nursing, Public Health Agency  
Assistant Director of Pharmacy and Medicines Management, Health and  
Social Care Board *(for cascade to prescribing advisers and onward  
distribution to Community Pharmacies)*  
Directors of Pharmacy HSC Trusts  
Director of Social Care and Children, HSCB  
Director of Integrated Care, HSCB  
Family Practitioner Service Leads, Health and Social Care Board *(for cascade  
to GP Out of Hours services)*  
Medical Directors, HSC Trusts *(for onward distribution to all Consultants,  
Occupational Health Physicians and School Medical Leads)*  
Nursing Directors, HSC Trusts *(for onward distribution to all Community  
Nurses, and Midwives)*  
Directors of Children's Services, HSC Trusts  
RQIA *(for onward transmission to all independent providers including  
independent hospitals)*  
Medicines Management Pharmacists, HSC Board *(for cascade to prescribing  
advisers)*  
Regional Medicines Information Service, Belfast HSC Trust  
Regional Pharmaceutical Procurement Service, Northern HSC Trust  
Donna Fitzsimons, Head of School of Nursing & Midwifery QUB  
Sonja McIlpatrick, Head of School of Nursing, University of Ulster  
Donna Gallagher, Open University  
Caroline Lee, Clinical Education Centre  
Bria Mongan, Director for Adult Services and Prison Healthcare within  
SEHSCT for onward transmission to relevant staff  
University health contacts  
Liam McIvor, BSO

This letter is available on the Department of Health website at  
[https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/professional-medical-and-environmental-health-  
advice/hssmd-letters-and-urgent-communications](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/professional-medical-and-environmental-health-advice/hssmd-letters-and-urgent-communications)