

From the Chief Medical Officer  
Dr Michael McBride



**HSS(MD) 5/2019**

**For Action:**

Chief Executive PHA (for onward cascade to all relevant Public Health Staff)  
Chief Executives HSC Trusts (for onward cascade to all relevant staff)  
Chief Executive HSCB (for onward distribution to GP Medical Advisers)  
All General Practitioners and GP Locums (for onward distribution to relevant practice staff)

Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
BELFAST  
BT4 3SQ

Tel: 028 90 520559  
Fax: 028 90 520573  
Email: [Michael.McBride@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Michael.McBride@health-ni.gov.uk)

Our Ref: HSS(MD) 5/2019  
Date: 15 April 2019

Dear Colleague

**OUTCOME OF REVIEW OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDHOOD VACCINATION DELIVERY MODEL IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

**Action Required**

**Chief Executives must ensure that this information is drawn to the attention of all staff involved in the pre-school vaccination programmes.**

**The HSCB must ensure that this information is cascaded to all General Practitioners immediately.**

In January 2017, in response to some long standing issues regarding the funding of pre-school vaccination programmes, the then Health Minister agreed that the Department should commission a small group to advise on the design of a sustainable and effective pre-school vaccination delivery model for Northern Ireland. The aim of the group was to ensure that adequate funding is directed to the appropriate agents.

The group was led by an independent Chair and included key stakeholders such as the Northern Ireland General Practitioners Council (NIGPC), the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP), Royal College of Nursing (RCN), Community Practitioners and Health Visitors' Association (CPHVA), Trust and PHA nursing representatives as well as a Health Protection representative from the Public Health Agency.

The Group met throughout 2017 to consider the range of issues, and looked at the arrangements that currently exist across Northern Ireland. At the end of that process they produced a report which sets out a number of recommendations. The report has now been approved and accepted by the Permanent Secretary, Richard Pengelly, and can be viewed by accessing the following link: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/review-pre-school-vaccination-delivery-model>

One of the main points agreed by the group was that responsibility for pre-school vaccination should continue to be held by General Practice. The Group also concluded that funding for nursing support should be provided on an equitable basis to all General Practices to allow all of them to employ nursing staff either by practices on an individual basis, by practices on a collective basis, including the potential for employment through GP Federations, or by engagement of nurses through contractual arrangements with Health and Social Care Trusts.

It has been agreed that the recommendation regarding funding for nursing support to enable the delivery of all pre-school childhood vaccinations will be phased in as part of the implementation of the population based staffing model for Primary Care nursing under the Delivering Care Policy Framework, subject to funding. The new arrangements will commence in two GP Federation areas (West Belfast and South West). The Director of Nursing and AHPs in the Public Health Agency will coordinate the implementation of the Review recommendations.

We are very proud to note that Northern Ireland continues to achieve some of the highest uptake rates for pre-school vaccination in the United Kingdom. We fully appreciate that this is due to the hard work and dedication of all those involved in the vaccination process, be they Nurses, GPs, their staff or the HSC staff involved in helping practices deliver the programmes. Vaccination of children plays a vital role in the promotion of health and wellbeing, prevention of deaths and disability from a range of infectious diseases such as diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles and meningitis and we must all ensure we all do our utmost to maintain Northern Ireland's excellent uptake statistics while the changes arising from the Review are implemented.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Michael McBride**  
Chief Medical Officer



**Professor Charlotte McArdle**  
Chief Nursing Officer

## CIRCULATION LIST

Executive Medical Director of Public Health/Medical Director, 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 onward distribution to Community Pharmacies)  
Directors of Pharmacy  
HSC Trusts Director of Social Care and Children,  
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 and practice based pharmacists)  
Regional Medicines Information Service, Belfast HSC Trust  
Regional Pharmaceutical Procurement Service, Northern HSC Trust  
Donna Fitzsimons, Head of School of Nursing and Midwifery QUB  
Sonja McIlfatrick, Head of School of Nursing, University of Ulster  
Caroline Lee, CEC

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>