

From the Chief Medical Officer  
**Dr Michael McBride**



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

[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta  
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÁNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydënter Heisin  
an Fowk Siccar**

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**Circular HSC (SQSD) (NICE) 47/08 CG 45**

Chief Executives of HSS Boards – **for distribution to:**

Directors of Public Health  
Directors of Nursing  
Directors of Pharmaceutical Services  
Directors of Primary Care – for cascade to prescribing and GP  
Advisors

Chief Executives of HSC Trusts – **for distribution to:**

Medical Directors – for cascade to relevant staff  
Directors of Nursing – for cascade to relevant staff  
Directors of Pharmaceutical Services – for cascade to relevant  
staff

Date: 10 October 2008

General Practitioners

HSC Clinical and Social Governance Leads

Chief Executives of HSC Special Agencies and NDPBs

**For Information**

Chairs of HSS Boards  
Chairs of HSC Trusts  
Chief Executive, Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority  
Chief Officers HSC Councils  
Chief Executive/Postgraduate Dean, NIMDTA  
Chief Executive, NIPPET  
Chief Executive, NIPEC  
Chief Executive, RMSC

Dear Colleagues

**NICE Clinical Guideline No 45 – Antenatal and Postnatal Mental Health**

This guideline provides best practice advice on the prediction, detection and treatment of mental disorders in women during pregnancy and the postnatal period (up to 1 year after delivery). The recommendations cover:

- recognising mental health problems during pregnancy and in the first year after giving birth;

- the care and treatment (including drugs and psychological treatments) of women who develop a mental health problem during pregnancy or in the first year after giving birth, and women who have a higher chance of developing a problem at this time;
- the care and treatment (including drugs and psychological treatments) of women who already had a mental health problem before becoming pregnant;
- how families and carers may be able to support women with mental health problems and get support for themselves.

It does not specifically look at:

- the care of women with 'baby blues' in the first few days after giving birth (this is covered in the NICE guideline on postnatal care <http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/CG37>)
- the treatment of physical problems during pregnancy and in the first year after giving birth;
- the treatment of mental health problems at any time other than when planning a pregnancy, during pregnancy and in the first year after giving birth.

DHSSPS advises that this guidance is valid for Northern Ireland and endorses it as good practice guidance for the HSC sector.

The full clinical guideline is available for download at:

<http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/CG45>

The HSC sector also should note that;

1. The Department expects the HSC sector to take account of this guidance in their delivery of services to women during pregnancy and the postnatal period (up to 1 year after delivery);
2. The Department regards this as best practice guidance that HSC bodies must seek to operate. It is recognised that this guidance will have significant implications for HSC services, and that some recommendations (e.g. requiring infrastructural investment) may not be immediately realisable;
3. This advice does not override or replace the individual responsibility of health professionals to make appropriate decisions in the circumstances of their individual patients, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer. This would, for example, include situations where individual patients have other conditions or complications that need to be taken into account in determining whether the NICE guidance is fully appropriate in their case;
4. NICE has developed tools to help organisations implement this guidance. These are available at <http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/CG45> and include costing tools, implementation advice and audit criteria to monitor local practice;
5. This guidance will be updated by NICE as required.

All NICE guidance endorsed by the Department to date can be accessed on the DHSSPS website at <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/sqsd-guidance-nice-guidance>

Circular HSS (PPMD) (NICE)01/006 issued on 30 June 2006 provides further information on the Northern Ireland process for reviewing NICE guidance and further details on the local status of the Institute's guidance. This circular can be accessed at: [http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/nice\\_guidance\\_01-06.pdf](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/nice_guidance_01-06.pdf)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael McBride', written in a cursive style.

**DR MICHAEL MCBRIDE**  
Chief Medical Officer