

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)

**Circular HSC (SQSD) (NICE) 57/09 CG 76**

AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta  
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÁNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin  
an Fowk Siccar**

**Subject: Clinical Guideline No 76 – Medicines  
Adherence**

**Circular Reference: HSC (SQSD) (NICE) 57/2009**

**For action by:**

Chief Executive of HSC Board – **for distribution to:**  
Director of Performance Management & Service Improvement  
Director of Commissioning  
Assistant Directors of Commissioning  
Head of Pharmacy and Medicines Management  
Family Practitioner Services Leads – for cascade to relevant  
Family Practitioner groups

Chief Executive of Public Health Agency – **for distribution to:**  
Director of Public Health  
Director of Nursing

Chief Executives of HSC Trusts – **for distribution to:**  
Medical Directors – for cascade to relevant staff  
Directors of Nursing – for cascade to relevant staff  
Heads of Pharmaceutical Services – for cascade to relevant  
staff  
Directors of Acute Services – for cascade to relevant staff  
HSC Clinical and Social Governance Leads

Chief Executives of HSC Special Agencies and NDPBs

**For Information to:**

Chair of HSC Board  
Chair of Public Health Agency  
Chairs of HSC Trusts  
Chief Executive, Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority  
Chief Executive Patient and Client Council  
Chief Executive/Postgraduate Dean, NIMDTA  
Chief Executive, NICPLD  
Chief Executive, NIPEC  
Chair, RMSG

**Summary of Contents:**

This guidance is about enabling patients to make informed choices by involving and supporting them in decisions about prescribed medicines.

**Enquiries:**

Any enquiries about the content of this Circular should be addressed to:  
Standards & Guidelines Quality Unit  
DHSSPS  
Room D1.4  
Castle Buildings  
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[SGU-NICEGuidance@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:SGU-NICEGuidance@dhsspsni.gov.uk)

**Date of Issue: 16 November 2009**

**Related documents:**

See Bullet Point 6 below

**Superseded documents**

**Status of Contents:**

Action

**Implementation:**

To take account of this guidance in delivery of services to all patients, including those with learning difficulties or mental health problems.

**Additional copies:**

Available to download from

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/phealth/sqs/sqsd-guidance.htm>

**Dear Colleagues**

## **Clinical Guideline No 76 – Medicines Adherence**

This guideline offers best practice advice on how to involve patients in decisions about prescribed medicines and how to support adherence. Treatment and care should take into account patients' individual needs and preferences. Good communication, supported by evidence-based information, is essential. Healthcare professionals are reminded of their duty under the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) to make adjustments to ensure that all people have the same opportunity for good health (see note 3 below). Healthcare professionals should follow the code of practice that accompanies the Mental Capacity Act (2005) if concerned about patient capacity (see note 2 below). If the patient agrees, families and carers should have the opportunity to be involved in decisions about treatment and care.

DHSSPS advises that this guidance is valid for Northern Ireland and endorses it for implementation in HSC.

The full NICE guidance is available for download at:

<http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/CG76>

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 all patients, including those with learning difficulties and mental health problems. Treatment and care should take into account patients' individual needs and preferences.
2. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Department of Health document 'Reference Guide to Consent for Examination or Treatment' do not apply in NI, but work is under way to bring forward the mental capacity legislation for NI. The DHSSPS guidance 'Reference Guide to Consent for Examination, Treatment or Care (2003)', which is available on the DHSSPS website, gives advice on determining whether a person has capacity and on what action may be taken where the person lacks capacity.  
<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/consent-referenceguide.pdf>
3. Where the NICE guidance refers to the Disability Discrimination Act (2005), this should be interpreted as including The Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, which further strengthened the Northern Ireland legal framework.
4. 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;
5. NICE has developed tools to help organisations implement this guidance. These are available at <http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/CG76> and include costing tools, implementation advice and audit criteria to monitor local practice;
6. NICE has published related guidance as follows:

Technical patient safety solutions for medicines reconciliation on admission of adults to hospital. NICE patient safety guidance 1 (2007).  
Available from: <http://www.nice.org.uk/PSG001>

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) 01/06 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://dhsspsni.gov.uk/nice\\_guidance\\_01-06.pdf](http://dhsspsni.gov.uk/nice_guidance_01-06.pdf)



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