

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) 58/09 CG 78**

AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta  
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÁNNYSTRIE O

**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin  
an Fowk Siccar**

**Subject: Clinical Guideline No 78 –  
Borderline Personality Disorder**

**Circular Reference: HSC (SQSD) (NICE) 58/2009**

**Date of Issue: 16 November 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 guideline covers the care, treatment and support that people with borderline personality disorder should be offered.

**Enquiries:**

Any enquiries about the content of this Circular should be addressed to:  
Standards & Guidelines Quality Unit  
DHSSPS  
Room D1.4  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont  
BELFAST  
BT4 3SQ

[SGU-NICEGuidance@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:SGU-NICEGuidance@dhsspsni.gov.uk)

**Related documents:**

See Bullet Points 6 & 7 below

**Superseded documents**

**Status of Contents:**

Action

**Implementation:**

To take account of this guidance in delivery of services to patients with borderline personality disorder.

**Additional copies:**

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

**Dear Colleagues**

## **Clinical Guideline No 78 – Borderline Personality Disorder**

Borderline personality disorder is characterised by significant instability of interpersonal relationships, self-image and mood, and impulsive behaviour. There is a pattern of sometimes rapid fluctuation from periods of confidence to despair, with fear of abandonment and rejection, and a strong tendency towards suicidal thinking and self-harm. Transient psychotic symptoms, including brief delusions and hallucinations, may also be present. It is also associated with substantial impairment of social, psychological and occupational functioning and quality of life. People with borderline personality disorder are particularly at risk of suicide.

Its course is variable and although many people recover over time, some people may continue to experience social and interpersonal difficulties.

This guideline makes recommendations for the treatment and management of borderline personality disorder in adults and young people (under the age of 18) in primary, secondary and tertiary care. The guideline also covers the treatment and management of people diagnosed with emotionally unstable personality disorder based on ICD-10 criteria.

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/CG78>

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 patients with borderline personality disorder. This also extends to patients with emotionally unstable personality disorder based on ICD-10 criteria.
2. Implementation of this clinical guideline will take time and additional resources, beyond the resources attached to the NI Personality Disorder Strategy.
3. Where the guidance refers to the Children Acts and Mental Health Act this should be interpreted within the Northern Ireland legal framework of The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and The Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986.
4. 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>
5. Where the guidance refers to the Department of Health guidance 'Seeking consent: working with children', healthcare professionals in Northern Ireland should follow the

DHSSPS guidance 'Seeking consent: working with children'.

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/consent-guidepart2.pdf>

6. 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.

7. NICE has developed tools to help organisations implement this guidance. These are available at <http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/CG78> and include implementation advice and audit criteria to monitor local practice.

8. NICE has published related guidance as follows:

### **Published post 1 July 2006**

Antisocial personality disorder. NICE clinical guideline 77 (2009). Available from [www.nice.org.uk/CG77](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG77)

Anxiety (amended). NICE clinical guideline 22 (2007). Available from [www.nice.org.uk/CG22](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG22)

Depression (amended). NICE clinical guideline 23 (2007). Available from [www.nice.org.uk/CG23](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG23)

Drug misuse: opioid detoxification. NICE clinical guideline 52 (2007). Available from [www.nice.org.uk/CG52](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG52)

Drug misuse: psychosocial interventions. NICE clinical guideline 51 (2007). Available from [www.nice.org.uk/CG51](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG51)

Bipolar disorder. NICE clinical guideline 38 (2006). Available from [www.nice.org.uk/CG38](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG38)

### **Published Pre 1 July 2006**

Obsessive-compulsive disorder. NICE clinical guideline 31 (2005). Available from [www.nice.org.uk/CG31](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG31)

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). NICE clinical guideline 26 (2005). Available from [www.nice.org.uk/CG26](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG26)

Violence. NICE clinical guideline 25 (2005). Available from [www.nice.org.uk/CG25](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG25)

Eating disorders. NICE clinical guideline 9 (2004). Available from [www.nice.org.uk/CG9](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG9)

Self-harm. NICE clinical guideline 16 (2004). Available from [www.nice.org.uk/CG16](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG16)

Zaleplon, zolpidem and zopiclone for the short-term management of insomnia. NICE technology appraisal guidance 77 (2004). Available from [www.nice.org.uk/TA77](http://www.nice.org.uk/TA77)

Schizophrenia. NICE clinical guideline 1 (2002). Available from [www.nice.org.uk/CG1](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG1)

9. NICE is currently developing related guidance as follows:

Alcohol dependence and harmful alcohol use: diagnosis and management in young people and adults. NICE clinical guideline (publication expected March 2011).

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)



**DR MICHAEL McBRIDE**  
Chief Medical Officer