



Department of

**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

An Roinn

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

From the Chief Medical Officer:

HSS(MD)44-2006

Directors of Public Health for cascade to all General Practitioners and Out-of-hours Services;
Medical Directors in Trusts for cascade to Clinical Directors and Consultants in Accident and Emergency;

Castle Buildings
Upper Newtownards Road
STORMONT, BT4 3SQ
Tel: 02890520716
Fax: 02890520551
Email:
michael.mcbride@dhsspsni.gov.uk

Your Ref:
Our Ref:
Date: 1 December 2006

Dear Colleagues

RE: INTERIM ADVICE TO HEALTH PROFESSIONALS REGARDING THE RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL 'POLONIUM-210' RESULTING FROM A RADIOLOGICAL INCIDENT OCCURRING IN NOVEMBER 2006

On 1 November 2006 Alexander Litvinenko was exposed in a public place to alpha emitting gamma rays of Polonium-210 (Po-210). He presented himself to his GP on 3 November and was transferred to hospital via ambulance.

Whilst nothing can be excluded at this stage, it is unlikely that the public or customers of commercial establishments that Mr Litvinenko visited will have had the kind of exposure that would result in acute radiation sickness. Moreover, the involvement of people from Northern Ireland at that stage was deemed insignificant and indeed there is no evidence that anyone in the province so far has presented to a healthcare professional seeking advice relating to the commercial establishments visited by Mr Litvinenko.

However, with the recent disclosure that a number of commercial aircraft may have been affected there is a small possibility that people from Northern Ireland may present to health professionals seeking advice on this issue.

The advice in the media has been for patients to contact NHS Direct. However, NHS Direct is not available to callers from Northern Ireland, so as an interim measure if you as a health professional require further advice on this issue following queries from a patient who feels they may be at risk, please ring 02890522049. **Note – these numbers are only to be used by health professionals and are not a means for the public to seek advice directly.**

Further advice will be issued when we have more information.

Yours sincerely

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

DR M McBRIDE
Chief Medical Officer