

From the Deputy Chief Medical Officer  
Dr Anne Kilgallen

**Circular HSC (SQSD) (NICE NG6) 6/16**

**Subject: NICE (Public Health) Guideline NG6 -  
Excess winter deaths and morbidity and the health  
risks associated with cold homes**

**For action by:**

Chief Executive of HSC Board – **for distribution to:**  
All HSC Board Directors – for cascade to relevant staff

Director of Integrated Care, HSC Board – **for cascade to:**  
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 and Medical Director – for cascade  
to relevant staff  
Director of Nursing and AHPs – for cascade to relevant staff

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  
Directors of Social Services – for cascade to relevant staff  
Directors of Finance – for cascade to relevant staff  
AHP Leads – for cascade to relevant staff

Chief Executive, Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority – **for  
cascade to:** relevant independent healthcare establishments

Chief Executives of HSC Special Agencies and NDPBs

**For Information to:**

Chair of HSC Board  
Chair of Public Health Agency  
Chairs of HSC Trusts  
Chair of RQIA  
NICE Implementation Facilitator NI  
Members of NI NICE Managers' Forum

**Summary of Contents:** The guideline is for commissioners,  
managers and health, social care and voluntary sector practitioners  
who deal with vulnerable people who may have health problems  
caused, or exacerbated, by living in a cold home. It will also be of  
interest to clinicians and others involved with at-risk groups, housing  
and energy suppliers.

**Enquiries:**

Any enquiries about the content of this Circular should be addressed  
to:

Quality Regulation and Improvement Unit  
DHSSPS  
Room D1.4  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
BELFAST  
BT4 3SQ

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

**Circular Reference: HSC (SQSD) (NICE NG6) 6/16**

**Date of Issue: 02 February 2016**

**Related documents:**

HSC (SQSD) 31/14

**Superseded documents**

HSC (SQSD) (NICE NG6) 14/15

**Status of Contents:**

Action

**Implementation:**

As per circular HSC (SQSD) 37/15

**Additional copies:**

Available to download from  
<https://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/publications/safety-quality-and-standards-circulars-2015-2016>

Dear Colleagues

**NICE GUIDELINES NG6 - Excess winter deaths and morbidity and the health risks associated with cold homes (<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng6>)**

The Department has recently reviewed the above NICE guidance and has formally considered it for applicability in Northern Ireland. This guidance should be taken into account when designing and delivering services for people at risk from living in a cold home.

Only those pieces of guidance or specific recommendations highlighted for implementation require formal monitoring and assurance. Where guidance or recommendations are for noting or highlighted for particular attention, no formal monitoring or assurance is necessary, but organisations may be required to demonstrate how they have taken account of the guidance in planning and delivering services.

In accordance with the process outlined in circular HSC (SQSD) 37/15 the following initial actions should be taken:

1. HSCB/PHA
  - a. Identify a Professional Lead who will consider the commissioning implications of the Public Health Guideline and co-ordinate with any other relevant commissioning teams. This Lead, liaising with others in the HSC Board / PHA, will consider the plans received from the HSC Trusts **in regards to those pieces of guidance or specific recommendations where implementation is required** (within 2 months of receipt) as well as any complex issues they may have highlighted. They will identify any areas where regional planning / investment / commissioning are required, or where there is material risk to safety or quality. These will then be actioned immediately through normal commissioning arrangements or through bespoke arrangements reflecting the nature of the issue / risk.
  - b. The PHA will identify other relevant stakeholders and networks and disseminate as appropriate, typically within two weeks of receipt. **The PHA should note that the NI Oil Federation and Bryson Energy, in particular, would welcome liaison.**
  - c. The HSC Board will ensure that relevant guidance is sent to the appropriate Family Practitioners.
2. HSC Trusts
  - a. Proceed with targeted dissemination, agree a clinical/management lead to coordinate implementation as necessary and consider what has to be done to achieve implementation using a risk based assessment and baseline review as appropriate to support planning. These initial actions should be undertaken within a three month period.
3. RQIA
  - a. Disseminate the Guideline to the independent sector as appropriate.
4. HSC Special Agencies and NDPBs
  - a. Take account of this Guideline in training and other developments as appropriate.

To inform the planning process, please find attached at Appendix 1 details from the Departmental review. You should consider and take account of other relevant policies and strategies in your planning, as well as any legislative / policy caveats identified in the course of the Departmental review.

The detailed arrangements for implementation, monitoring and assurance can be found in circular [HSC \(SQSD\) 37/15](#).

A full current list of NICE guidance endorsed for application in Northern Ireland can be found on the [Department's website](#).

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Anne Kilgallen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**Dr Anne Kilgallen**  
**Deputy Chief Medical Officer**

## Appendix 1

### Endorsed NICE guidance - Details from Departmental review

Reference Number	<a href="#">NICE Public Health Guideline - NG6</a>
Title	Excess winter deaths and morbidity and the health risks associated with cold homes.
Summary of guidance	<p>The guideline is for commissioners, managers and health, social care and voluntary sector practitioners who deal with vulnerable people who may have health problems caused, or exacerbated, by living in a cold home.</p> <p>It will also be of interest to clinicians and others involved with at-risk groups, housing and energy suppliers.</p> <p>This guideline makes recommendations on how to reduce the risk of death and ill health associated with living in a cold home. The aim is to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce preventable excess winter death rates.</li> <li>• Improve health and wellbeing among vulnerable groups.</li> <li>• Reduce pressure on health and social care services.</li> <li>• Reduce 'fuel poverty' and the risk of fuel debt or being disconnected from gas and electricity supplies</li> <li>• Improve the energy efficiency of homes.</li> </ul>
Related strategically relevant policies	<a href="#">Making Life Better – A Whole System Strategic Framework for Public Health and supporting strategies</a>
Inter-Departmental interest	None
Legislative / policy caveats	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.