Addendum to DoH Guidance on the Transfer of Patients Detained under Mental Health Legislation between Hospital in Northern Ireland and Great Britain

Clarification of HSC responsibilities in transfer process

- When a HSC Trust requests the removal of a detained patient from Northern Ireland to Great Britain all information required must be submitted to the Department at least 14 days before the proposed date of transfer. A transfer request within 14 days from the proposed date of transfer will be returned to the relevant Trust for resubmission with an amended appropriate transfer date.

- The 14 day period is required to allow the Department sufficient time to fully consider the case, to obtain any necessary further information and to meet the statutory legal requirement to notify the patient, nearest relative and the RQIA of an authorisation 7 clear days before the date of transfer. It also builds in time for the appropriate authority in the receiving jurisdiction to consider and agree to the removal.

- As the 7 day notification period is a legal requirement set out in Article 134(6) of the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 the Department is unable to accommodate any late requests.

- All information relating to transfers must be sent unencrypted to the designated Department mailbox. Encrypted emails will be rejected with the effect that the transfer will not be authorised.

- The designated mailbox is mentalhealthunit@health-ni.gov.uk. Any correspondence must also be copied to Ronnie Long at ronnie.long@health-ni.gov.uk.

- It is the responsibility of the HSC Trusts to ensure that the Department is aware of who the Trusts’ transfer coordinators are. This includes deputies and staff who will fill in when the transfer coordinator is not available.

- It is the responsibility of the Trust transfer coordinator to ensure that the pro-forma found in Annex 6 of the DoH transfer guidance is fully complete and that all supporting documents are attached. This includes ensuring that the supporting documents contain sufficient information for the Department to make a decision whether to allow the transfer.