

Chief Pharmaceutical Officer  
**Prof Cathy Harrison**

## Circular HSC (SQSD) (NICE NG223) 14/23



### **Subject: NICE Public Health Guideline NG223 - Social, emotional and mental wellbeing in primary and secondary education**

#### **For action by:**

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

#### **Summary of Contents:**

This guideline covers ways to support social, emotional and mental wellbeing in children and young people in primary and secondary education (key stages 1 to 5), and people 25 years and under with special educational needs or disability in further education colleges. It aims to promote good social, emotional and psychological health to protect children and young people against behavioural and health problems.

#### **Enquiries:**

Any enquiries about the content of this Circular should be addressed to:  
Medicines Policy Branch  
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Circular Reference: **HSC (SQSD) (NICE NG223) 14/23**

**Date of Issue: 23 May 2023**

#### **Related documents:**

HSC (SQSD) 15/22

#### **Superseded documents**

None

#### **Status of Contents:**

Action

#### **Implementation:**

As per circular HSC (SQSD) 15/22

#### **Additional copies:**

Available to download from  
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/safety-and-quality-standards/national-institute-health-and-care-excellence-nice>

**Dear Colleagues**

**NICE Public Health Guideline NG223 - Social, emotional and mental wellbeing in primary and secondary education** - <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng223>

The Department has recently reviewed the above NICE guidance and has formally considered it for applicability in Northern Ireland.

**Decision:**

All recommendations in *NG223 - Social, emotional and mental wellbeing in primary and secondary education* are to be **taken into account in designing and delivering services** that are aimed at promoting good social, emotional and psychological health to protect children and young people against behavioural and health problems.

**Action Required:**

In accordance with the process outlined in circular HSC (SQSD) 15/22 (<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/HSC%20%28SQSD%29%2015-22.pdf>), the following initial actions should be taken.

1. PHA
  - a. In conjunction with the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) Department of Health, identify Commissioning and Professional Leads who will consider the commissioning implications of the Public Health Guideline and co-ordinate with any other relevant commissioning teams.
  - b. Identify other relevant stakeholders and networks and disseminate as appropriate, typically within two weeks of receipt.
2. HSC Trusts
  - a. Proceed with targeted dissemination, agree a clinical / management lead to coordinate implementation 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 details from the Departmental review. You should consider and take account of other relevant policies and strategies in your planning and implementation of this guideline, as well as any legislative / policy caveats identified in the course of the Departmental review.

A full current list of NICE guidance endorsed for application in Northern Ireland can be found on the Department's website at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/safety-and-quality-standards/national-institute-health-and-care-excellence-nice>

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cathy Harrison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Prof Cathy Harrison**  
**Chief Pharmaceutical Officer**

## Appendix 1

### Endorsed NICE guidance - Details from Departmental review

Reference Number	NICE Public Health Guideline – NG223 <a href="https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng223">https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng223</a>
Title	<b>Social, emotional and mental wellbeing in primary and secondary education</b>
Summary of guidance	<p>This guidance updates and replaces NICE Public Health Guidelines PH12 (March 2008) &amp; PH20 (September 2009), which were published by NICE prior to the introduction of the DoH process for endorsing Public Health guidelines.</p> <p>The guideline covers ways to support social, emotional and mental wellbeing in children and young people in primary and secondary education (key stages 1 to 5), and people 25 years and under with special educational needs or disability in further education colleges. It aims to promote good social, emotional and psychological health to protect children and young people against behavioural and health problems.</p> <p>This guideline includes recommendations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whole-school approach</li> <li>• universal curriculum content</li> <li>• identifying children and young people at risk of poor social, emotional and mental wellbeing</li> <li>• targeted support</li> <li>• support with school-related transitions and other life changes</li> </ul>
Related strategically relevant policies	<p>Making Life Better - A Whole System Strategic Framework for Public Health and supporting strategies (2013-2023) - <a href="https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/public-health-policy-and-advice/making-life-better-whole-system-strategic-framework-public">https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/public-health-policy-and-advice/making-life-better-whole-system-strategic-framework-public</a></p> <p>Protect Life 2 - A Strategy for Preventing Suicide and Self Harm in Northern Ireland 2019-2024 - <a href="https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/pl-strategy.PDF">https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/pl-strategy.PDF</a></p> <p>Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031 - <a href="https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/doh-mhs-strategy-2021-2031.pdf">https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/doh-mhs-strategy-2021-2031.pdf</a></p>
Inter-Departmental interest	The Department of Education (DE) noted that the Children & Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Education Framework is consistent with the NICE guidelines - <a href="#">Children &amp; Young People s Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Education Framework (final version).PDF (education-ni.gov.uk)</a>

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.

This guidance makes reference to a number of pieces of legislation in respect of education. In Northern Ireland the curriculum provisions are set out in the *Education (Northern Ireland) Order 2006*. The special educational provision is set out in the *Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996* as amended by the *Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005* and further amended by the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (Northern Ireland) 2016*). Available at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2006/1915/contents/made>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2005/1117/contents>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2016/8/contents>

This guidance refers to the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter which is only applicable in England. In Northern Ireland the Wellbeing Hub has been developed by the Education Authority which offers education staff with key health and wellbeing information, as well as initiatives around staying fit and healthy both physically and mentally. More information is available at:

<https://healthwell.eani.org.uk/>

Where reference is made to the Department for Education's Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education guidance, the CCEA RSE Hub provides a range of up-to-date, relevant resources and sources of support for priority areas in Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). Available at:

<https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/relationships-and-sexuality-education-rse>

Where reference is made to the Department for Education's Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools guidance. Northern Ireland education/health professionals should refer to the joint DE/DoH framework for Emotional Health and Well Being. Available at: [Children & Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Education Framework \(final version\).PDF \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](#).

Behaviour Support is provided by the Education Authority (EA). More information is available at:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/behaviour-support-and-provisions>

This guidance refers to the Department of Health and Social Care and Department for Education's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) code of practice which is only applicable in England. Northern Ireland's corresponding Special Education Needs (SEN) code and its supplement are available at: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/special-educational-needs-code-practice>.

The following is also a useful link to the Northern Ireland Department of Education's SEN resource file - <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/special-educational-needs-sen-resources>.

Where this guidance refers to the Public Health England's guidance on Measuring the Mental Wellbeing of Children and Young People, the equivalent resources in Northern Ireland are available at:

[Young Persons' Behaviour & Attitudes Survey | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/young-persons-behaviour-attitudes-survey)

[Youth Wellbeing Prevalence Survey 2020 - HSCB \(hscni.net\)](https://www.hscni.net/youth-wellbeing-prevalence-survey-2020)