Subject: NICE Clinical Guideline NG26 – Children’s attachment: attachment in children and young people who are adopted from care, in care or at high risk of going into care.

Circular Reference: HSC (SQSD) (NICE NG26) 65/16

Date of Issue: 28 November 2016

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
Chains of HSC Trusts
Chair of RQIA
NICE Implementation Facilitator NI
Members of NI NICE Managers’ Forum

Superseded documents
None

Summary of Contents: This NICE clinical guideline covers the identification, assessment and treatment of attachment difficulties in children and young people up to age 18 who are adopted from care, in special guardianship, looked after by local authorities in foster homes (including kinship foster care), residential units and other accommodation, or on the edge of care. It aims to address the many emotional and psychological needs of children and young people in these situations, including those resulting from maltreatment.

Enquiries:
Any enquiries about the content of this Circular should be addressed to:
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Department of Health
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Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SQ

SGU-NICEGuidance@health-ni.gov.uk

Status of Contents: Action

Implementation:
As per circular. Generally, Clinical Guidelines should be implemented within 12 months of endorsement.

Additional copies:
Available to download from
Dear Colleagues

NICE Clinical Guideline NG26 – Children’s attachment: attachment in children and young people who are adopted from care, in care or at high risk of going into care. http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng26

The Department has recently reviewed the above NICE guidance and has formally endorsed it as applicable in Northern Ireland.

In accordance with the process outlined in circular HSC (SQSD) 3/13, the following actions should be taken (https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/hsc-sqsd-3-13.pdf)

1. HSC Board / PHA
   a. Identify a Professional Lead who will consider the commissioning implications of the Clinical Guideline and co-ordinate with any other relevant commissioning teams. This Lead 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. Ensure that relevant guidance is sent to the appropriate Family Practitioners.
   c. Seek positive assurance from the HSC Trusts that the required initial actions have been undertaken within a 3 month period, and that the Guideline has been implemented within a further 9 months (unless otherwise notified by the HSC Trusts).
   d. Where significant investment/ commissioning needs cannot be met within the usual timeframe, agree appropriate arrangements with HSC Trusts. Report to DoH as required at 6 monthly accountability meetings.

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.
   b. Implement the Guideline within a further 9 months (apart from any elements where significant issues have been raised with the HSC Board PHA).
   c. Provide positive assurances to the HSC Board that required initial actions have been taken within the 3 month planning period and that the Guideline has been implemented within a further 9 months, where appropriate.
   d. Where significant investment/ commissioning needs cannot be met within the usual timeframe, notify the HSC Board/PHA at the earliest opportunity through the bi-monthly director level meetings and agree appropriate arrangements with them to achieve implementation.

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 Departmental policies and strategies in your planning, as well as any legislative / policy caveats identified in the course of the Departmental review.


Dr Paddy Woods
Deputy Chief Medical Officer
### Appendix 1

**Endorsed NICE guidance - Details from Departmental review**

| Reference Number | NICE Clinical Guidance - NG26  
http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng26 |
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<td>Children’s attachment: attachment in children and young people who are adopted from care, in care or at high risk of going into care.</td>
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| **Summary of guidance** | This clinical guideline covers the identification, assessment and treatment of attachment difficulties in children and young people up to age 18 who are adopted from care, in special guardianship, looked after by local authorities in foster homes (including kinship foster care), residential units and other accommodation, or on the edge of care. It aims to address the many emotional and psychological needs of children and young people in these situations, including those resulting from maltreatment. 
It includes recommendations on:  
- principles of care  
- supporting children and young people with attachment difficulties  
- assessing attachment difficulties  
- interventions for attachment difficulties in children and young people on the edge of care  
- interventions for attachment difficulties in children and young people in the care system, subject to special guardianship orders and adopted from care  
- interventions for attachment difficulties in children and young people in residential care |
| **Related strategically relevant DoH / HSC policies** | None |
| **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.

This guidance refers to the Children Act 1989. HSC staff in Northern Ireland should adhere to the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and its associated Guidance, Regulations and Volumes. Available at:

It is permissible that HSC staff in Northern Ireland access DfE data packs and frameworks as exemplars of good practice.


The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health has provided an intercollegiate role framework “Looked after Children: knowledge, skills and competence of health care staff (March 2015) for health professionals and is accessible for those health professionals employed across the United Kingdom.

Available at:
http://www.rcpch.ac.uk/system/files/protected/page/Looked%20After%20Children%202015_0.pdf


This guidance makes reference to the (HM Government: England, March 2015) document *Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers*, which does not apply in Northern Ireland.

This guidance refers to some NICE Public Health Guidance which pre-dates the introduction of the DoH process for endorsing Public Health guidelines. All Public Health Guidance endorsed by DoH can be found at: [https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/nice-public-health-guidance](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/nice-public-health-guidance)

This guidance makes reference to NICE Quality Standards which have not been endorsed by the Department.