

29 July 2004

Letter to Chief Executives of Acute and Primary Care NHS Trusts

Action by: Chief Executives of Acute Trusts and PCTs
Distribution to: Chief Executives of PCTs
Chief Executives of Acute NHS Trusts
Chief Executives and DsPH of SHAs (for information)

Copied to: CsCDC via Regional Epidemiologists (HPA)
Independent Healthcare
Peter Christie, Scottish Executive
Joan Sneddon, SCIEH
Lorraine Doherty, DHSSPS Northern Ireland
Michael Simmons, Welsh Assembly

A Medical Device Alert (MDA 2004/028) was issued on 23rd June 2004 by the MHRA as a result of reported flexible endoscope decontamination failure incidents in Northern Ireland. Similar Medical Device Alerts were issued by the Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh Administrations at around the same time. These alerts required Trusts to undertake assessments of endoscope decontamination processes, ensuring that manufacturer's advice and instructions for use of the endoscopes and the reprocessors are being followed. Further, before purchasing a new endoscope there should be a check on whether it can be satisfactorily decontaminated after use with the existing decontamination processes available.

The deadline for completion of the Action Points set out in the Medical Device Alert is 18th August 2004.

Chief Executives are requested to bring this notice to the attention of their Directors of Infection Prevention and Control (DIPCs) and ensure that there is an active review of reprocessing of *all* endoscopes in the Trust and that urgent steps are taken to remedy any inadequacies that are identified. DIPCs are requested to notify their Consultant for Communicable Disease Control (CCDC) that action has been taken and that the Action Points raised in the Medical Device Alert have been completed. Where failures of adequate decontamination are identified, the endoscopes should be taken out of service until the problems have been remedied. These incidents should also be reported to the local CCDC.

David Harper
Director of Health Protection, International Health and Scientific Development.