

From the Deputy Chief Medical Officer  
**Dr Paddy Woods**



Department of  
**Health**

An Roinn Sláinte  
Máinnystrie O Poustie

[www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

## Circular HSC (SQSD) (NICE NG128) 19/19

**Subject: NICE Clinical Guideline NG128 – Stroke and transient ischaemic attack in over 16s: diagnosis and initial management (updates and replaces CG68)**

**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:**

This guideline covers interventions in the acute stage of a stroke or transient ischaemic attack (TIA). It offers the best clinical advice on the diagnosis and acute management of stroke and TIA in the 48 hours after onset of symptoms.

**Enquiries:**

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

Quality Regulation and Improvement Unit  
Department of Health  
Room D1.4  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
Belfast  
BT4 3SQ

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

**Circular Reference: HSC (SQSD) (NICE NG128) 19/19**

**Date of Issue: 26 June 2019**

**Related documents:**

HSC (SQSD) 3/13

**Superseded documents**

HSC (SQSD) (NICE CG68) 34/2009

**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

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

## Dear Colleagues

### **NICE Clinical Guideline NG128 - Stroke and transient ischaemic attack in over 16s: diagnosis and initial management (updates and replaces CG68) -**

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng128>

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.

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 'Paddy Woods', written in a cursive style.

**Dr Paddy Woods**  
**Deputy Chief Medical Officer**

## Appendix 1

### Endorsed NICE guidance - Details from Departmental review

Reference Number	NICE Clinical Guideline – NG128 <a href="https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng128">https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng128</a>
Title	<b>Stroke and transient ischaemic attack in over 16s: diagnosis and initial management</b>
Summary of guidance	<p>This guideline updates and replaces NICE Clinical Guideline CG68 - Stroke and Transient Ischaemic Attack (endorsed by DoH in July 2009).</p> <p>The guideline covers interventions in the acute stage of a stroke or transient ischaemic attack (TIA). It offers the best clinical advice on the diagnosis and acute management of stroke and TIA in the 48 hours after onset of symptoms.</p> <p>In May 2019, NICE reviewed the evidence and made new recommendations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• initial management of suspected and confirmed TIA</li> <li>• imaging for people with suspected TIA</li> <li>• thrombectomy for people with acute ischaemic stroke</li> <li>• blood pressure control for people with acute intracerebral haemorrhage</li> <li>• optimal positioning and early mobilisation for people with acute stroke</li> <li>• decompressive hemicraniectomy for people with acute stroke</li> </ul> <p>These supplement the existing recommendations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rapid recognition of symptoms and diagnosis</li> <li>• imaging</li> <li>• specialist care, pharmacological treatments and surgery for people with acute stroke</li> <li>• maintenance or restoration of homeostasis</li> <li>• nutrition and hydration</li> </ul>
Related strategically relevant DoH/ HSC policies	None
Inter-Departmental interest	None

Legislative / policy caveats	<p>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.</p> <p>Where this guidance indicates that informed consent should be obtained and documented, the DoH guidance <i>Reference Guide to Consent for Examination, Treatment or Care (2003)</i>, gives advice on the law concerning consent to intervention. Available at: <a href="https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/consent-examination-treatment-or-care">https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/consent-examination-treatment-or-care</a></p>
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