

To GOS Principal Optometrist

Tel : 0300 555 115 (ext 3314)
Web Site: www.hscboard.hscni.net

October 2015

Dear Colleague

Re: Adult Safeguarding – Policy Development

In July 2015 the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety and the Department of Justice jointly issued a new policy to safeguard adults at risk of harm or in need of protection.

Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership emphasises that safeguarding is everyone's business. In particular, it notes the specific responsibilities that primary care specialists have in the identification of risks of harm and ensuring appropriate referral to the local HSCT Trust for a further assessment of need and /or risk.

At a minimum, primary care specialists will be expected to safeguard adults who may be at risk by:

- **Recognising** that adult harm is wrong and that it should not be tolerated;
- **Being aware** of the signs of harm from abuse, exploitation and neglect;
- **Reducing** opportunities for harm from abuse, exploitation and neglect to occur; and
- **Knowing** how and when to report safeguarding concerns to HSC Trusts or the PSNI.

The full policy can be accessed on the DHSSPS websites or by using the following link:-

<http://search.nics.gov.uk/search?siteName=dhsspsni&q=adult+safeguarding>

We are working with colleagues within the Social Care Directorate to develop an awareness raising programme for primary care practitioners and it is hoped that some training opportunities will be available in due course.

We are also in the process of developing guidance for staff which will provide some practical advice on how to recognise the signs of abuse and how to refer concerns to local HSC Trusts and/or the PSNI. We will share that with you once the content has been agreed. **Please ensure that you bring this policy to the attention of staff within your practice.**

In the meantime, if you have a concern about an individual patient or you want to discuss any aspect of the new policy, please contact the Regional Adult Safeguarding Officer, Joyce McKee at Joyce.mckee@hscni.net (tel. no. 02895 362 810)

Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized initial 'R' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Mr Raymond Curran

Head of Ophthalmic Services

Health and Social Care Board

raymond.curran@hscni.net