



The Regulation and
Quality Improvement
Authority

press release

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Hospital Hygiene inspections highlight room for improvement

RQIA - the independent health and social care regulator - today published the latest results of its rolling programme of unannounced hospital hygiene inspections.

Glenn Houston, RQIA Chief Executive, said: "**Clean wards and robust infection control practices are crucial in the fight against health care associated infections. These help to reassure patients that the care they receive is safe**"

Mr Houston continued: "**Between January and March this year RQIA inspected 19 wards and clinical areas in five hospitals - using the Infection Control Nurses Association (ICNA) audit tool. The inspections focused on indicators of good practice, including hand hygiene, the environment, clinical practice and patient equipment.**"

"**The standard of performance varied across the 19 areas inspected, and there was also a marked variation in performance between wards within each of the five hospitals. In particular, concerns were noted in some Accident and Emergency and Outpatient departments where there was significant room for improvement.**"

During the inspections RQIA also observed good practice, with partial or full compliance achieved in 11 of the 19 wards inspected.

Staff in the hospitals inspected have demonstrated that they can get it right. However, the clear message from these inspections is that hygiene and infection control measures need to be embedded in daily routines across all wards and clinical areas all of the time.

RQIA's Chief Executive added: **"The current focus on hand hygiene has resulted in significant improvement when compared with previous inspections, but further work is necessary in this area."**

Each Trust has provided RQIA with a comprehensive action plan detailing how it is addressing the issues we have raised. Later this year RQIA will follow up each inspection with a further unannounced visit to assess progress against our recommendations.

Mr Houston concluded: **"RQIA recognises the commitment of staff working in our hospitals to achieve the best outcomes for patients, and these reports are published at a time when Trusts have demonstrated significant progress towards meeting the Minister's target to reduce levels of health care associated infection. RQIA will continue to publish the results of its programme of unannounced hygiene inspections so that the public can be assured that the drive to achieve better outcomes, in respect of both hygiene and infection control, is being afforded priority in every hospital in Northern Ireland."**

END

For further information:

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Editors' Notes

The five hospitals inspected were:

Daisy Hill (Southern Health and Social Care Trust)
Lagan Valley (South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust)
Mater (Belfast Health and Social Care Trust)
Mid-Ulster (Northern Health and Social Care Trust)
Tyrone County (Western Health and Social Care Trust)

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority, established in April 2005 under *The Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003*, is the independent health and social care regulatory body for Northern Ireland. In its work RQIA encourages continuous improvement in the quality and availability of health and social care services through a programme of inspections and reviews.