



The **Regulation** and  
**Quality Improvement**  
Authority

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Managers and Proprietors  
Independent Hospitals, Hospices, Nursing and Residential Care Homes

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Water systems and potential infection risks**

You will be aware of the recent incidents in the Belfast Royal Jubilee Maternity and Altnagelvin Hospitals involving water systems which were infected with pseudomonas organisms.

By now, you should be familiar with your legionellae risk assessment and the responsibility to maintain water systems to prevent and control the risk of infection by legionellae and other water borne organisms including pseudomonas.

Alongside this, the importance of correct management and use of wash hand basins and sinks in respect of infection prevention and control cannot be over emphasised.

The DHSSPS Chief Medical Officer recently wrote to all HSC Trusts and other relevant agencies offering advice and guidance on good practice in respect of the above issues. Copies of the correspondence can be found at:

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/hss-md-31-2011.pdf>  
<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/hss-md-34-2010.pdf>

In July 2011, DHSSPS Health Estates and Investment Group (HEIG) wrote to HSC Trusts and other relevant agencies in relation to management of water systems in health care premises. A copy of this correspondence can be found at:

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/hss-md-31-2011-attachment2.pdf>

I would ask you to read the above linked documents and review the policies and procedures as well as the risk assessments relating to these areas of practice and risk in your establishments taking action where applicable.

Yours sincerely

Phelim Quinn  
Director of Regulation and Nursing

informing and improving health and social care