

## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

11 February 2008

### **INDEPENDENT REVIEW INTO C DIFFICILE OUTBREAK WILL BE RIGOROUS – MCGIMPSEY**

Health Minister Michael McGimpsey said that the independent review into the Clostridium Difficile outbreak in the Northern Trust will be rigorous and thorough.

Announcing the Terms of Reference for the review, the minister said that he asked the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) to carry out the review and report back findings to him as quickly as possible.

The Terms of Reference for the review include examining:

- The circumstances contributing to the rates of C difficile infection in the Northern Trust in 2007/08, including the recent outbreak;
- The trusts's management and clinical response to its C difficile rates, and outbreak, including actions to inform patients, their relatives and the public;
- The trusts's arrangements to identify and notify cases, outbreaks and deaths associated with C difficile infection;
- The trusts's governance arrangements and the priority given to the prevention and control of infection;
- The actions of the Northern Board and the department in relation to the management of the outbreak in the Northern trust, and wider actions to help reduce C difficile rates in Trusts;
- Any other relevant matters that emerge during the course of the review; and
- To identify learning from the management of this incident and make recommendations for the Northern Trust and the wider Health and Social Care service.

The Minister said: "I realise that this is a matter of great concern to the public and I have considered this matter very carefully. It is important that we respond urgently and have a thorough review which focuses on the circumstances contributing to this particular outbreak. I believe that the independent review which I have announced will identify any lessons for the health service much more quickly than would be possible through a public inquiry.

"I want to ensure that all appropriate action is taken to contain the current outbreak of the virulent 027 strain of C difficile in the Northern Trust. I have visited the Northern Trust and I was encouraged by talking to staff and seeing at first hand the measures that have been put in place to control the outbreak.

"In addition, I have met with the chairs of all five trusts and will be meeting this week with the chief executives to ensure there is no complacency across the health service in dealing with C difficile infections.

"It is important that the public has confidence in the health service. I recently announced an extensive package of measures aimed at fighting superbugs in hospitals. Unfortunately we can never fully eradicate such infections from our hospitals but I am committed to doing all in my power to support health trusts in reducing the spread of such infections in our hospitals and in the community."