

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



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Dear *Helen,*

Thank you for your e-mail of 11 November 2020 regarding the issue of hysteroscopy procedures in the NHS. I note your blog which highlights matters relating to access to pain relief, informed consent and the failure to address patients concerns. I am supportive of ensuring that patient harm is avoided.

The use of hysteroscopy has been recommended in the current guideline issued by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), Heavy Menstrual Bleeding: Assessment and Management (NG88). This guideline was endorsed by the Department in May 2018 for implementation in Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland and continues to apply. There is also other relevant professional guidance on this matter published by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the British Society for Gynaecological Endoscopy. This guidance does cover some of the issues you have raised as regards pain relief and my department will write to the HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland to highlight this guidance and remind the service about the importance of consistent application of the guidance.

In relation to addressing patient concerns, you are aware the Cumberlege Report was published on 8 July 2020, the Report highlighted failures in the healthcare system in a number of areas including the need to listen and understand patients' voices regarding concerns raised around certain treatments. My Department is currently considering this important report in the local context, we will use it to improve our understanding and response to patient concerns and in particular those relating to the safety of medicines and medical devices. Your correspondence will help inform this work.

I trust this response is helpful.

Yours sincerely



Robin Swann MLA
Minister of Health