

Date: 31 March 2010

Gateway reference number 13482

To: SHA Chief Executives  
SHA Directors of Finance  
SHA Directors of Medicine  
SHA Directors of Nursing  
SHA Directors of Performance

Cc: PCT Chief Executives  
NHS Trust Chief Executives  
NHS Trust Directors of Infection Prevention and Control  
NHS Trust Directors of Medicine  
NHS Trust Directors of Nursing  
Regional Directors of Public Health  
Independent Sector Treatment Centre Chief Executives  
Monitor  
CQC

Dear Colleague

### **MRSA SCREENING – OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE 3**

This guidance is aimed primarily at Chief Executives and Directors of Performance. It will be of interest to Finance Directors, Directors of Nursing and Medicine, Directors of Infection Prevention and Control and their teams, medical microbiologists, laboratory managers, bed managers and those running pre-admission clinics and admission units.

#### **Aim**

This guidance is to support NHS organisations in introducing MRSA screening for all relevant emergency admissions. Please note that the deadline for this is 31 December 2010.

In line with this, every organisation that admits relevant emergency patients is asked to refresh and re-publish its MRSA screening policy and statement of compliance by 31 December 2010.

It builds on previous guidance "*Screening for MRSA colonisation – a strategy for NHS Trusts: a summary of best practice*"<sup>1</sup>, "*MRSA Screening – Operational*

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[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_063188](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_063188)

*Guidance*<sup>2</sup> issued on 31 July 2008, Gateway reference 10324, and “*MRSA Screening – Operational Guidance 2*”<sup>3</sup> Gateway reference number 11123, each of which are available on the Department of Health website.

## **2010/11 Operating Framework Requirement**

There is a commitment in the 2010/11 Operating Framework to introduce screening of relevant emergency admissions for MRSA.

*“NHS providers and commissioners should ensure that:*

*(they) screen all relevant emergency admissions for MRSA as soon as possible – and definitely by 2011.”*

We are aware that many organisations already have MRSA screening of emergency admissions in place, but others will wish to ensure that they have plans in place to ensure that they are screening emergency admissions by the end of December 2010.

## **Context**

Following the previous guidance mentioned above, all trusts with relevant elective admissions have confirmed that they are screening those admissions from April 2009.

## **Which patients have to be screened?**

As with elective admissions, organisations will need to ensure that all relevant emergency admissions are screened. A set of Frequently Asked Questions has been published which seek to clarify some of the issues around screening emergency admissions<sup>4</sup>. Individual organisations should ensure that relevant staff are aware of local protocols for screening. In addition, an illustrative pathway for screening emergency admissions is available on the *Clean, Safe Care* website<sup>5</sup>. We are also taking this opportunity to refresh the FAQs on screening elective admissions.

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<sup>2</sup>

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleagueletters/DH\\_086687](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleagueletters/DH_086687)

<sup>3</sup>

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleagueletters/DH\\_092844](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleagueletters/DH_092844)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publichealth/Healthprotection/Healthcareassociatedinfection/DH\\_094120](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publichealth/Healthprotection/Healthcareassociatedinfection/DH_094120)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.clean-safe-care.nhs.uk/Documents/Emergency\\_Admissions\\_MRSA\\_Screening\\_Pathway.pdf](http://www.clean-safe-care.nhs.uk/Documents/Emergency_Admissions_MRSA_Screening_Pathway.pdf)

## Role of SHAs and PCTs and Monitor – Assurance

Organisations currently have an MRSA screening policy and statement of compliance for elective screening. Every organisation that admits relevant emergency patients is asked to refresh and re-publish its MRSA screening policy and statement of compliance by 31 December 2010. SHAs, working with their PCTs, will want to ensure that Chief Executives of those organisations sign off that they are complying with their local MRSA screening policy and that they have appropriate evidence to demonstrate that they are screening all relevant emergency patients. They should also regularly monitor Trusts' compliance with this commitment. DH will seek assurance from SHAs that the required policies, sign-offs, assurances and evidence are in place.

In order to provide this assurance SHAs are asked to send a copy of their statement of compliance to Amy White ([Amy.White@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Amy.White@dh.gsi.gov.uk)) by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010.

Monitor will contact NHS Foundation Trusts about MRSA screening for emergency admissions.

Yours sincerely



Director General of NHS Finance  
Performance and Operations



Dame Christine Beasley CBE  
Chief Nursing Officer