



TO 347/2003

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Dear Mr Redmile-Gordon

Thank you for your recent letter to the, Chief Medical Officer. I have been asked to respond. On 5 December 2003, the Chief Medical Officer launched "Winning Ways: Working together to reduce healthcare associated infection in England". The report recognised that infection in hospitals and other healthcare settings is a major problem for health services around the world, including the NHS. The report stated that this is an area where intensified controls measures are required and made a number of recommendations.

All NHS organisations are now expected to have a designated Director of Infection Prevention and Control who will report directly to the Chief Executive and Trust Board and will also have the authority to challenge the inappropriate clinical hygiene practice outlined in your letter. Mr Cunningham, the Chief Executive of the Surrey and Sussex NHS Trust rightly states in his letter to you that compliance to infection control policies can be problematical. The new Directors should be aiming to change the NHS culture so that infection control becomes everybody's' business. This should improve infection control practice and ultimately bring about a reduction in infection rates.

The Chief Medical Officer has also recommended that stronger emphasis is given on education on the prevention and control of infection for all healthcare workers to help ensure that infection control policies are put into practice. In addition, the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection will be asked to give priority to assessing NHS performance in reducing healthcare associated infection.

Thank you for your interest in this important area. I hope the above information reassures you that the prevention and control of healthcare associated infection is something the Department of Health and Chief Medical Officer takes very seriously.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carole Fry', written over a circular stamp.

Carole Fry  
Nursing Officer Communicable Diseases

Cc: Mr K Cunningham, Chief Executive, Surrey and Sussex NHS Trust.