Dear Colleagues

HEALTHCARE IMPROVEMENT SCOTLAND PROCESS FOR CLOSING A WARD TO NEW ADMISSIONS

I am enclosing final guidance relating to the new Healthcare Improvement Scotland powers for the closure of wards to new admissions.

In November 2014, The Rt Hon Lord MacLean published the Vale of Leven Inquiry Report which detailed the findings of the public inquiry into the occurrence of *Clostridium difficile* infection at the Vale of Leven Hospital. The first recommendation in Lord MacLean’s report was for the Healthcare Environment Inspectorate to have the power to close a ward to new admissions.

*Recommendation 1: Scottish Government should ensure that the Healthcare Environment Inspectorate (HEI) has the power to close a ward to new admission if the HEI concludes that there is a real risk to the safety of patients. In the event of such a closure, an urgent action plan should be devised with the Infection prevention and Control team and management.*

The Healthcare Improvement Scotland (Delegation of Functions) Order 2016 delegates the power to Healthcare Improvement Scotland to give directions to Health Boards to close hospital wards to new admissions where Healthcare Improvement Scotland believes that, in the absence of such a direction, there is a serious risk to the life, health or wellbeing of persons. The order is not limited to HEI inspection and applies to all activity undertaken by Healthcare Improvement Scotland.

It is important to emphasise that the power to close a ward to new admissions would only be used on extremely rare occasions. These powers will only be applied where other avenues have been exhausted and agreement cannot be realised with the Health Board Executive Team. Every effort will be taken to resolve issues at a local level.

The final version of this document has been informed by consultation feedback from a range of external stakeholders, including NHS Boards and professional bodies.

If you require any further information or would like to discuss anything further please contact Steven Wilson ([steven.wilson@nhs.net](mailto:steven.wilson@nhs.net)) or Alastair McGown ([alastair.mcgown@nhs.net](mailto:alastair.mcgown@nhs.net)).