

## Press Release – 25 March 2015

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### **RCGPNI launch guidelines for care of LGBT patients**

Ground-breaking guidelines to support GPs to provide the best care possible to their Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans\* (LGB&T) patients has been published today by the Royal College of General Practitioners Northern Ireland (RCGPNI), in partnership with the Public Health Agency.

The guidance, being launched on Wednesday 25 March in Belfast, will be published in two volumes; *Guidelines for the Care of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Patients in Primary Care*; and another specifically related to delivering care to Trans\* patients.

*Guidelines for the Care of Trans\* Patients in Primary Care* is thought to be the first guidance of its kind in Europe to educate and inform GPs of the patient pathways available for those who identify as Trans\*.

It is estimated that on average, GP surgeries in NI will have around 300 patients who identify as LGB, and some of these patients will have specific medical needs that often go unmet.

To address these, the cutting-edge guidelines have been developed in collaboration with members of the LGB&T community in NI, as well as LGB&T rights groups.

Copies of the guidance will be sent to every GP practice in NI to raise awareness of health issues associated with LGB&T patients and ensure that GPs and practice staff are familiar with treatments and referral processes available to them in primary care.

Dr John O’Kelly, Chair of the RCGPNI, said: “LGB&T patients face some unique problems in accessing healthcare and I hope that these important and innovative guidelines will assist in overcoming these barriers. The guidance will help to ensure that GPs are well equipped to help their patients feel at ease with their doctor and ensure that they can receive the appropriate advice and care.

“I am proud that these guidelines have been developed in Northern Ireland and it is a reflection of the College’s dedication and commitment to provision and delivery of high-quality and effective care for all patients. I hope that GPs and practice staff find them useful and a practical tool for day to day use.”

Mary Black, PHA Assistant Director of Health and Wellbeing Improvement, said: “The PHA is proud to support these two sets of guidelines and believe they will be of great benefit to GPs and staff working in Primary Care. The Guidelines, the first for Northern Ireland, will help raise awareness of the health inequalities experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals and encourage staff working within primary care settings to be inclusive in their practice.

“The guidelines are part of a number of developments within health and social care to help ensure that the needs of LGB&T individuals, families and communities are taken into account in the planning and delivery of health and social care.”

**Further information:**

In 2014, the RCGPNI was commissioned by the Public Health Agency NI to develop guidelines to support GPs in their efforts to provide the best care possible to members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans\* (LGB&T) community. The development and design of the guidelines has involved members of the LGB&T community, The Rainbow Project, HereNI, SAIL, The Regional Gender & Identity Clinic, GPs, Nurses, Consultants and lay patient representatives who have an interest in Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland.

The launch event will take place at the Radisson Blue, Belfast on 25 March 2015 at 14:00.

Copies of the guidance will be available via the RCGP website in the near future.

**Notes to Editors**

The Royal College of General Practitioners is the largest membership organisation in the United Kingdom solely for GPs. It aims to encourage and maintain the highest standards of general medical practice and to act as the 'voice' of GPs on issues concerned with education; training; research; and clinical standards. Founded in 1952, the RCGP has just over 50,000 members who are committed to improving patient care, developing their own skills and promoting general practice as a discipline.

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