



NHS Management Executive
St. Andrew's House
Edinburgh EH1 3DG
9th December 1998

Dear Colleague

RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES – GUIDANCE FOR THE NHS IN SCOTLAND

Summary

1. Revised guidance on emergency planning for the NHS in Scotland, "Responding to Emergencies", is attached.

Background

2. Our responsibility to meet the needs of people in Scotland for health-care includes those needs which are not possible to forecast in detail or which arise or change unexpectedly. Similarly our responsibility is unaltered by whatever circumstances might adversely affect our ability to provide the diagnosis, treatment, care and support expected of us. An emergency does not alter the nature of our tasks, but their achievement may require sudden adjustments to how, where and when they are carried out.

3. While it is not possible to predict the exact form and nature of a future emergency, nor the amount of time available to prepare for it, any part of the NHS in Scotland might need to contribute to the response to it and must be prepared accordingly. Planning and managing NHS emergency response must be regarded as integral to the planning and management of every service the NHS in Scotland provides.

4. "Responding to Emergencies" contains key principles, terminology and procedures for use throughout the NHS in Scotland. **It provides a national framework within which Health Boards should develop and maintain area-wide emergency plans, and within which NHS Trusts, the Common Services Agency and others should base their detailed operational emergency plans and procedures.**

Addressees

For action:
General Managers,
Health Boards

General Manager,
State Hospital

General Manager,
CSA

Chief Executives,
NHS Trusts

Chief Executives,
Shadow NHS Trusts

For information:
Chief Executives,
Scottish Local Authorities

Chief Constables,
Scottish Police Forces

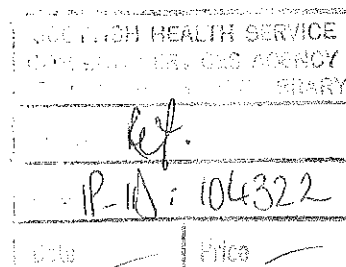
Firemasters,
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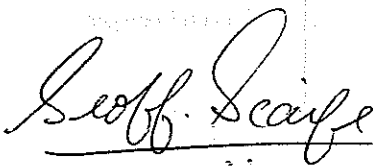
Action

5. All Health Boards, the CSA and NHS Trusts are to ensure that their emergency plans are consistent with the guidance, are subject to periodic review and are exercised sufficiently to ensure their effectiveness. (For amplification see paragraphs 4.3-4.6 of the guidance.)

6. Health Boards should ensure particularly that effective emergency response arrangements are maintained during the forthcoming reconfiguration of NHS Trusts.

7. Health Boards are invited to make GPs aware of this guidance, it is available on the Internet at <http://www.show.scot.nhs.uk/dtc>.

Yours sincerely



GEOFF SCAIFE
Chief Executive
NHS in Scotland