



Web Newsletter

To: «First» «Last»,

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NEW RESEARCH REPORT ON SPINA BIFIDA—THE HEALTH RESEARCH BOARD

New research published in September 2008 by the Health Research Board (HRB) in the Republic of Ireland highlights the serious consequences for children born with spina bifida, the most common neural tube defect (NTD). The findings, which track 623 Irish children born with spina bifida over a period of 11 years, reinforce the need for effective public health interventions to encourage women of child-bearing age to take folic acid before and during early pregnancy.

'Research has shown that women can reduce the chance of having a baby with an NTD by up to 70% by taking folic acid, a B vitamin, for at least 8 weeks before they get pregnant and for the first twelve weeks of the pregnancy,' explains Dr Peadar Kirke, Head of Child Health at the HRB. 'This can be achieved simply by taking a folic acid supplement'.

Further details can be found by clicking [here](#)

A LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR MENTAL CAPACITY AND MENTAL HEALTH LEGISLATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Bamford Review completed its work in 2007 and set out a vision for taking forward mental health services in Northern Ireland to enhance the dignity and human rights of some of the most vulnerable people in society, those living with a mental health disorder or learning disability.

This consultation document outlines Northern Ireland Department of Health and Social Services proposals, in response to the Bamford review, to introduce a legislative framework for new mental capacity legislation and modernised mental health legislation in Northern Ireland, with an overarching set of human rights principles embedded in both.

You can view the consultation document by clicking [here](#)

CHIEF EXECUTIVES APPOINTED TO NEW REGIONAL HEALTH BODIES

Health Minister, Michael McGimpsey, has announced the appointment of the Chief Executives (Designate) who will lead the four Health and Social Care (HSC) organisations.

They are:

- John Compton: Regional Health and Social Care Board
- Dr Eddie Rooney: Regional Public Health and Social Well-being Agency
- Maeve Hully: Patient and Client Council
- David Bingham: Regional Business Services Organisation

More information on these individuals by clicking [here](#)

COLD SNAP TRIGGERS COLD WEATHER PAYMENTS

The Department for Social Development is to make Cold Weather Payments following extremely low temperatures recorded over the last week in parts of Northern Ireland. Payment was triggered by information supplied by the Met Office from its Castlederg weather station, indicating forecast sub-zero temperatures over a seven-day period from 29 December 2008 to 4 January 2009. The following postal areas of Northern Ireland were affected by the cold spell: BT45-48, BT70, BT78-82.

Margaret Ritchie, Minister for Social Development, welcomed this additional help and said: "*The £25.00 payment will be paid automatically by the Social Security Agency to qualifying groups in the affected areas. There is no need to make a claim.*" *Those qualifying are people in receipt of Pension Credit, Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance (Income based) or Employment and Support Allowance (Income related) for one day during the period of cold weather who already receive a relevant pensioner or disability premium or have a child under the age of five.* The Cold Weather Payments will be made over the period of 7 January to 12 January 2009 either by direct payment to customer accounts or by cheques.

Cold Weather Payments are triggered when the daily temperature is, or is forecast to be, zero degrees Celsius or below, for a period of seven consecutive days. The temperature measurement is made by five meteorological stations located at Aldergrove, Ballykelly, Castlederg, Katesbridge, and Enniskillen.

The payments are made automatically and people do not have to make a claim. Cold Weather Payments are made in addition to the Winter Fuel Payments of £250 and over, made to people aged over 60 years.

CHARITY COMMISSION INTERIM WEBSITE

The Department for Social development has launched an interim website for the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. To view the site click [here](#) The site will provide information on the Charities Act, the role of the new Commission and the timescales for implementation and will operate until the Charity Commission is in place and in a position to develop its own corporate identity.

It is expected that the Charity Commissioners will be appointed and the Charity Commission established in March 2009.

NICVA has prepared a briefing on the Charities Act (NI) 2008 which can be accessed and downloaded by clicking [here](#)

It is envisaged that charities will not be required to register with the Charity Commission until the Spring of 2010 with first reporting requirements happening the following year in April 2011. The new rules for fundraising and public collections are not likely to take effect until 2011.

EVERY PHONE YOU SEND WILL RAISE UP TO £10 FOR ASBAH

An easy way to help ASBAH raise money and so help people with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus is to recycle your mobile phone and your ink-jet cartridges. If you are sending a phone do remember to remove any SIM cards. Original manufacturer-but not compatible-Inkjet cartridges from Hewlett Packard, Canon, Lexmark and Dell are welcomed.

Phones and inkjet cartridges can be sent to:

ASBAH Appeal,
FREEPOST ANG20589
PO Box 137
NR9 5BR

A supply of special envelopes for returning mobile phone and inkjet cartridges can be obtained by ringing Ian at 01733 421328

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