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Dear Parents/Carers

You will all be aware that over the past few months we have been investigating a number of cases of infection in Ward 6A to identify if there are any links between those infections and the ward environment.

As part of this, an independent review of the unit’s infection rates was carried out. The purpose was to examine whether infection rates within Ward 6A are what we might expect to see, or are higher than expected.

The review, commissioned by the Chief Nursing Officer, Scottish Government, and undertaken by Health Protection Scotland, has now been completed.

Health Protection Scotland has concluded there is no evidence to support the continued restriction of new admissions to Ward 6A at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital.

Health Protection Scotland have also confirmed that they are content with the actions that have been taken by the Incident Management Team (IMT) to investigate individual cases, that they have reviewed evidence of effective implementation of the actions they recommended and are assured that appropriate arrangements are in place for ongoing monitoring of infections, including triggers for detailed scrutiny going forward.

On the basis of the IMT investigation’s findings and the results from the Health Protection Scotland review, a recommendation to re-open the ward has been accepted. We anticipate that the Health Protection Scotland report will be published shortly.

Restrictions have therefore now been lifted and the ward has re-opened to new patient admissions today. We want to assure you of our absolute commitment to ensuring our environment remains safe for our patients.

To support the re-opening, a number of ward enhancements have been introduced including new parent and staff facilities, installation of HEPA filters in shower rooms and enhanced maintenance and cleaning of the air heating and cooling system.

We continue to closely monitor the quality of the water supply to ensure it remains safe. Sampling of the water system is carried out by an external specialist water hygiene company and analysed in their laboratory. This independent water expert has confirmed that it is ‘wholesome’, which is an industry term meaning it is safe to use.

As a further assurance we carry out our own sampling of the water supply by our own laboratory staff. The results of water sampling are reported and considered by the laboratory team and a group within NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde called the ‘Water Technical Group’ – this has representatives from infection control, external advisors and local technical staff.

The on-site water plant ensures all water coming into the hospital has a low dose of chlorine dioxide added to keep it clean and safe.

Any patient cared for high risk areas has point of use water filters in place as an extra precaution.

We understand that there may have been confusion because of the signs at the sinks within the single bed rooms, which advise patients that they are for hand washing use only.

Although the water is safe to drink, water from basins in patient rooms should not be used, as they are for handwashing only; this is advice from infection prevention and control colleagues.

Alongside ongoing routine monitoring and surveillance of infections, we have also established a Clinical Management Group to maintain vigilance on issues of infection control. At the request of the Cabinet Secretary, external experts from the National Service Network for Children and Young People with Cancer will join this group.

We completely understand this has been a distressing time for families and staff. There will always be a small number of patients who develop infections because of the seriousness of their illness. There are clearly lessons for us to learn in how we communicate with families during these periods. We welcome the opportunity to work with parents and Professor Craig White, who has been appointed by the Cabinet Secretary for Health, to consider how we can improve our information flow.

We would like to thank you for your understanding throughout this difficult time. If you have any further questions please speak to a member of staff who will be able to help or will refer the matter on to an appropriate person.

Yours sincerely



**Jane Grant**

**Chief Executive**

**NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde**