

Mr Robin Swann MLA
Minister for Health
Castle Buildings
Stormont
Belfast, BT4 3SQ



Sent by email

20/10/2020

Dear Minister Swann,

Definitions of Aerosol Generating Procedures

At the start of this pandemic we wrote to you regarding our concerns that dysphagia assessments, regularly undertaken by SLTs, were wrongly not listed as an AGP in the National Guidelines.

There is substantial evidence that as part of these procedures, coughing and sneezing generate aerosols with significant viral load, creating a higher risk of transmission of COVID-19, which itself causes profuse coughing.

Unfortunately, over 6 months now into this pandemic, we are still calling for **adjustment** to National Guidelines to accept that dysphagia assessments should be listed as an Aerosol Generating Procedure (AGP) despite the strength of robust scientific evidence.

RCSLT are now part of newly formed **UK AGP Alliance**, which brings together Royal Colleges, trade unions and professional bodies from across the health and care sector to call for an urgent review of the definition of Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGPs) involving the upper airways and gastrointestinal tract for the purposes of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

The Alliance strongly believe that current government guidance does not reflect the best available evidence on AGP and leaves our health and care professionals, their patients and colleagues at increased risk of COVID-19 transmission. Please see the attached position paper for more information (Note-since publication GMB Union have also joined the Alliance).

We would urge you to also consider this issue ahead of an imminent second surge to ensure that our SLT, fellow AHP, health and social care staff in Northern Ireland as well as their patients, colleagues and families are duly protected with the correct measures of infection control.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Kamini Gadhok MBE
Chief Executive

Office

Ceara Gallagher
RCSLT NI, Head of

cc: Richard Pengelly, Permanent Secretary, Department of Health NI
Jenny Keane, Chief Allied Health Professions Officer, Department of Health NI