



19<sup>th</sup> July 2007

## MEDIA STATEMENT

### £1/2 million Endoscope Decontamination Unit opens at Altnagelvin

Dame Deirdre Hine, whose review of the decontamination of endoscopes in Northern Ireland two years ago led to new guidelines across the UK, made a return visit today to officially open the first new purpose built endoscope decontamination unit at the Western Health and Social Care Trust's Altnagelvin Hospital.

The Western Trust's new £500,000 endoscopy unit utilises the very latest technology and sophisticated processes to ensure the highest quality standards in decontamination. It will provide decontamination services for the large and busy gastroenterology department at Altnagelvin, which is at the forefront of diagnostics and teaching in Northern Ireland.

Speaking at the opening of the unit Dame Deirdre Hine said:

"It is not often that a report I have written receives so much substantial response in terms of real hard money that the Department of Health has provided following my report. In fact it is almost unprecedented for me to see recommendations I have made being turned into bricks and mortar the way Altnagelvin has done – it has produced real tangible results which is very heartening for me."

"Bricks and mortar are very important but what is more important is the work and dedication of staff who I found to be of the highest calibre but working in difficult environments; today we can see professionals now having access to superb facilities and technology."

Dame Deirdre added: "If I needed to have an endoscopy, I would like to have it at Altnagelvin".

Commenting on the opening of the new service Mrs Sally O Kane, Chairman of the Western Health and Social Care Trust's Clinical Governance Committee said:

“The Trust has made a significant investment in the development, installation and commissioning of the new Endoscope Decontamination Unit. This demonstrates our continuing commitment to raise standards and deliver the best possible quality services for our patients. It could not have been possible without the hard work, dedication and commitment of our staff in the Endoscopy and HSDU units and they are to be congratulated on their swift response in implementing the Review recommendations and enabling Altnagelvin to be the first hospital to deliver this gold standard service in Northern Ireland.”

**Ends.**

**Notes to editors:**

The Independent Review of Endoscope Decontamination was chaired by Dame Deirdre Hine, Chairman BUPA Foundation and Chairman of the Royal Society of Medicine Press Board.

The use of endoscopes was introduced over 30 years ago and, since then, the technology has benefited many thousands of people in Northern Ireland. They are now an essential part of modern medical treatment, allowing patients access to early diagnosis and treatment of many serious illnesses such as cancer, severe intestinal bleeding or other life threatening conditions. In the past, many patients with these conditions would have required major surgery with a correspondingly higher associated risk.

HSDU is the acronym for the “Hospital Sterilisation and Disinfection Unit”.