

Document level: Trustwide (TW)
Code: SOP17
Issue number: 3.1

Emailing patients

Lead executive	Medical Director
Authors details	Trust Records & Information Governance Manager - 01244 397384

Type of document	Procedure
Target audience	All CWP staff
Document purpose	To provide staff with guidance for external emailing of password protected documents to patients

Approving meeting	Information Governance & Data Protection Sub-Committee	13-Mar-19
Implementation date	13-Mar-19	

CWP documents to be read in conjunction with	
HR6 CP3 CP63 GR41 IM7 IM1	Mandatory Employee Learning (MEL) policy Health records policy Access for health records policy Corporate records policy Confidentiality policy ICT Acceptable Usage Policy

Document change history	
What is different?	Recoded policy in line with policy library reshape
Appendices / electronic forms	N/A
What is the impact of change?	N/A

Training requirements	Training requirements for this policy are in accordance with the CWP Training Needs Analysis (TNA) with Education CWP.
-----------------------	--

Document consultation	
Clinical Services	Clinical representatives of the Information Governance & Data Protection Sub-Committee
Corporate services	Corporate representatives of the Information Governance & Data Protection Sub-Committee
External agencies	N/A

Financial resource implications	None
---------------------------------	------

External references	
1. Medical Protection Society fact sheet communicating with patients by fax and email: communicating-with-patients-by-fax-and-email	

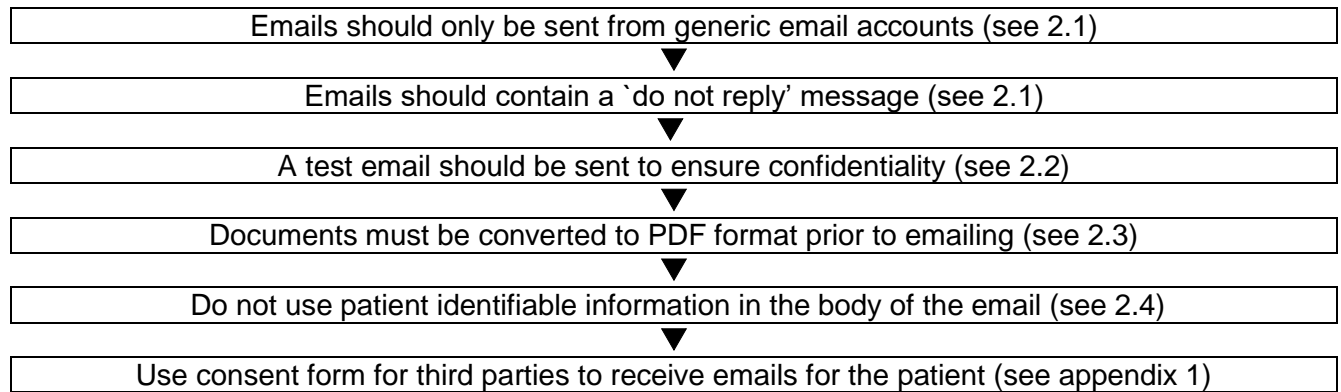
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) - Initial assessment	Yes/No	Comments
Does this document affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:		
- Race	No	
- Ethnic origins (including gypsies and travellers)	No	
- Nationality	No	
- Gender	No	
- Culture	No	
- Religion or belief	No	
- Sexual orientation including lesbian, gay and bisexual people	No	
- Age	No	
- Disability - learning disabilities, physical disability, sensory impairment and mental health problems	No	
Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?	No	
If you have identified potential discrimination, are there any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable? N/A		
Is the impact of the document likely to be negative?	No	
- If so can the impact be avoided?	N/A	
- What alternatives are there to achieving the document without the impact?	N/A	
- Can we reduce the impact by taking different action?	N/A	
Where an adverse or negative impact on equality group(s) has been identified during the initial screening process a full EIA assessment should be conducted.		
If you have identified a potential discriminatory impact of this procedural document, please refer it to the human resource department together with any suggestions as to the action required to avoid / reduce this impact. For advice in respect of answering the above questions, please contact the human resource department.		
Was a full impact assessment required?	N/A	
What is the level of impact?	N/A	

Content

Quick reference flowchart	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1. Introduction.....	5
2. Process for emailing patients.....	5
2.1 Generic email accounts.....	5
2.2 Test email.....	5
2.3 Documents in PDF format.....	5
2.4 Format of email.....	5
Appendix 1 Consent form for third parties to receive emails.....	6

Quick reference flowchart for emailing patients

For quick reference the guide below is a summary of actions required.



1. Introduction

This standard operating procedure is to provide staff with guidance for emailing patients. The Trust's information sharing leaflet for patients states that where the Trust hold their email address, the Trust may email information to them unless they choose to opt out of receiving emails. The leaflet states that the Trust cannot guarantee the security of emails. Patients may choose to nominate another individual to receive information by email, for example, a relative or carer. See appendix 1 for consent form for third parties to receive emails. Documents should be sent from generic email accounts which should contain a 'do not reply' message. Documents should be converted to PDF format.

2. Process for emailing patients

2.1 Generic email accounts

Emails should be sent from generic email accounts. Generic email accounts used for emailing patients must include a 'do not reply – use normal methods of communicating with service' automated message. Do not reply message must include warning to patients of using shared email addresses and failure to inform Trust of changed email address. If a generic email account does not already exist, contact the CWP ICT service desk email cwp.ictservice@nhs.net Tel: 0300 303 8182

2.2 Test email

To ensure that confidentiality is maintained, a test email should be sent to the recipient prior to sending any confidential information.

2.3 Documents in PDF format

Prior to emailing a document to an external location, it must be converted to PDF format. To PDF a document choose this as an option when saving the document:

2.4 Format of email

DO NOT use person identifiable information in the subject title or the body of the email. Documents which may be attached to emails may include for example copy letters. There may be reasons why copying letters to patients should not be carried out. These include:

- Where the patient specifically does not want a copy;
- Where the clinician feels that it may cause harm to the patient or for other reasons (record reasons in health records);
- Where the letter includes information about a third party who has not given consent;
- Where special safeguards for confidentiality may be needed.

For guidance regarding appropriate content of letters which may be copied to patients, please see the copying letters to patients section of the [access to health records policy](#)

Please complete the following information, using **BLACK INK** only

CONSENT TO EMAIL THIRD PARTY

Patient's Full Name:

We are now able to contact you and let you have **NON-URGENT** information about you by email. **However the Trust cannot guarantee the confidentiality of material sent to you in this way** as this depends on the security systems that may have been installed on the receiving computer.

You may wish to nominate someone to receive email communication for you for example a relative or carer.

I would like the following third party (person) to receive email communication on my behalf:

Name of third party:.....

Email address:

Signed:

Print Name:

Date: