

ST JOHN'S WAY MEDICAL CENTRE

PROCEDURE FOR ELECTRONIC TRANSFER OF PATIENT DATA

Introduction

There is a statutory and contractual obligation on practices under the new GMS contract to have in place a written procedure for the transfer electronically of patient data. The purpose of this protocol is to define circumstances in which this takes place within the practice and the administrative and security procedures which will apply.

For the purposes of this, electronic transmission is defined as;

- E mail
- Fax
- Pathology Test Results
- Out of Hours transmissions (OOH)
- Electronic Prescription Requesting (EPMS).

The overriding standard applicable to each of these is the Data Protection Act 1998 as summarised on the DoH website at www.dh.gov.uk

Email

- Patient identifiable information will not be sent by email.
- Where, in the interests of expedience, an email with or without attachments must be used to provide information, texts, images or other identifiable sections must be removed prior to dispatch. In these circumstances the recipient will be contacted by telephone to advise them that the e mail will be sent, and they will be informed verbally of the identity of the patient along with any relevant personal detail. The de-personalised items may then be emailed.
- Care will be taken to ensure that minor errors in the e mail address used do not result in an inappropriately or incorrectly addressed e mail.

Fax

It is acceptable for personal data to be transmitted by fax.

Although fax transmissions are not normally specifically electronic in nature when sent via a fax machine (they are similar to telephone calls) it is also possible for faxes to be sent directly from a PC, or to be sent from an ordinary fax machine directly into a recipients PC. In the latter scenario the sender will not be aware that the image will become data on receipt, and accessible via a computer screen.

When faxing patient identifiable data to an individual or a department for the first time the sender will determine whether the recipient has a traditional fax machine or a PC based fax system.

When sending patient identifiable data between two traditional fax machines the sender will ensure that the intended recipient is available to receive the data.

When sending information to a PC based system the sender will telephone the recipient to ensure that the person is logged on and available to receive the fax. This will avoid essential information being stored while the recipient is not present/on leave etc.

If in doubt, the recipient will be telephoned to ensure that the fax has been received.

Pathology/Test Results

- Most test results are transmitted in encrypted form to the practice via the clinical system pathology link.
- The duty doctor will be responsible for viewing the results on a daily basis. The reviewing clinician will identify any patient related action required.
- Nominated clinicians will be responsible for the re-allocation of results to alternative GPs in the event of named GP absences.
- The nominated clinician(s) will check for any unmatched patients or unmatched doctors daily. If the result cannot be matched manually they will print off the result and return it to the pathology department advising that the practice is unable to trace the patient.

- The pathology department will be contacted regarding any missing results or interchanges.
- The reception team will check that results-related administrative action is carried out daily. Results will not be removed from the action queue until all are completed.
- All patient related reports will be dealt with on the day of receipt.
- Individual clinicians will append comments to the results and file as a consultation into the clinical patient record.
- The nominated clinician will notify reception by means of comments on the patient database or email for any additional action required.

Out of Hours Transmissions (OOH)

- Encrypted reports of individual patient consultations with the out of hours provider, CAMIDOC, are transmitted directly into the clinical system.
- The Admin Team views and downloads these on a daily basis, before the practice opens in the morning.
- Each report is saved to the relevant patient's electronic EMIS record and an email is sent to the patient's usual doctor, or nominated deputising doctor in the case of absence, to notify them of the entry in the patient notes.
- The GPs will view the information and arrange any follow up action.

Electronic Prescription Requesting (EPMS)

EPMS is not currently in use. When it is implemented the following policy will apply:

The Electronic Prescription Management Service provides electronic requesting transmissions directly into the clinical system, electronic authorisation of prescription requests, and re-transmission of the authorised prescription back to the pharmacy for issue.

- The patient must complete a consent and application form prior to registration to the system.
- The patient will have the choice to opt in and out of the system, and will be able to select either of the methods (electronic or normal / manual) at any time.

- The administration and clinical staff accessing the system will ensure at each authorisation that there is no duplication, or potential duplication, of prescriptions being obtained either electronically or concurrently, manually.
- The reception team are responsible for accessing the inbox twice daily to view new electronic prescription requests. This person (s) is the nominated "In Box Manager" and will be in overall control of the process.
- The nominated person is responsible for initial review of the request, investigation of pharmacy queries relating to that prescription, and either accepting or rejecting the request back to the pharmacy.
- The nominated person will be responsible for the manual matching of patients to GPs where necessary.
- The nominated person is responsible for the initiation of any requests received direct from patients attending the surgery for a prescription to be processed and delivered electronically.
- The nominated person (or authorised deputy) is responsible for the monitoring of each prescription request received electronically until each has been authorised back to the pharmacy by the patient's "Usual GP" or the GP responsible for the authorisation.
- All repeat prescription requests received electronically will be accepted and authorised, or rejected, within 24 working hours of receipt within the clinical system.

Resources:

Department of Health <http://www.dh.gov.uk> Policy and Guidance – Data Protection Act

Department of Health <http://www.dh.gov.uk> Policy and Guidance – Electronic Transmission of Prescriptions