

Primary Care Support Service – Guidance on...

Use of NHS Wales email between GMPs and Community Pharmacists

This guidance is to support the use of NHS Wales email between General Medical Practitioners (GMPs) and Community Pharmacists, however, it can also be referred to for emailing between any NHS Wales email account, **excluding NHS Wales generic pharmacy accounts that must only be used for accessing NHS ENAS alerts.**

The NHS Wales email network is considered secure for the transfer of any information, including personal data, within NHS Wales. This applies to email addresses that end in “@wales.nhs.uk”. Users must always evaluate whether the email platform is the most appropriate method to communicate such data.

During this period of the COVID -19 outbreak, GMPs and Community Pharmacies are facing significant pressures it is accepted that it could be more harmful to not share health information than to share it. Where clinical need demands it, we may need to work in different ways from usual with our focus being on **what** information we need to share and **who** we share it with, rather than **how** we share it.

Reducing risks of using email

All transfer of information systems can pose various risks; however, these can be reduced by following the below guidance:

- GMPs and Pharmacists should only use the NHS Wales email system when emailing patient identifiable information to other healthcare professionals in Wales;
- Although the email system is considered safe, as a mitigating factor to avoid any inadvertent misdirection, additional pre-cautions such as encrypting attachments may also be considered when sending special category information (sensitive);
- Only email personal information between the Practice and Pharmacist if both parties have a legitimate reason to send and receive it, and only do so if it is strictly necessary;
- **GMPs should not send emails to the generic NHS Wales Pharmacy account as it may be viewed by any member of staff;**
- GMPs MUST contact the Pharmacy prior to sending an email to confirm which Pharmacist is on site that day and confirm the specific Pharmacist’s NHS Wales email address;
- There is always a risk of misdirection when sending emails. Users must double check that the communication is being directed to the intended recipient. All users should use the NHS Wales address book to check that the correct email address has been selected;
- Monitor your Outlook application to ensure that the email was sent appropriately, for example, no bounce back emails or ‘out of office’ reply’s. It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure the email was received by the recipient, DO NOT assume it has been received;

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- Requesting a read receipt or confirmation email by return may help ensure the GMP or Pharmacist has received the email, particularly in emergency situations and in light of the above point;
- Emailing to other NHS email addresses are not currently considered secure, for example, @nhs.net
- A pragmatic approach to emailing should always be taken.

Use of Web Mail for Community Pharmacies (personal NHS email accounts)

The Choose Pharmacy application enables Pharmacists to email directly through the NHS Wales email system, however, this does not always enable them to attach documentation.

An alternative route for Pharmacists to login to the NHS Wales email system is through the following link <https://email.cymru.nhs.uk/owa/auth/logon.aspx?> Using Outlook Web Mail through this route allows the user to attach and send documents and is considered secure.

Use of NHS email for communicating urgent prescriptions

- NHS Wales email must not be used for routine prescription requests;
- NHS Wales email must only be used where it is not immediately possible to provide the pharmacy with an original WP10 or other valid NHS prescription;
- Prescribers must discuss transmission via email with the pharmacist on duty before sending prescription information;
- Prescribers will need to provide the pharmacy with the original copy of the prescription within 72 hours.

Policies for Emailing Person Identifiable Information

An [All Wales Email Use Policy](#) is in place, although not specifically for Primary Care, it sets out the responsibilities of all users when accessing the NHS Wales email service. Each organisation should have their own Email Policy which supports the All Wales Policy when accessing the All Wales email system.