



To:
Organisations providing health services
General Practices
Local Authorities

8 February 2022

Annwyl / Dear All,

Covid-19 – Request for processing of confidential patient information for Covid-19 purposes

I have previously written to you regarding processing of confidential patient information for Covid-19 purposes. This is a further update to my previous letters.

The health and social care system is continuing to take action to manage and mitigate the spread and impact of the current outbreak of Covid-19. To support the response to the Covid-19 outbreak the processing and sharing of confidential patient information amongst health organisations and other bodies engaged in disease surveillance may be necessary for the purposes of protecting public health, providing healthcare services to the public, research and monitoring and managing the Covid-19 outbreak and incidents of exposure.

The future course of the pandemic cannot be determined. For now, we must maintain our response arrangements. I am therefore writing to request you continue to use the provision under regulation 3(1) of the Health Service (Control of Patient Information) Regulations 2002 (**COPI**) to process confidential patient information. Further detail of this request is set out below.

1. Purpose of this request

Regulation 3 of COPI provides that confidential patient information can be used and shared appropriately and lawfully for specified purposes. The purpose of this request is to ask organisations to process confidential patient information for the purposes set out in Regulation 3(1) of COPI in order to support the Minister for Health and Social Services' response to Covid-19 (Covid-19 Purpose). "Processing" for these purposes is defined in Regulation 3(2) and includes dissemination of confidential patient information to persons and organisations permitted to process confidential patient information under Regulation 3(3) of COPI.

2. Request to Process Confidential Patient Information

2.1. This request to process confidential patient information, includes disseminating that information to a person or organisation permitted to process confidential patient information under Regulation 3(3) of COPI.

2.2. Organisations are only requested to process such confidential patient information:

- a) where the confidential patient information to be processed is required for a Covid-19 Purpose and will be processed solely for that Covid-19 Purpose in accordance with Regulation 7 of COPI; and
- b) from the date of this request until 30 September 2022.

2.3 I wish to particularly highlight that this request still requires organisations to comply with relevant and appropriate data protection standards and to ensure that they operate within statutory and regulatory boundaries.

3. Covid-19 Purpose.

3.1 A Covid-19 purpose includes but is not limited to the following:

- understanding Covid-19 and risks to public health, trends in Covid-19 and such risks, and controlling and preventing the spread of Covid-19 and such risks;
- processing to support delivery of the NHS Wales Test Trace Protect Programme;
- identifying and understanding information about patients or potential patients with or at risk of Covid-19, information about incidents of patient exposure to Covid-19 and the management of patients with or at risk of Covid-19 including: locating, contacting, screening, flagging and monitoring such patients and collecting information about and providing services in relation to testing, diagnosis, self-isolation, fitness to work, treatment, medical and social interventions and recovery from Covid-19;
- understanding information about patient access to health services and adult social care services and the need for wider care of patients and vulnerable groups as a direct or indirect result of Covid-19 and the availability and capacity of those services or that care;
- monitoring and managing the response to Covid-19 by health and social care bodies and the Government including providing information to the public about Covid-19 and its effectiveness and information about capacity, medicines, equipment, supplies, services and the workforce within the health services and adult social care services;
- delivering services to patients, clinicians, the health and adult social care services workforce and the public in connection with Covid-19; including the provision of information, fit notes and the provision of health care and adult social care services;
- delivering the Covid-19 Vaccination Programme; and
- research and planning in relation to Covid-19.

4. Recording of processing

A record should be kept of all data processed under this request.

5. Review and Expiry of this Request

This request will be reviewed on or before 30 September 2022. If no further request is sent to you by me, this request will expire on 30 September 2022.

Yn Gywir / Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ifan Evans'.

Ifan Evans

ifan.evans@gov.wales

Cyfarwyddwr –Technoleg, Digidol a Thrawsnewid
Director – Technology, Digital & Transformation

Llywodraeth Cymru - Grwp Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Welsh Government - Health & Social Services Group