



Cymorth Llywodraethu Gwybodaeth  
ar gyfer Gofal Sylfaenol  
Information Governance Support  
for Primary Care

IGDC • DHCW

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# IG Guidance for Primary Care Service Providers on Use of Email for GMPs; including Locums

## Introduction

This guidance is to support the use of NHS Wales email to any NHS Wales email account (including to other GPs and pharmacies using NHS Wales email accounts).

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.

It is accepted that it could be more harmful to not share health information than to share it, therefore 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.

## Policies for Emailing Personal Identifiable Information

The [NHS Wales Email Use Policy for Primary Care Service Providers](#) is supplementary to the All Wales Email Use Policy issued under the All Wales Information Governance Policy Framework. This sets out the responsibilities of all users when accessing the NHS Wales email service.

The NHS Wales Email Use Policy for Primary Care Service Providers should be read in conjunction with relevant organisational procedures.

## Emailing between NHS Wales and NHS England

Email communications between NHS Wales and NHS England accounts can now occur without the need for additional encryption. This is following work between DHCW and NHS Digital to enable improved security and accredited connection for e-mails between @Wales.nhs.uk and @NHS.net accounts.

The NHS Wales email solution now meets with NHS Digital’s accreditation standard in order to transfer personal and confidential information between organisations.

## Reducing risks of using email

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

- When emailing patient identifiable information to other healthcare professionals in Wales (@Wales.nhs.uk) or England (@NHS.net) users should only use the NHS Wales email system;
- 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 to NHS Wales or NHS England email users if both parties have a legitimate reason to send and receive it, and only do so if it is strictly necessary;
- Users should not include personal information in calendar appointments;
- 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' replies;
- NHS Wales email users should monitor their NHS Wales email regularly to ensure no emails are missed;
- Senders may request a read receipt or confirmation email by return to ensure the receipt of the email, particularly in emergency situations;
- If there is a requirement to email a non @wales.nhs.uk or @nhs.net account in an emergency, consider other options, seek advice if necessary, and take a view based on the risks at the time;
- A pragmatic approach to emailing should always be taken.

## Unacceptable Usage

Users must NOT, at any time, use the NHS Wales Email System for:

- Communicating information that could be considered defamatory, libellous, derogatory, bullying or offensive;
- Sending knowingly false materials that could be misleading;
- Expressing personal views that may bring NHS Wales into disrepute (always remember you are NHS Wales's representative to the outside world);
- Distributing and storing content which could be considered as obscene, hateful, pornographic, violent, terrorist, racist or otherwise illegal material;
- Distributing or storing copyrighted material in a way that breaches the conditions of the copyright;
- Distributing unsolicited commercial or advertising materials;
- Communicating unsolicited personal views on political, social, or religious matters;
- Subscribing to non-work-related third-party email notification using NHS Wales email account;



- Distributing or storing non work-related emails that may not be productive for the recipient and that could also impact the network bandwidth and storage capacity;
- Intentionally introducing malicious code (i.e. Viruses, Worms, and Trojans) into the NHS Wales email system;
- Auto forwarding to outside of NHS Wales;
- Deliberately attempting to circumvent security systems protecting the integrity of the email system;
- Facilitate or perpetrate crime

