



CYMORTH LLYWODRAETHU GWYBODAETH AR GYFER GOFAL SYLFAENOL  
INFORMATION GOVERNANCE SUPPORT FOR PRIMARY CARE

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# IG Guidance on Use of NHS Wales email between GMPs and Community Pharmacies



## Introduction

This guidance is to support the use of NHS Wales email between GMPs and Community Pharmacies, however, it can also be referred to for emailing between any NHS Wales email account.

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:

- Pharmacies 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 Pharmacy if both parties have a legitimate reason to send and receive it, and only do so if it is strictly necessary;
- 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;
- Pharmacies often have other email addresses / outlook accounts therefore they should monitor their NHS Wales email (available through the Choose Pharmacy Application) regularly, especially during this time of extreme circumstances, to ensure no emails are missed;
- Practices may request a read receipt or confirmation email by return to ensure the Pharmacy 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

The Outlook Web App is how Pharmacies access the NHS Wales email system, through the Choose Pharmacy application, therefore this is considered secure. See Appendix A of the [Choose Pharmacy User Guide](#) for further information on accessing and Use of Web Mail.

## Comparison of the systems for sending emergency prescriptions

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, it 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.