

Access to Patient Records in General Practice Protocol

Applies to

HaRD CCG employed Pharmacists and Medicines Optimisation Technicians

These protocols are produced by the NY&AWC MM team hosted by HaRD CCG for use by their employed MM team members. They can be adopted for use by other healthcare staff working in GP practices across NY&AWC CCGs but HaRD CCG accepts no responsibility for the use and application of these protocols in these situations. External staff working to these protocols must agree with their own employer whether they are competent and able to work to these protocols.

Rationale

Accessing patient medical records in line with NHS information governance (IG) requirements is an essential part of the role of the medicines management team and is ordinarily approved by a GP in the practice by the signing of a protocol to authorise a specified piece of work.

This protocol is to allow practices to agree to the Medicines Management Team (MMT), who have up to date information governance training, to access a practice prescribing system and patient records for the purposes of investigating specific prescribing issues which may arise from locally or nationally produced prescribing data, or general practice and patient queries, which are not covered by a current MMT protocol.

This may include the investigation of:

- Red/Black drug prescribing
- Specials prescribing
- Medicines safety alerts
- Prescribing trends
- Ad-hoc practice requests for information on prescribing matters

It is important that IG requirements are adhered to regardless of the work that is undertaken, in order to safeguard patient and business confidentiality.

This protocol should be used in conjunction the NHS Confidentiality Policy (NHS England, 2014) and MMT staff will work within their professional code of conduct at all times.

Audits

In order for a MMT member to assess whether to proceed with a piece of work or to find information to inform internal medicines management QIPP or related activities, a simple search may be undertaken on practice patient data to check the number of patients affected. This will determine the potential impact of this on the practice/CCG i.e. patient numbers or potential cost saving/ prescribing patterns and inform work plans. The MMT member may:

- a) Run one or more audit/search reports,
- b) Access one or more patient records for the purpose of checking that the report has provided the expected result.
- c) Communicate anonymised results to share with the practice/ MMT/ CCG.

Ad-hoc Requests

From time to time the MMT may be approached by the practice, other parts of the MMT or CCG and asked to run a report or access one or more patient records for the purposes of fulfilling a specific request. Provided this request can be met by the MMT work stream, the MMT member should:

1. Receive explicit permission from the practice to undertake the piece of work by email and retain the email within an appropriate filename in the relevant practice signed protocol folder for that year on the Y drive.
2. Run appropriate reports to fulfil the request,
3. Access patient records where necessary in order to fulfil the request.

Occasionally, the MMT member working in a practice may speak to a patient of that practice who may ask for information regarding their medicines. In this instance the MMT member may access the patient's records if it is necessary to answer the patient's question. It is good practice to seek verbal permission from the patient prior to accessing the records for this purpose.

Method

When this protocol is signed the MMT member should:

- Place a copy into the relevant practice folder for signed protocols
- Make a scanned / photographed copy and store electronically in the appropriate practice signed protocol folder for that year on the Y drive.

Signature of practice Caldicott Guardian	
Practice name	
Date	
Signed on behalf of NYAWC MMT	

Please note that the practice representative signing this protocol agrees that:

- The practice will take responsibility for the notification of all relevant practice staff.
- The practice has made patients aware that their records are accessed by medicines optimisation team staff for these purposes e.g.: via practice leaflet, website or other communication and that the practice has applied appropriate restriction to the records of patients who have withdrawn consent.

References

NHS England, 2016. *NHS Confidentiality Policy*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/confidentiality-policy-v3-1.pdf>
[Accessed 09 03 2018].

Document version control

Version	State changes	New version	Actioned by
1 00	Use of on-line version statement	1 01	SK October 2016
1 01	New initial statement regarding protocol use.	1 02	SK November 2016
1 02	Review and reference update	2 00	AM/SK April 2017
2 00	Review and reference update	3 00	JA March 2018