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Dear Colleague

Intra-NHS Scotland Information Sharing Accord 2020

Summary

Revision of the Intra-NHS Scotland Information Sharing Accord (2011).

Background

The need to share information within the NHS Scotland has never been greater. The complexity of delivering healthcare services means there is a need to facilitate appropriate access in a seamless manner to patients' information throughout the patient journey.

In addition, there is increasing emphasis on multi-agency and cross boundary working and management of care which requires professionals to be able to securely communicate and share necessary, relevant, adequate and proportionate information in order to provide the best possible care for patients.

This requirement is underpinned by current data protection legislation and associated regulations which highlight that the duty to share information can be as important as the duty to protect patient confidentiality.

All NHS Scotland organisations have Information Governance processes in place in accordance with the Scottish Government Information Security Policy Framework. They have identified Senior Information Risk Owners, Data Protection Officers and Caldicott Guardians who oversee access to, the use of and the sharing of patient personal data with bodies both within, and outside NHS Scotland.

Patients and service-users expect a seamless flow of their health data throughout their patient journey - sharing within the NHS Scotland should happen in order to provide care – and all the activities which directly or indirectly support that care – without delay and duplication of effort. In many cases the safety of people depends on these data flows.

The NHS Scotland in itself is also changing, and events like the current COVID-19 pandemic, have made more evident the need

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Addresses

For action

Chief Executive Officers
Senior Information Risk Owners
IG Leads

For information

Data Protection Officers
Caldicott Guardians

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<https://www.informationgovernance.scot.nhs.uk/publications-2/>

for an agreement that is reflective of the wider patient journey within the NHS Scotland. Scottish Ministers have taken direct responsibility for dedicated health care facilities such as the Louisa Jordan Hospital, and will continue supporting and managing the NHS Scotland through the various policy areas and programmes of work within the Health and Social Care Directorate.

For these reasons a working group of Information Governance experts from across the NHS Scotland has revised the existing Intra-NHS Scotland Information Sharing Accord (2011).

Action

The [Intra-NHS Scotland Information Sharing Accord \(2020\)](#) comes into immediate effect across NHS Scotland organisations from the 22 June 2020.

This Accord re-enforces the spirit of our duties as Data Controllers within the NHS Scotland, and our recognition that the duty to share information can be as important as the duty to protect patient confidentiality. This Accord brings the patient at the centre of the NHS Scotland.

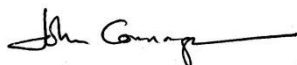
This Accord does not change the obligations of Data Controllers in discharging their data protection responsibilities.

I appreciate that this Accord is an interim step towards a wider NHS Data Protection Code of Conduct, as defined within the current Data Protection regulations and endorsed by the Information Commissioner Office in due course. This work is being led by the National IG team for Health and Social Care, and will evolve in close collaboration with IG colleagues across the NHS Scotland and the EU NHS Confederation.

We hope this Accord and any future NHS Data Protection Code of Conduct will allow faster, safer, fairer and more efficient data flows within the NHSScotland, situating the patient at the centre of the health care service.

With time, we hope the scope will extend across Health and Social Care in Scotland.

Yours sincerely



JOHN CONNAGHAN CBE
Interim Chief Executive NHSScotland
