

Chapter 1 - Introduction

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1 Introduction

The NHS has undergone rapid changes in the last few years. We hope that the guidelines will be sufficiently generic to offer authoritative advice to all those involved in the development and use of general practice electronic patient records in the foreseeable future. Therefore, these guidelines concentrate on addressing the issues that have recently arisen as queries to and from the Department of Health (DoH), the Scottish Executive Health Department (SEHD), the NHS Connecting for Health programme in the NHS England (NPfIT), Primary Care Organisations (PCOs), GP system user groups, the Joint GP IT Committee and its parent bodies since the last version was published in 2003.

1.1 Why this work is needed

The guidelines needed to be revised and updated to reflect the changes brought about through the NHS National eHealth and IM&T Strategy and the 2004 General Medical Services Contract for GPs. New areas are emerging that require updated or additional guidance. In addition there was a requirement to adapt the original document, which was written primarily for an English NHS audience, to meet the specific legal and operational needs of Scottish primary care.

1.2 Purpose and scope

Custom, practice and IT standards have evolved rapidly in the last few years and these need to be incorporated into the revised guidelines. This is particularly true in the areas of;

- Information governance

- Electronic transfer of medical records between GP practices (GP2GP or GP2EP)

- Electronic documents attached to the EPR

- Increasing inter-operability using electronic data interchange (EDI) standards

- Education and training

The Good Practice Guidelines were originally prepared at the request of the Department of Health in consultation with the Joint GP IT Committee of the General Practitioners' Committee of the British Medical Association and the Royal College of General Practitioners. This revision was undertaken on behalf of SEHD by Scottish Clinical Information in Practice (SCIMP <http://www.scimp.scot.nhs.uk>).

The main purpose of the guidelines is to provide a framework within which general practices can move from paper-based patient records to electronic patient records. They are intended as a source of authoritative guidance for practices, primary care organisations and other organisations supporting or advising general practices in the development and use of electronic patient records.

The Good Practice Guidelines (GPG) reflect the Joint GP IT Committee view of "best information practice" after consultation with stakeholder groups (see appendix 1). These guidelines draw on the experience gained since the last guidelines were published (Good Practice Guidelines v3 July 2003) and reflect developments in NHS structure, policy and practice since that time.

Where appropriate, specific references to English legislation or policy which do not apply in Scotland have been removed or replaced with their Scottish equivalents.

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The original document from July 2005 is available on the Department of Health web site.¹

¹ Good practice guidelines for general practice electronic patient records: Guidance for GPs (version 3.1) - July 2005 (PDF, 1474K)

[Hhttp://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/67/07/04116707.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/67/07/04116707.pdf)H

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