Email security

The purpose of this Stop Press is to update you on changes to the way we use email. These changes take effect immediately.

The Scottish Government has recently issued guidance to NHS Boards about what types of information can be exchanged by email with NHS colleagues, business partners and patients. We can now email certain categories of information more widely than before. The guidance sets rules on whether email can be exchanged between different parties, depending on the category of the email and the email networks in use.

This guidance is based on NHSScotland's own assessment of actual risk and discussions with the Information Commissioner's Office on how to improve security without disrupting normal business. Please see **Using Email in NHSScotland: A Good Practice Guide.**

What has changed?

You will need to categorise the content of any emails you send according to their sensitivity. There are three categories to choose from:

- **Green:** Unclassified information

- **Amber:** Protected information

- **Red:** Highly sensitive or restricted information

Click on each of the links for a description of each category of information. If you're reading this as a paper copy, please refer to AthenA for this information.

These changes will bring the NHS in line with the government protective marking scheme currently used by emergency services, local and central government.
You should note that:

- When emailing **Amber** information to trusted partners, you must type Protect in the subject line of the email.

- When emailing **Red** information to trusted partners, you must type Restricted in the subject line of the email.

The matrix overleaf shows what email systems can be used for the exchange of email, depending on the category of information contained in the email.

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	Green Unclassified information	Amber Protected information	Red Highly sensitive information Restricted	Red Highly sensitive information Restricted
Can I send or receive e-mail?	From any NHS Scotland official email account (nhs. net or nhs.uk) to:	From any NHS Scotland official email account (nhs. net or nhs.uk) to:	From an NHSmail account (nhs.net) to:	From an NHS.uk account to:
To another official NHS Scotland email address (nhs. net or nhs.uk)	✔	✔	✔	✔
To a trusted partner with GSi-equivalency*	✔	✔	✔	✖
To a trusted partner without GSi-equivalency*	✔	✔	✖	✖
To patients and wider public Subject to the Emailing Patients Guidelines	✔	✔	✖	✖
To unconnected organisations	✔	✖	✖	✖

* GSi means Government Secure Intranet. This is a wide area network used by many government bodies. It works on the basis of security accreditation and codes of connection. GSi-equivalency shows where similar public networks are deemed to meet the same level of security. Click **here** for more information.

If you need to send information outwith these categories or information which includes a high volume of patient identifiable information, please contact the Information Governance team and / or IT Security team. They will be able to advise the most appropriate methods, subject to approval from the Caldicott Guardian.

Always consider anonymising personal identifiable information where possible. Always use the minimum amount of identifiable information for your requirements.

All NHS Ayrshire & Arran policies and guidance will be updated to reflect these recent changes to email. Click **here** for more information.

What hasn't changed?

Information should only be shared where there is a legitimate need or legal right to access the information.

Work-related email must only be sent from official NHSScotland email accounts and never from personal non work-related accounts.

Always take precautions to ensure that the e-mail message is not transmitted to the wrong person. If this happens, it may result in a breach of confidentiality. This may lead to the individual sending the e-mail being subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Further information

For more information on in the implementation of this guidance, please contact:

Information Governance:
• Telephone extension 13693 or 13694
• Email **informationgovernance@aapct.scot. nhs.uk**

IT Security:
• Telephone extension 13720
• Email **itsecurity@aapct.scot.nhs.uk**

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