

Protocol for the Transmission of Manual Faxes

Introduction

The Transmission of Manual Faxes Protocol outlines the reasons for caution with regard to sending manual fax transmission, and includes the practical steps that need to be taken to ensure confidentiality of patient and staff information is maintained.

Objectives

This short protocol has a few specific objectives:

- To highlight the confidential nature of the information held by the UHB
- To stress the importance of confidentiality
- To provide practical steps for sending and receiving confidential faxes.

Operational Date

Immediate

Scope

The protocol applies to all staff at all locations across Cwm Taf UHB.

Equality Impact Assessment

No impact identified.

Distribution

SharePoint

To be read by

All staff via intranet. Managers are required to ensure that relevant staff have access to the protocol.

Documents to read alongside this Protocol

Information Governance Policy
Information Security Policy
Data Protection Policy

Approved by

Information Governance Group

Accountable Executive

Board Secretary / Director of
Corporate Services & Governance

Author

Head of Corporate Services

Freedom of Information Status	Open
<p>If the review date of this policy has passed, please ensure that the version you are using is the most up to date either by contacting the document author or the Corporate Services Department</p> <p>Out of date policies cannot be relied upon</p>	

Amendment Record

If a change has been made to the document, the changes must be noted and circulated to the appropriate colleagues.

Detail of change	Why change made?	Page number(s)	Date of change	Version	Name of Policy Author
Minor grammatical and stylistic changes	Changes to make document correct and more readable	Across document	Sept 2016	2	Gwenan Roberts
Revised front page	To improve readability of document and better record changes	Front cover	Sept 2016	2	Gwenan Roberts
Minor revisions	Corporate style	Whole document	Nov 2018	3	Gwenan Roberts

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1. INTRODUCTION

Cwm Taf University Health Board (the UHB) holds large amounts of personal information about patients and members of staff. This information must be treated with respect, integrity and in a confidential manner at all times to ensure that it is protected from inappropriate and unauthorised disclosure.

One of the most common breaches of confidentiality occurs when documents containing patient or staff identifiable information are sent by fax machine. The fax machine to which you are sending information could be sited in an open office or even in a corridor; it may be shared by more than one department, thereby increasing the risk of the information being seen by unauthorised persons.

This protocol has been developed to provide staff with clear instructions which must be followed whenever patient / staff information or other confidential information is sent via fax machine. It must be placed alongside every fax machine.

2. SENDING FAXES

If patient or staff identifiable information needs to be sent to other health organisations, the first preference is to send to a Safe Haven fax machine.

Safe Haven Fax Machines

A Safe Haven fax machine is managed in such a way that the UHB can be confident that information can be transferred to it in the knowledge that safeguards are in place to ensure its security. These safeguards include:

- The fax machine is sited in a secure room or cupboard
- The organisation has a written policy for handling faxes
- Staff have been informed of and understand the policy
- There are designated staff who are responsible for collecting and delivering the faxed information to the appropriate person.

3. SENDING FAXES – THE PROCESS

Whenever patient or staff identifiable information is sent via fax machine the following process **must** be followed:

1. Before sending the fax, the recipient of the fax (or their representative) should be telephoned, to inform them that patient or staff identifiable information is being sent by fax. A few simple questions should be asked:
 - Is the receiving fax machine sited in a secure office?
 - Does more than one department use the fax machine?
 - Are there designated people who collect faxes?
 - Could a member of staff wait by the fax machine whilst the fax is sent?

2. Clinical information should, wherever possible, be faxed without accompanying patient administrative details, i.e. the hospital number should be detailed on the first sheet together with any administrative details. Clinical details together with the same linking identifier should be transmitted on the second sheet. Confirmation of receipt of the fax cover sheet must be received before any confidential patient or staff information is transmitted.
3. Measures should be taken to minimise the risk of mis-dialling, e.g. programming frequently used numbers into fax machines and always checking that numbers are up to date and entered correctly.
4. Always use a fax cover which states that the information being sent is confidential. Please see below for suggested wording

The information contained in this fax is **STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL** and is intended for the named recipient only. If you are not the named recipient you must not copy, distribute or disseminate this information, or disclose its contents to any person. If you have received this fax in error, please notify the sender immediately. Thank you.

5. Double check the fax number before pushing the 'send' button to ensure that the correct, current number has been dialed.
6. Check that the fax has been received.
7. A confirmation report sheet must be requested to confirm that the fax has been transmitted successfully. This must be stapled to the documents that have been faxed.
8. The fax machine must not be left unattended while the information is being transmitted.

Do not:

- Send faxes to a destination where they are not going to be seen for sometime.
- Send faxes to a destination outside office opening hours (wherever possible).

If a confidential document is sent to a fax machine in error, it is the responsibility of the staff member who found it to ensure that it is given to the named recipient or securely returned to its source.

Fax Machines with Carbon Rolls

Colleagues should note that the carbon rolls on fax machines show exactly what has been sent and received so the carbon rolls must be shredded.

PLEASE REMEMBER, IF IN DOUBT – CHECK IT OUT

Take care of personal information

4. RECEIVING FAXES

If confidential information is to be faxed from or faxed to a member of staff, please ask that the follow process is carried out:

1. A telephone call should be made just before the fax is sent.
2. The front sheet should be sent first and the following should be clearly marked on it:
 - a) that it contains confidential information
 - b) the number of sheets, including the frontsheet
 - c) the name, job title, telephone number and organisation or sender
 - d) the receiving person's name, together with their job title and telephone extension if possible.
3. Staff sending the fax should telephone to check that the front sheet has arrived safely (if the front sheet has been safely received, the remainder of the fax can then be sent).
4. In addition, staff sending the fax could be asked to retain the delivery confirmation sheet.

Information Governance

If the Department fax machine is to be relocated, the Information Governance team must be notified. A central register is kept within this team to ensure that appropriate security measures are met and recorded.

Copies of the protocol should also be displayed by the fax to raise awareness of the correct procedure to be followed. Should there be any queries or training required, please contact the Information Governance Officer at Ynysmeurig House, Abercynon.