

Pharmacy Information Governance Toolkit Assessment and Standards

The Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC)

(http://www.psn.org.uk/news.php/587/nhs_information_governance_requirements) and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB)

(<http://www.rpsgb.org/worldofpharmacy/currentdevelopmentsinpharmacy/itinpharmacy/#gov>)

have been working jointly with the Department of Health and NHS Connecting for Health to develop the Information Governance Toolkit standards for pharmacies.

We appreciate that this work will be new to most pharmacies and have therefore setup a dedicated helpdesk with an email address and dedicated telephone lines to support any immediate queries that those involved in the completion of the information governance toolkit assessment may have (i.e pharmacists themselves, PCT Medicines management leads, PCT IG Leads, SHAs). Queries can either be sent via email to pharmacy.assurance@nhs.net or referred to a member of the team by telephoning 0113 394 6540. This helpdesk will be available from Monday 19th October 2009.

Background

All community pharmacies are subject to legal and professional requirements to ensure the confidentiality and security of patient data that they handle. Under the Data Protection Act all community pharmacies have to register with the Information Commissioner's Office as data controllers, must handle information fairly and lawfully and must ensure there are adequate technical and procedural security measures in place to safeguard information. All community pharmacies have a contractual requirement to ensure appropriate arrangements have been made in respect of compliance with the Confidentiality NHS Code of Practice and pharmacists individually have a professional requirement to comply with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain professional standards.

The NHS Operating Framework 2009/10

(http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyandGuidance/DH_091445) introduced a requirement that by the end of 2009/10, all NHS providers, including community pharmacies, must be able to provide IG assurances to their commissioners regarding the management of personal information within the provider organisation

What do community pharmacies need to do and by when?

For 2009/10 there are 18 IG requirements that community pharmacists will be expected to comply with. To meet the requirements in the Operating Framework, each community pharmacy will need to provide appropriate assurances to their PCT with regards to the community pharmacy set of information governance requirements. Community pharmacies are therefore required to carry out annual IG assessments in their premises and record their findings on the online IG Toolkit.

Why do local pharmacies have to complete the IG assessment rather than Head Offices of multi-national companies?

As with all service provision and compliance matters, each pharmacy premises will need to reassure their PCT regarding IG compliance and in turn each PCT will need to seek IG assurances from each of their pharmacies. A potential 'business as usual' model for obtaining these assurances will be for PCT medicines management leads to work closely with PCT IG leads looking at which pharmacies are

engaging with the IG toolkit assessment and which aren't. The tools to enable this monitoring have been made available for PCTs within the Reporting section of the IG Toolkit.

All community pharmacists should undertake an online baseline assessment by **31st March 2010** against the Pharmacy requirements in the IG Toolkit at <https://www.igt.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/> Any pharmacies that are not achieving level 2 attainment on these requirements will be expected to work with their PCT to agree an action plan. By the end of **31st March 2011** community pharmacists will be expected to attain Level 2 against the pharmacy set of IG requirements.

Support for community pharmacies

Comprehensive guidance and tools have been developed by the PSNC and the RPSGB in conjunction with the Department of Health and NHS CFH. The materials will include template policies, standard operating procedures and patient information material, which will be published on the IG Toolkit website and PSNC and RPSGB websites.

Agreement has been reached between the Department of Health and the PSNC on the funding for the community pharmacy contractual framework for 2009/10. A proportion of excess margin will be used in 2009/10 to fund one-off infrastructure investments, to sustain the effective delivery of community pharmacy services. This includes implementation of the information governance requirements.

Any queries please contact the dedicated helpdesk on:

Email: Pharmacy.assurance@nhs.net

Telephone: 0113 394 6450