

Document level: Trustwide (TW)
Code: IM2
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Email Management Procedure

Lead executive	Medical Director
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Type of document	Procedure
Target audience	All CWP staff including health and corporate services
Document purpose	Originally devised as part of the productive leader package in order to produce efficiencies and allow staff to more effectively use email technology.

Approving meeting	Records & Information Systems Group	26-July-18
Implementation date	15-Nov-18	

CWP documents to be read in conjunction with	
HR6	Mandatory Employee Learning (MEL) policy
IM7	Code of Confidentiality Policy
SOP17	Emailing patients

Document change history	
What is different?	Page 4 flow chart changed consider using shared drives to used shared drives for attachments where possible Page 7 2.9 changed emphasis of emailing links to documents rather than sending attachments. Page 8 2.14 updated encryption guidance for nhsmail
Appendices / electronic forms	N/A
What is the impact of change?	Low

Training requirements	No - Training requirements for this policy are in accordance with the CWP Training Needs Analysis (TNA) with Education CWP.
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Document consultation	
Clinical Services	Via Records & Information Systems Group
Corporate services	Via Records & Information Systems Group
External agencies	N/A

Financial resource implications	None
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External references	
1. N/A	

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) - Initial assessment	Yes/No	Comments
Does this document affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:		
- Race	No	
- Ethnic origins (including gypsies and travellers)	No	

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) - Initial assessment	Yes/No	Comments
- Nationality	No	
- Gender	No	
- Culture	No	
- Religion or belief	No	
- Sexual orientation including lesbian, gay and bisexual people	No	
- Age	No	
- Disability - learning disabilities, physical disability, sensory impairment and mental health problems	No	
Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?	No	
If you have identified potential discrimination, are there any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?		
Is the impact of the document likely to be negative?	No	
- If so can the impact be avoided?	N/A	
- What alternatives are there to achieving the document without the impact?	N/A	
- Can we reduce the impact by taking different action?	N/A	
Where an adverse or negative impact on equality group(s) has been identified during the initial screening process a full EIA assessment should be conducted.		
If you have identified a potential discriminatory impact of this procedural document, please refer it to the human resource department together with any suggestions as to the action required to avoid / reduce this impact. For advice in respect of answering the above questions, please contact the human resource department.		
Was a full impact assessment required?	No	
What is the level of impact?	Low	

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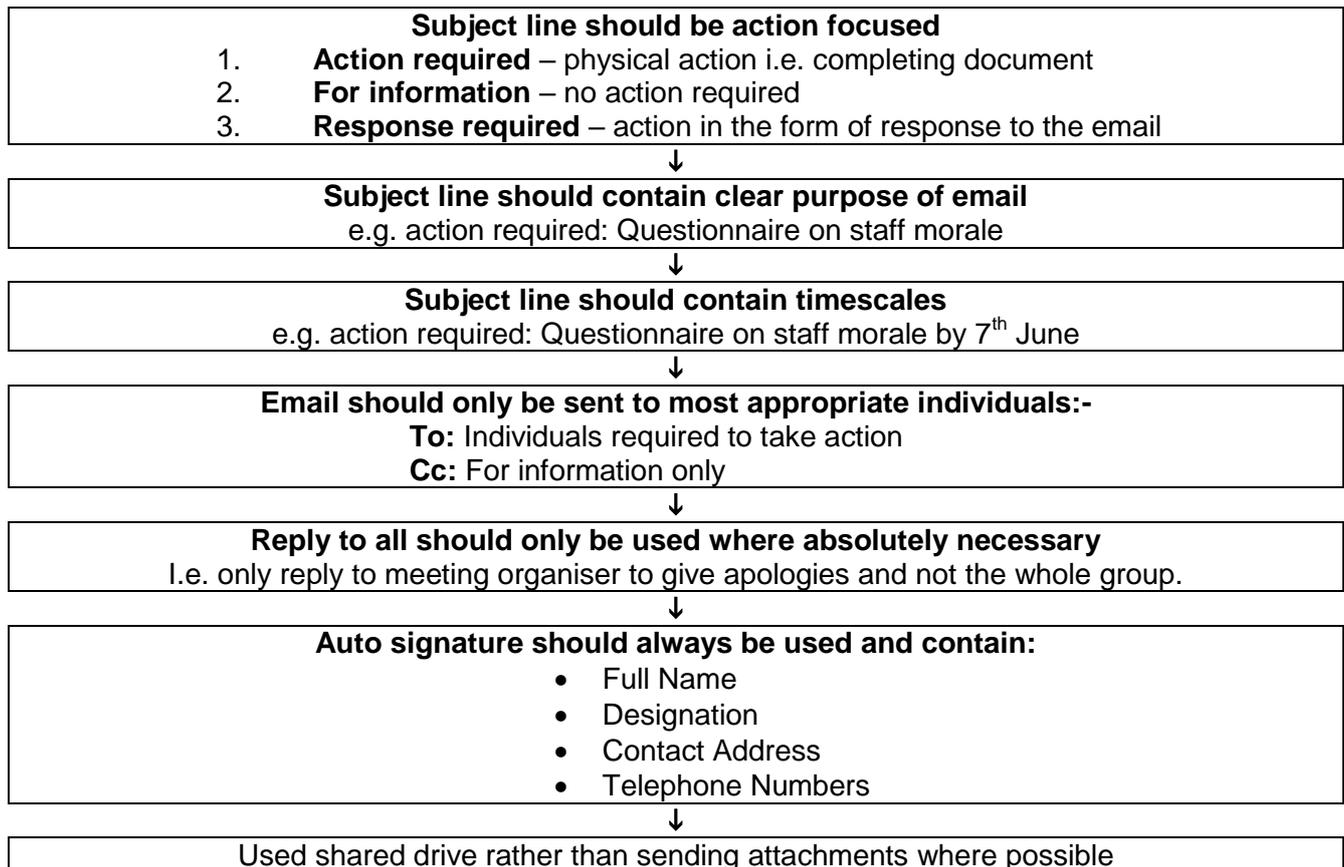
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Quick reference flowchart 1 – Sending an email

Consider whether email is the best form of communication to achieve the desired outcome

Alternative methods:

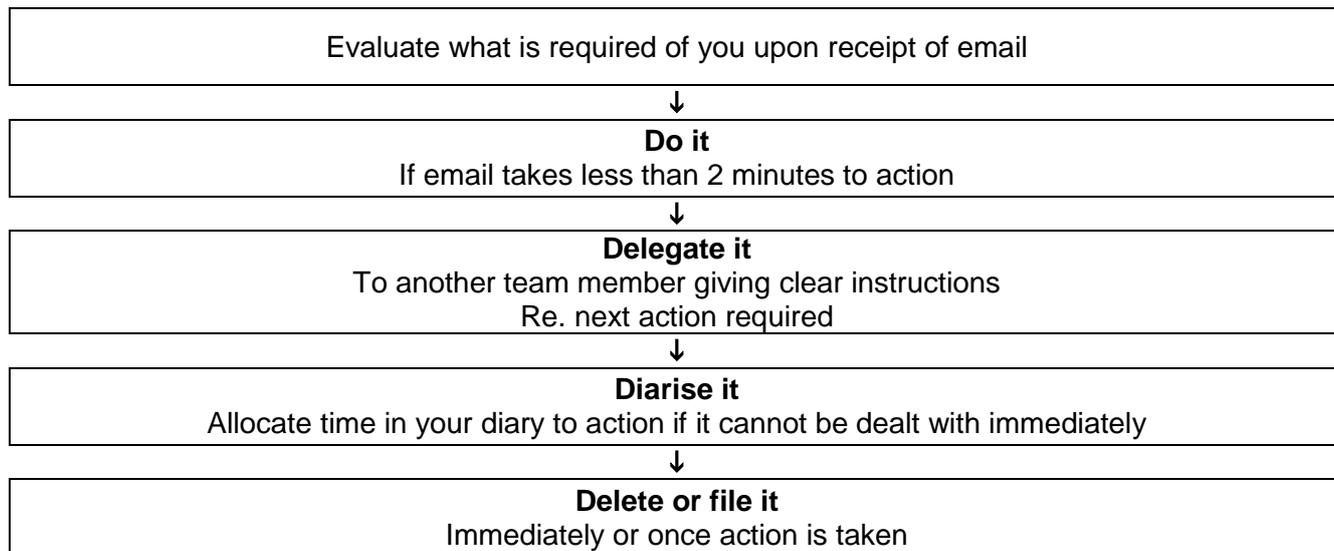
- Face to face
- Telephone
- Video or telephone conferencing



Always consider the language and tone used within an email:

- Emails are also accessible via the Freedom of Information Act;
- Follow the Trust guidelines for email encryption for those being sent to external sources.

Quick reference flowchart 2 – Receiving an email



Where possible, only handle an email once

1. Introduction

The procedure was originally devised as part of the Productive Leader programme developed by the NHS Institute of Innovation and Improvement. The benefits to individual staff members and the organisation as a whole are as follows:

- A reduction in the amount of time spent dealing with emails
- More effective management of the inbox and a reduction in unwanted items
- A reduction in the stress that staff feel when managing emails
- An improvement in the quality of emails which are sent and received
- A reduction in the number of emails received
- Better responses to the emails which are sent

2. Sending emails

The following are best practice guidelines for email management for emails both sent and received

2.1 Things to consider prior to sending an email

The 3 key questions prior to sending an email should be why the email is being sent, what is being sent and who it is being sent to. This will help the sender to decide whether an email is actually the best form of communication to be used for the task at hand.

Emails should not be used as a means of avoiding having difficult conversations or **if an urgent response is needed as an email may not be picked up in time**. Prior to sending an email consideration should be given as to whether a face to face or telephone conversation would be more appropriate to achieve the necessary outcome. Other available options maybe the use of video conferencing technology or telephone conferencing.

2.2 Purpose and desired outcome

If it is decided that email is the most appropriate form of communication to use in a particular instance consideration needs to be given as to the outcome that needs to be achieved. The purpose of an email should be outlined in the first paragraph and it may be necessary to also outline the context of the email particularly if it is the first time that the recipient has been involved in a particular issue. If an individual is being asked to add comments following a string of emails the purpose of their input should be made clear along with a summary of the discussions within the string provided to avoid time being wasted scrolling down numerous emails.

Emails should always be:

- **Short, concise, action focused and only deal with one subject at a time.**
- Task driven and not enter into unnecessary conversation.

2.3 Subject line

All emails should include a subject line (do not include personally identifiable information in a subject line). A subject line should:

Start with the action required

- **Action required-** a physical action is required, i.e. completing a document;
- **For information-** there is no action required;
- **Response required-** action is required in the form of a response to the email.

Contain a clear description of the purpose of the email e.g.

- **Action required:** Questionnaire on staff morale.

Contain any timescales if necessary e.g.

- **Action required:** Questionnaire on staff morale **by 7th June.**

2.4 Recipients

The sender should always ensure that the email is being sent to the most appropriate individuals:

- **To-** individuals who are required to take action;

- Cc- Individuals who are copied in for information only.

Note: If staff receive emails in error which contain personally identifiable information, e.g. staff sickness, this is a breach of confidentiality and a DATIX incident form must be completed on every occasion.

2.5 Email format

To ensure clarity within the email, language and formatting should be used appropriately. The use of bold and underlining should only be used to emphasise key points. Paragraphs, bullets and numbering can be used to add structure to an email. The text within the e-mail should be written in Arial font with 11 point as a minimum size. To ensure that an email is easy to read text should be black on a white background.

Emails should always be brief, to the point. Abbreviations should always be kept to a minimum with capital letters only being used where necessary.

2.6 Auto-signature

All emails should contain an auto signature at the end with the following contact details included:

- Name;
- Job title;
- Full office address including postcode;
- Contact telephone number;
- Fax number if appropriate.

2.7 Attachments

If staff have access to the same server or shared file a link where information can be stored and accessed should be sent as an alternative to sending attachments. **Attachments should only be sent to those recipients who need them and should be removed from emails being forwarded if they are not necessary.** Alternatives to sending an attachment could be the use of web links or to paste only the relevant sections of the attachment into the email.

2.8 Out of office responses

An out of office reply should always be set if emails are not able to be accessed due to annual leave etc. and should include the following information:

- Estimated date of return;
- Name and contact details of the person covering.

The auto reply should be removed immediately upon return to work.

2.9 Reply to all

When replying to an email sent to a number of recipients e.g. the date for a meeting **the reply to all button should only be used where absolutely necessary.** It is not necessary for all recipients to know if an individual is sending apologies to a meeting, only the meeting organiser.

2.10 Forwarding other staffs emails

Approval needs to be sought from the originator of an email before it is forwarded on to a third party. It is important that the originator is aware of where their email contents destination will be.

2.11 Read receipts

Read receipts should only be used where it is necessary to see that an email has been opened / read and not as a matter of course.

2.12 Language and tone

The language used within an email is a reflection of not only the individual but of the organisation and it is therefore important that the language and tone used is appropriate. Consideration should be given to the target audience with particular attention paid to their level of understanding in relation to the

subject. The tone of an email can easily be misinterpreted so emails should always be read back before being sent. The language used within an email should be such so as not to promote stigma towards the service being represented or those in receipt of a particular service.

It is important to consider what an email may say about the sender or the organisation as a whole and therefore every email should be checked prior to sending to ensure that the negative impact of emails can be reduced. The sender should always ensure that the email is clear, concise and the contents could not be misinterpreted by the recipient. **Emails should not be sent in the heat of the moment or with a negative purpose.** The information contained in an email trail should be checked to ensure that sensitive information is not forwarded in error. Finally the email the sender should ensure that all the required information is contained within the email and that it has been spell checked before sending.

2.13 Freedom of information (FOI)

All staff should be aware that the public can request access to any email whether or not it contains information about them. Therefore all emails are disclosable under the Freedom of Information Act unless access would lead to a breach of Data Protection legislation.

2.14 Email encryption and password protected documents

Confidential information should only be exchanged outside of nhsmail when encrypted. NHSmail email sent to secure domains is automatically encrypted and complies with the pan-government secure email standard. NHSmail is accredited to the Health and Social Care secure email standard and is suitable for sharing patient identifiable and sensitive information.

When sending emails outside of NHSmail, use [secure] at the start of the email subject. [Secure] is not case sensitive. **Note:** brackets must be square brackets or the message will not be encrypted. 'Secure' is not case sensitive. The NHSmail service will assess whether encryption is required.

- If the domain the email is being sent to is accredited, the email will be sent securely and no further encryption is required.
- If the domain the email is being sent to is not accredited, and therefore insecure, the NHSmail service will programmatically enforce the use of the encryption tool to protect the email data. The recipient will need to log into the Trend Encryption Micro portal to unencrypt the email before it can be read.

NHSmail works with the Government Digital Service (GDS) to regularly update the list of accredited domains.

How to send an encrypted message from nhsmail:

- Send the recipient the recipient [Accessing Encrypted Emails Guide](#) so they can register for the service.
- Once the recipient of the information has registered for the encryption service and confirmed to the sender that this is complete, confidential information may be sent to the recipient using [Secure] at the beginning of the subject field of the email.
- Send the message.

The service will then encrypt the message and deliver it to the intended recipient. The sent item will be stored unencrypted in your sent items folder, any replies received will be decrypted and displayed as normal in NHSmail.

An alternative to encryption is to password protect a document. To password protect a document go into 'file' and select 'permissions' then select 'encrypt with password'.

2.15 What needs to be protected?

Any information leaving the Trust which is confidential or commercially sensitive should be encrypted. This would include the following (you may be able to think of further examples):

- Patient / client identifiable information;
- Staff identifiable information;

- Tender documents;
- Financially / commercially sensitive documents;
- Reports;
- Audits;
- Statistics.

2.16 Sending emails out of hours

The sending of emails out of hours is the responsibility of the individual. It should be realised however that there is no requirement for the recipient to respond outside of their normal working hours. The sender must also consider any additional pressure that this may place on an individual who may come into work to find a high number of emails awaiting response and make every effort to avoid this.

2.17 Email use whilst on annual leave

Staff using smart phones/lpads or remote access to CWP's email network whilst on annual leave is not encouraged by CWP, appropriate cover should be in place during this time.

3. Receiving emails

Upon receipt of an email the recipient should evaluate its requirements and where necessary respond themselves. The following processes for dealing with emails should apply:

- **Do it** if the email will take less than 2 minutes to deal with;
- **Delegate** the email to another member of the team giving clear instruction on the next action required;
- **Diarise** time to action the email if action cannot be taken immediately;
- **Delete or file** the email immediately or once the relevant action has been taken.

Once the action required for each email has been determined it should be filed to either action at a later date or for information/ reference. To ensure that the minimum amount of time is spent dealing with emails where possible they should only be handled once.

4. Email management

In order to effectively manage emails and keep your inbox as free as possible the following actions can be taken:

4.1 Email filing system

- Folders should be set up and named for easy recall which is down to personal preference e.g. by the name of the sender or topic / project name;
- The @ sign can be used at the beginning of the folder name to bring this to the top of your folder list;
- An actions folder should be set up at the top of the folder list for any items that cannot be responded to within the 2 minute do it rule;
- Folders should be set up in the name of key colleagues so that follow emails can be saved within them.

4.2 Reminders for future action

- Schedule diary time in which to deal with emails within the working week;
- Set reminders with regards to any follow ups or deadlines using the flagging system;
- Emails can also be attached to an appointment in a diary using the following process:
 - Highlight email;
 - Go to edit then copy;
 - Go to calendar date and time required;
 - Paste the email at the bottom of the calendar entry;
 - Complete the subject line and timings as normal.

4.3 Training available

Microsoft Office 2010 Outlook Level 1	All Staff	IT Training	EE3-373-Microsoft-Office-2010-Outlook-Level-1
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This course is designed to provide you with the basic tools needed to use Microsoft Outlook and is suitable for all staff. This course is a good level to start at and build foundation skills in Microsoft Outlook. New users and competent users of Outlook will both benefit from the course and will learn new skills. This course is available twice a year face to face and can be completed **online** at any time, please contact cwp.ittraining@nhs.net to express your interest and enrol. For further information or to discuss these options, please contact the IT Trainers at cwp.ittraining@nhs.net.