



INFORMATION GOVERNANCE

VOLUNTEER GUIDANCE

Whilst this specific advice may not be necessary in General Practice now it is a useful summary and could easily be adopted for a future scenario where volunteers work with or are granted access to patient data.

Many people have signed up to volunteer following the government's call for volunteers to help support the health and care system during the current COVID-19 period. The roles include transporting patients; transporting NHS equipment or supplies e.g. assisting pharmacies with medication delivery and providing telephone support to individuals.

It is recognised that there may not be a period of formal training but as a minimum volunteers will need a brief overview of Information Governance (IG) considerations which are set out below.

I'm a volunteer - what do I need to know?

- You may be given use of and access to information about patients, service users or staff, for example patient names and addresses to deliver prescriptions to. This information is confidential and you must only share it with others who need it as part of their role. If you are unsure about when to share information you should speak with your volunteer supervisor. You will only be given this information if it is required for your volunteering role.
- If you come into contact with patients/service users e.g. if transporting or calling them, you should also treat any information they tell you as confidential and only share it with those you are working with where required. You should not for example share this information with your friends or family or use it for your own purposes.
- If you think someone has accessed information inappropriately or there is a risk to information, for example you have lost some personal/confidential patient information, such as a list of patient's names or a prescription, you should report it to your volunteer supervisor.
- Confidential waste should be disposed of securely. The organisation you work for will have information about how this is done. If you are unsure, speak to one of your colleagues or your volunteer supervisor.
- Consider where you make calls from – if you need to call someone about a sensitive issue, find somewhere private where you won't be overheard.
- If you need to undertake video calls, you can do so. You should ensure you safeguard personal/confidential patient information in the same way you would with any other method of communication, for example ensuring others can't overhear or see your conversation.
- You should protect the information you are given, including when working from home. For example storing copies of information securely and ensuring others in your household don't have access to information stored on mobile devices or computers.
- Patients/service users have certain rights over their information. If someone asks you for a copy of their information, or asks for their data to be changed or deleted, you should consult your supervisor.

If you are unsure about anything contact your volunteer supervisor in the first instance.

If you have any queries about this, or any Information Governance issue, please contact the N3i service desk marking your query IG. The contact details for the service desk are:

Phone: 0300 002 0001

Email: N3i.support@nhs.net

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