

## SENDING PERSONAL INFORMATION BY FAX

This is an agreed set of administrative and physical security procedures that have been designed to minimise the risks of breach of confidentiality or loss of information when sending or receiving faxing personal information via Fax

Do not fax personal or confidential information unless it is absolutely necessary. Where possible choose a safer method of sending information.

If it is absolutely necessary e.g. urgent clinical purposes, confidential information can be sent and received by fax if the following procedures are followed to reduce the information security risks.

### Part 1 - Sending Information by Fax

1. Telephone the recipient of the fax (or their representative) to let them know that you are going to send the confidential information and confirm the number.
2. Verify the correct number by sending a cover sheet first and asking the recipient to acknowledge receipt of the fax by sending it back.
3. Always use a fax cover sheet which states who the information is for, who the information is from and your contact number. Mark it "**Private and Confidential**"
4. Include the following statement on the sheet:

#### **Confidentiality notice**

This message is private and confidential. If you have received this message in error, please notify us and destroy this facimile.

5. Anonymise information wherever possible. If information cannot be anonymised, use only the minimum amount of patient/personal details necessary for the purpose. Where possible use only an identification number e.g. an NHS number
6. Double check to make sure you have dialled the correct the fax number before sending the cover sheet and information.
7. Request confirmation of receipt or request a report sheet to confirm that the transmission was successful.

8. If you send information to a fax number on a regular basis, complete this process by programming the number into the fax directory. This establishes the link as a "Safe Haven".
9. If you are faxing to a known Safe-Haven, you do not need to complete these procedures if (a) you have already verified the number and programmed into your directory and, (b) you use a fax cover sheet.
10. Pre-programmed numbers should be checked periodically to ensure they remain valid or following office relocations, departmental moves or any other reorganisation.
11. Information faxed in error to the wrong person must be reported as a security incident to ICT Services Helpdesk email [Helpdesk \(ICT\)](#)

## **Part 2 - Receiving Confidential faxes**

1. Each department should have a least one designated safe haven contact point on which to receive confidential information.
2. Make use of the security features on the fax machine, e.g. passwords, programmed directories etc.
3. A safe haven fax machine should be situated in a secure environment away from the public.
4. Staff responsible for the fax machine should participate with other departments or organisations in verifying a safe haven link by responding to requests from the sender to confirm receipt etc.
5. Confidential faxes should be removed upon receipt. The documentation should be placed inside an envelope to await collection by the addressee.
6. Where possible, safe haven fax machines should be turned off out of office hours.

A Confidentiality poster to place next to the fax machine is available from [here](#)

Other guidance in the Safe-Haven series includes:

- [Guidance for Sharing Personal Information by Email](#)
- [Guidance for Sharing Personal Information By Post](#)

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ICT Services  
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