



SASM

promoting trust
promoting change

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To all SASM contributors:

Suspension of SASM activities

The Caldicott Guardian for Information Services Division of NHS National Services Scotland, Dr Janet Murray, reviewed the SASM process of transferring patient information through the post and has advised that this is not compliant with NHS Scotland Information Governance Standards. These require that confidential and sensitive SASM mail should be double wrapped and sent by recorded delivery.

In light of this, ISD senior management have made an operational decision to briefly suspend current SASM activities. They believe that in addition to eliminating the need to send confidential and sensitive information through the post, the development of eSASM will enable us to provide more timely feedback and reports and so plan to accelerate Phase 2 of eSASM.

Whilst the SASM Management Committee understands that ISD must comply with policy, we do feel that it is necessary to question the policy which makes this action necessary. Essentially the proposals do nothing to protect patient confidentiality and the management committee do not accept this position but are left with no choice. Furthermore, they are concerned that virtually all mail traffic in the NHS does not comply with this requirement and hence the implications of this policy are immense. A more pragmatic view has been proposed and we will be taking our concerns to the Chief Medical Officer.

However, the chairman of the board and I are assured that ISD remains committed to SASM and that they will work with us to enable the external peer review of surgical deaths to resume as soon as possible. eSASM is currently being system tested and we plan to start user acceptance testing in August. We expect to give a full demonstration at the assessors' meeting on the 28th September and that it will be ready for use at the start of 2011. Your input when the team are testing in your area would be greatly appreciated and will help speed the entire process. Karen Irvine our new clinical coordinator will communicate with each centre as testing comes to your area and we will post updates on our website www.sasm.org.uk. In the meantime the management committee are organising the next assessors' meeting to be held on the 28th September 2010 (details to follow) and the SASM office are working on the annual report for 2009 data for publication in the autumn.

What happens now?

- **You should not process any outstanding work.**
- **If you have any *completed* work (or assessor/coordinator work)**
 - ***Please only return to the SASM office if you are able to send double wrapped and by recorded delivery***
- **If you are unable to comply with the above request, please let us know, keep the work somewhere secure and we will make arrangements to collect this work at a later date.**
- **The SASM team are working to expedite training and the roll out of eSASM**
- **Updates of progress will be posted on the SASM website**

We plan to take this opportunity to conduct an end-user survey to ensure we continue to provide data which is useful to your clinical practice and hope you will participate. Your contribution to the audit is very much appreciated and we hope you will continue to support the electronic version of the audit in the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nick Pace".

Nick Pace
Chairman of SASM Management Committee