



THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

National Health Service in Scotland
Management Executive

St. Andrew's House
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

COMMON SERVICES AGENCY	

18 November 1992

Dear Colleague

ACCESS TO NHS HEALTH RECORDS

Summary

1. The health records of Health Boards are owned by the Secretary of State on behalf of the Crown. However NHS Trusts become owners of health records which they have created or which they have inherited on gaining Trust status. Therefore it is important that the current Good Practice of ensuring the free-flow of information within the NHS continues. This involves providing authorised access to data for patient care and research purposes throughout the Service.
2. A summary of such Good Practice is given below.

Action

3. All Board General Managers, Chief Executives and Chief Executive Designates of NHS Trusts are requested to ensure that the current Good Practice continues to be applied.

Addressees

For Action:

All Chief Executives and
Chief Executive Designates,
NHS Trusts

Board General Managers

General Manager,
Common Services Agency

General Manager, State
Hospital

For Information :

Health Education Board
Scotland

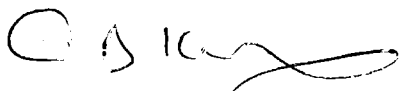
Enquiries to:

Mr C L Darroch
Directorate of Information
Services (ME8)
Room 151
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Good Practice Procedures

4. The main points of the existing Good Practice are as follows :-
- 4.1 Access to health records and to information contained within them should be provided free of charge to authorised staff within the NHS to ensure the continued provision of appropriate health care for patients.
 - 4.2 Data from health records should be provided to purchasers as required by contracts.
 - 4.3 Health data as required by the Scottish Office Home and Health Department should continue to be provided to the Information and Statistics Division (ISD) in line with present arrangements.
 - 4.4 Reasonable access to clinical information for clinical and health service research should be provided to staff of Higher Education Institution and of the National Health Service when agreed by local research ethics committees.
 - 4.5 Appropriate protection should be given to the confidentiality of such material in line with the Code of Practice on the Confidentiality of Personal Health Information. In the case of contract data further guidance is provided in the recent MEL (1992)42 on "Safeguarding the Confidentiality of Personal Data Association with Contracts".

Yours sincerely



C B KNOX
Director of Information Services