

Health Service Circular



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sets out a specific action on the part of the recipient with a deadline where appropriate

CALDICOTT GUARDIANS

For action by: Health Authorities (England) - Chief Executives
Special Health Authorities (England) - Chief Executives
NHS Trusts - Chief Executives
Primary Care Groups - Chief Executives

For information to: Community Health Councils - Chief Officers
Directors of Education & Training
Health Authorities (England) - Chairman
NHS Trusts - Chairman
Local Authorities (England) - Chief Executives

Further details from: RC WALKER
CA-QC(CI)
NHS EXECUTIVE
Room 3E58
Quarry House
Leeds
LS2 7UE
0113 2546383

Additional copies of this document can be obtained from:

Department of Health
PO Box 410
Wetherby
LS23 7LN

Fax 0990 210 266

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CALDICOTT GUARDIANS

Summary

A key recommendation of the Caldicott Report, published in December 1997, was the establishment of a network of Caldicott Guardians of patient information throughout the NHS. This circular advises on the appointment of Guardians, outlines the first year work programme for improving the way each organisation handles confidential patient information and identifies the resources, training and other support for Guardians.

Action

Each Health Authority, Special Health Authority, NHS Trust and Primary Care Group should appoint a Caldicott Guardian by no later than 31 March 1999. Ideally the Guardian should be at Board level, be a senior health professional and have responsibility for promoting clinical governance within the organisation.

The attached documentation should be made available to the Caldicott Guardian but should also be copied to all Board members and discussed if this is felt appropriate at a subsequent Board meeting. It outlines the action that each organisation should take during 1999/2000, as well as the Guardian's role and responsibilities. This action will include:

- a management audit of current practice and procedures
- annual plans for improvement that will be monitored through the clinical governance framework
- the introduction of registered access authorisation to certain patient information held outside of the organisation (i.e. through the NHS Strategic Tracing Service)
- the development of clear protocols to govern the disclosure of patient information to other organisations.

Resources

Support for Guardians and the work to improve the protection and use of patient information may be drawn, where necessary, from the modernisation funds that are being made available to implement *Information for Health*. Action in this area, and planned resource allocation, should be outlined in the Local Implementation Strategy that each organisation is required to prepare (HSC 1998/025). Training seminars are being organised by the NHS Executive for guardians and supporting staff - details can be found in the attached paper.

This circular has been issued by:

Alasdair Liddell
Director of Planning