

Name

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Web Site : www.hscni.net10th February 2017

Dear Colleague,

Re: Data Protection - reporting of suspected or actual data breaches

Following a recent serious adverse incident in a community pharmacy where there was a significant loss of patient information, I am writing to remind you of the processes to be followed for reporting suspected or actual data breaches.

You will be aware that as a Data Controller, you and your employees are legally obliged to protect and maintain the confidentiality of personal information in your charge. This responsibility is set out in the Data Protection Act 1998. Further information on this is available as outlined below.

- HSCB data protection information leaflet which is available on the BSO website at <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/2449.htm>.
- HSCB pharmacy information security leaflet, entitled 'Information Security' which compliments the data protection information leaflet. This includes helpful tips and information that will assist you to meet your legal obligations – see <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/2449.htm>.
- The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland's Professional Standards and Guidance for Patient Confidentiality which can be accessed via the following link: <http://www.psni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/StandardsonPatientConfidentialityrevised24feb2016.pdf>

I would particularly like to draw your attention to the importance of reporting suspected or actual breaches of patient sensitive information e.g. loss of prescriptions. If you suffer a suspected or actual data breach, you should **contact your Pharmacy Adviser at the HSCB and inform them immediately of the incident.**

You may also need to report this formally to the Information Commissioner's Office, depending on the nature and volume of the information lost and the potential detriment to the data subjects. You can find some useful guidance on when to report data breaches to the Information Commissioner at the web link below.

https://ico.org.uk/media/1536/breach_reporting.pdf

It is also critical that in the event of an information loss, or if the integrity of information is compromised, you manage the incident quickly and effectively. It is imperative that you conduct an assessment of the breach as soon as possible after discovery to:

- recover the data if possible or contain the loss
- gather the facts so you can understand what happened and what actions you need to take

For further information on your obligations under Data Protection Legislation, please visit <https://ico.org.uk/>.

If you have any queries on this letter, please contact your Pharmacy Adviser.

Yours sincerely



Mr Joe Brogan
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Head of Pharmacy & Medicines Management