Sheffield Teaching Hospitals – Network accounts for academic staff and students
Notes on procedures as at June 2011

Normal procedure

Trust network accounts are allocated to academic staff or to clinical students provided either:

a) The Trust HR Department confirm that the person has a letter of authority to work within the Trust. Access to specific systems would depend on the particular role involved.
b) The person is able to confirm that they have an honorary contract with the Trust.

The person is required to sign the Trust standard agreement for the allocation of network accounts. At present, this is a paper document but it is hoped to change this to an electronic process.

A Trust network account includes the provision of a Trust (local and not NHSmail) e-mail account.

There is no distinction between academic staff and students. E.g. medical students or therapy students who have been given authority to work within the Trust are regarded in the same way as academic staff.

In the case of malpractice, then the Trust would immediately disable the network account and would pursue the issue in association with the person's employer.

Processes

At the end of the medical degree course, students are allocated provisional posts as Foundation 1 (F1) doctors (previously called junior house officers). At present in Sheffield, the final year medical students shadow the person in the post to which they have been allocated for two weeks during the final year. Network accounts are set up during the induction courses associated with the shadowing process. Medical Education and Medical Personnel (in association with the Deanery) provide lists of names of students. The accounts will not be activated until the students take up their positions within the Trust. (Accounts would not be activated for students who do not pass their exams.)

In future, Sheffield will implement the Student Assistantship scheme where final year medical students work in a clinical environment for an extended period during the final year. The processes for allocating network accounts will need to change to take this into account.

Common issues

It is common practice for e-mails to be forwarded from the Trust e-mail environment to an "ac.uk" or personal e-mail account. It is important that this processes is never used for e-mails containing subject identifiable data.

Data derived from clinical information is commonly stored within the “ac.uk” environment. It is important that appropriate pseudonymisation is used.

“Academic proxy server”
STH has implemented a “proxy server” that is allocated specifically for staff with academic contracts where their academic status allows them to comply with JANET access procedures. For those “academic users”, the “proxy server” creates a network route that accesses external networks via the Sheffield University network (instead of via N3) so that their Internet access is via JANET. At present, network accounts set up for medical students are not routinely linked to this proxy server. The procedures for setting up proxy server accounts were established many years ago and need to be reviewed to take into account changing requirements and changing infrastructure.

Research data
Research projects that use clinically derived information should be documented via Trust Research Department processes. These processes include input from the Trust Information Governance Department.

Pseudonymisation using the NHS Number as the key is permitted in relation to data transfer to commissioners. (See e.g.: *NHS – Information Governance Framework for the processing of patient information for secondary purposes – 2009*.) Research studies should use a local secure key and should not use NHS Number as the key.

STH has implemented a dual stage data warehouse process to support research studies. A data warehouse “environment” has been established by extracting data or by taking data feeds from various clinical systems and databases. This data is then “replicated” onto a separate database environment on the “academic DMZ”. (STH has a direct high-speed firewalled network link to Sheffield University. The “academic DMZ” is linked to the firewall between the two networks.) In the database replication process, data is pseudonymised and all patient identification is removed from e.g. text reports.