

**NHSCR Governance Board
the NHSCR and the Citizen's Account**

1. This paper, which the Board is invited to note, describes the way in which the NHS Central Register (NHSCR) could help to provide the national infrastructure for the Citizen's Account.

Background

2. The Citizen's Account is a voluntary scheme, to be delivered by the Improvement Service on behalf of the 32 local authorities, under which each citizen will be able to apply to have an account recording all entitlements and transactions related to that individual. The Account will be linked to a smartcard recording the particular citizen's entitlement to certain public services (including free transport under the national travel scheme). The Account will only be set up with the informed consent of the citizen to the data sharing involved, and no service will be withheld simply for lack of that consent.

3. Rather than having 32 completely separate databases, a National Infrastructure will be set up including a database containing basic information about everyone who holds or has held an Account, identified by a unique citizen's reference number (UCRN). The purpose of the database will be to link related information stored across the spectrum of public sector databases. It will not itself hold any service-specific information: it will simply act as an index to such information stored by individual authorities. The database will be accessible to all local authorities for the purpose of delivering services but not otherwise, except for statistical purposes. It may be populated only when a citizen applies to open an Account (although it will also hold publicly-available registration data about people born in Scotland after the creation of the Infrastructure, but who have not yet opened an Account); or it may be pre-populated with data from the birth register (on which a decision has still to be taken, in the light of further consideration of the legal issues). Following consideration of options including the national insurance number, it has been concluded that the NHS number is the best available UCRN and that the business processes used by the NHSCR give a useful basis for the national infrastructure. The items on the NHSCR database which are relevant to the Citizen's Account are name, date of birth, gender and NHS number (birth registration number for Scots-born people or a number allocated by the NHSCR for others).

How would it work in practice?

4. When a Citizens Account is first set up:-

- The local authority receiving the citizen's application for a Citizen's Account will pass the applicant's name, sex and date of birth to GROS;

- GROS will match the applicant to an existing NHSCR identity and pass the NHS number (but no other information) back to the local authority;
- That basic personal information would be stored on a separate Citizen's Account national infrastructure database, which would mirror the NHSCR, with the 2 datasets being kept constantly in line with each other;
- The Citizen's Account database would also store the Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) associated with each enrolled citizen, probably based on the address provided by the citizen at the time of application, with the UPRN being obtained from a link between the Citizen's Account database and the Definitive National Address database;

and, once the Citizen's Account is set up:-

- If the person dies or registers a change of name, GROS will supply registration information to the National Infrastructure, for transmission to the local authorities with which the citizen has had an account;
- On the birth of a new child, GROS will supply registration information to the National Infrastructure;
- A citizen's change of address (or other details) will be shared by the local authority to whom the change of address is notified, with the new home local authority (if a change of council area is involved), with other local authorities from whom the citizen draws services and desirably (through the intermediary of GROS) with the NHS.

5. Essentially, therefore, GROS would be providing for local authorities a similar service to that provided (through the NHSCR) to the NHS. Extra resources would be provided, to ensure that the work of the NHSCR did not suffer. To reap the maximum efficiency benefit for the NHS, it may be sensible to route data exchanges between CHI and National Infrastructure via the NHSCR system.

Progress

6. A Proof of Concept trial is testing whether the system described in paragraph 4 is feasible. We plan that the forthcoming Bill to modernise the registration service will extend the Registrar General's powers to allow GROS to play its assigned part. It may be sensible at the same time to give the Registrar General more explicit powers to run the NHSCR itself.

Recommendation

7. The Board is invited to note the proposed use of the NHSCR database for the national infrastructure of the Citizen's Account.

**General Register Office for Scotland
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