



General Register Office for Scotland
information about Scotland's people

Paper NHSCR GB 3/08

Revising the NHSCR Regulations

May 2008

1. This paper seeks the views of the Governance Board on the scope of amending Regulations about the operation of the NHSCR.

Background

2. The Local Electoral Administration and Registration Services (Scotland) Act 2006, which put the NHSCR on a statutory footing, allows us to fine-tune the operation of the NHSCR through Regulations. Among the things which the Regulations can do, is to prescribe additional information which may be held by the NHSCR, and the sources of that information.

Need for Change

3. We need to amend the existing Regulations because of the change of status of the analogous body in England and Wales – with which the NHSCR exchanges information about cross-border migrants. Until 1 April, it was part of the Office for National Statistics but, as a side-effect of the creation of the UK Statistics Authority, it was transferred to the Information Centre for Health and Social Care, which is part of the NHS. We need to take the first available opportunity to amend the Regulations to reflect this.

4. Although there is no requirement to go further, we would like to do so, in two ways:

- allow the NHSCR to hold more address information. The current Regulations allow the NHSCR to hold “a postcode and reference code indicating address”, but only when that information is supplied by a local authority (as part of the NHSCR’s role as the source of identity information for the local authority Citizen Account). As a result of operating the new Citizen Account role, we now realise that it would improve the accuracy of both local authority and NHS address lists if we could gather information from both sources and act to resolve discrepancies – and if the full address were held, rather than only a code.
- Allow the NHSCR to hold information from the Citizen Account. At present, the flow of information is one way: from the NHSCR to the Citizen Account. But the NHSCR would be strengthened if it could also hold information on people who enrol for the Citizen Account but are not already on the NHSCR because they are not on a GP’s list.

Approval

5. These changes will obviously need Ministerial approval – and Ministers may be inclined not to go ahead with the second possibility, since there is no requirement to do so. Before being put to Ministers, they need the formal approval of Scottish Government officials responsible for health service information and for information policy. They also require the approval of the Information Centre for Health and Social Care.

Recommendation

6. The Governance Board is invited to consider whether, and at what pace, we might pursue the requirement for new Regulations – and whether there are other items which should be included.

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