Primary Medical Services
Accessing Patient Data as part of a CQC visit – use of Smartcards

Introduction

CQC Inspectors, may, as part of their visits, request access to patient data. It is up to the organisation and CQC to agree how this will be done, print outs being provided, accessing data alongside a clinician, issuing of usernames and passwords, or, in some cases via Smartcards. Any agreed way of accessing such data will need to meet the information governance requirements of the relevant organisation.

What are Smartcards?

Some national systems, such as Electronic Prescription Service, Choose & Book, Summary Care Record for example and some electronic patient data systems such as TPP, EMIS, Rio, Cerner and Lorenzo for example require a Smartcard to access data. A Smartcard is something that is issued to an individual upon proving their identity to a national standard, this together with a passcode only known to the individual means that the NHS Care Record Guarantee can be met – that it is known who accessed a record, when, that they have a legitimate reason to do so (via ID being checked) and what they did to the information. The individual provided the Smartcard has access permissions set up to access the patent data that is relevant and required for their role only.

Why is this important for CQC Inspectors?

If it is proposed that CQC Inspectors access patient data where the access is controlled by Smartcards then it is important that the inspectors are set up to do so. It will breach HSCIC policy on Smartcards if inspectors are given someone else's Smartcard and their passcode to access data and if they are given a 'blank' Smartcard and a passcode.

How do CQC Inspectors get Smartcards?

If it is agreed that CQC Inspectors need to access patient data via a system that is Smartcard enabled then the way to do this is to have a Smartcard created for them and relevant access set up for them by the organisation that they are visiting. This access then gets removed at the end of the visit but the Inspector retains the card should they need access set up in another organisation they visit in the future.

This will mean that the organisation will need to arrange a meeting between the Inspector and the part of the organisation that issues Smartcards – this is the organisations 'Registration Authority'. The organisation should arrange this to be at the start of your visit.

The Inspector will need to produce original documents to prove their identity to the required standard. There are a range of combinations, the most common being:

- 2 valid photo identity documents (e.g. valid passport and phot driving license) and one current 'proof in the community' (address verification) document (e.g. utility bill, bank statement, community charge, land phone line bill – no mobile bills)
- 1 valid photo ID document and 2 proof in the community documents.
- In certain exceptional circumstances if no photo ID is available the 4 non photo ID documents can be used

The full list of acceptable documents is available in Appendix 1 of this embedded document

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