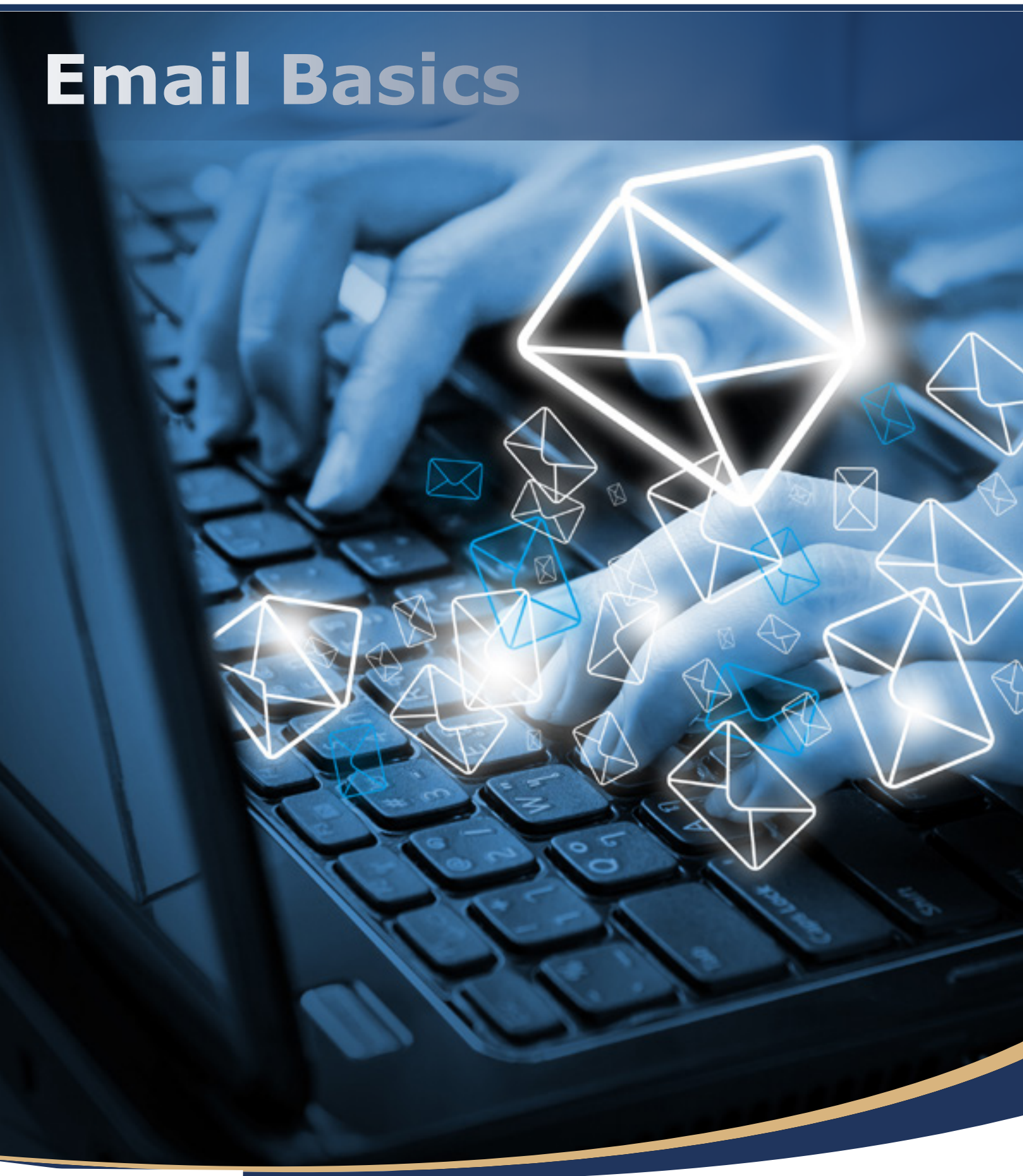




**GIG**  
CYMRU  
**NHS**  
WALES

Addysg a Gwella Iechyd  
Cymru (AaGIC)  
Health Education and  
Improvement Wales (HEIW)

# Email Basics



**GIG**  
CYMRU  
**NHS**  
WALES

Addysg a Gwella Iechyd  
Cymru (AaGIC)  
Health Education and  
Improvement Wales (HEIW)

## Email good practice etiquette

Following some high profile reported incidents within the NHS, it is important to ensure you are aware of the information you are sending in an email and the consequences it could have for the organisation, both the sender and the recipient.

Staff should be aware that email is instant and sometimes once sent, may not be able to be recalled or retracted successfully.

### Content aware

This guidance has been written to ensure that all staff are aware of what they are:

- **Sending** – is the email address correct?
- **Sharing** – is the email and the content to be shared with the recipient or recipients?
- **Including** – does the email include confidential information? Is the email and the response meant for all those recipients copied in? Is this labelled private or confidential?
- **Attaching** – does the mail contain the right information? If it is a spreadsheet with tabs, does the recipient need to see all the information? Have filters been applied that has not hidden the information?
- **Forwarding** – should the email be forwarded to everyone on the list? Is it more suited for an individual response to the original sender or enquirer?
- **Disclosing** – should this email be disclosed? What is the purpose of sending the email?
- **Comments** – does your email contain personal comments?

## When to use the “To or CC” category for emails

Circulating papers for a meeting – all recipients are aware of the membership of the group.

Usual contact with other email users within the service – general communications.

## When to use the “BCC” or “Blind Copy”

When sending out information to specific groups that involve more than one person that may not include official business (such as meetings or committees) then the use of the Blind copy (or “BCC”) should be used.

Specific groups could include:

- Recipients of newsletters;
- Participants of various schemes (i.e. salary sacrifices such as cycle to work or lease cars); or
- Circulations where recipients are not known to each other that may contain confidential information that relates to all subjects.

If you are unsure how an email should be sent out using your NHS email address, then please contact the Corporate Governance Manager for advice.





## Forwarding emails

When forwarding an email to another person, ask yourself whether the previous conversation (or 'thread') should be included?

## Personal/Patient Identifiable Information and use of personal or domestic email accounts

It is not considered to be good practice to send work emails especially those containing confidential information from your NHS account to a personal email address for purposes of working at home.

If you need access to your NHS email account at home, then please apply for a VPN token.

## Exceptional circumstances

Emails sent to your own email address or the use of your own email address is sometimes unavoidable but should be considered on a 'case by case' basis and assessed for risk.

Not everyone is able to receive remote access at home or away from the office, so caution when using personal email addresses must be observed at all times.

Exceptional circumstances can include:

A Legal and Risk employee is in court with only personal connectivity to emails (for example - 3G/4G network access) and requires access to work related items in order to review and send something contained within their mailbox and only their personal email address is available for use; or

An employee needs to send an email to test the use of a Secure File Sharing Portal before use with a service user or enquirer outside the NHS.

## Global address list

Many emails are sent between staff within NHS Wales.

When initial communication is started, it is important to check using the Global Address list, to obtain the correct email addresses as there may be more than one person on the list with a similar email within another NHS Wales organisation.





## Checking an email address

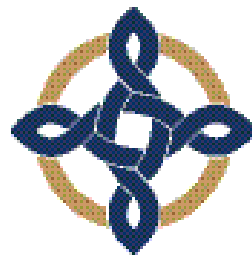
Getting it wrong.....misdirection that includes not using the right email address or spelling the address incorrectly are the main errors when sending.

It is therefore important to ensure that when someone that has a legitimate reason for requesting communication or information from the NHS gives their contact information, that the staff member double checks and makes sure that the email address is correct, including:

- Any unusual names or spelling of common ones (e.g. Davies or Davis, Steven or Stephen, etc)
- Any use of a Government email address (e.g. .gov.uk, .wales.nhs.uk, .nhs.uk, etc)

*joe.bloggs4@wales.nhs.uk*

*joe.bloggs1@wales.nhs.uk*



**GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES**

*joe.bloggs12@wales.nhs.uk*

*joe.bloggs13@wales.nhs.uk*

*joe.bloggs14@wales.nhs.uk*

## Know your numbers

This is especially important in NHS Wales and use of the Global Address list. Staff with the same name will be allocated a numbered email address based on when they joined the organisation.

## Common entries in email

Examples of multiple entries include:

David Jones – **58 entries**

Sarah Jones – **77 entries**

It is very important that you check the email address and not just assume that the email address is david.jones@wales.nhs.uk when it could be david.jones34@wales.nhs.uk.

## Inappropriate receiving

Sometimes, you may receive an email that is sent to you in error or contains inappropriate content.

It is therefore advisable to contact those senders to inform them of the error made and to advise them to check the email address and to be aware of the breach of confidentiality.

In these circumstances, it is advisable to delete the email and report the incident to the [Corporate Governance Manager](#).

## Real life breach: “56 Dean Street”

An NHS trust has been fined £180,000 after a sexual health centre leaked the details of almost 800 patients who had attended HIV clinics.

The 56 Dean Street clinic in London sent out a newsletter in 2015 that mistakenly revealed the recipients’ email addresses to one another.



**TAKE A STEP BACK AND ASK YOURSELF .....**

**IF THE EMAIL YOU ARE SENDING IS TO THE RIGHT PERSON? CONTAINS THE RIGHT INFORMATION? IS MEANT TO BE SHARED? IS THE CONTENT RELEVANT? AND ARE THERE ANY CONFIDENTIALITY CONCERNS?**



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Addysg a Gwella Iechyd  
Cymru (AaGIC)  
Health Education and  
Improvement Wales (HEIW)

## Contact

If staff have any queries in relation to Information Governance, please contact the Corporate Governance Manager via:

**Email:**

