

7 August 2015

Solicitors

Dear Sir/Ms,

Re: Access to electronic patient records for Tribunal Hearings in East London

After representatives of Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service and the Mental Health Lawyers Association met with senior managers in the Trust to discuss how legal representatives and Tribunal Panel Members could more easily gain access to detained patient's electronic records, the Trust has introduced a booking system so that legal representatives and Tribunal Panel Members can attend Trust premises in East London to view electronic records at an allotted time in a place away from the immediate clinical area.

The procedures to be followed are set out in the enclosed guidance note and have been agreed with both the Tribunal Service and Mental Health Lawyers Association.

A significant advantage about this system, subject to available room, is that legal representatives and Tribunal Panel Members can make appointments to view more than one record on the one site, no matter where the patient is located.

It does mean however that unless there are exceptional circumstances, access to electronic records will not be allowed to occur in clinical areas such as wards.

Please note the important points in the guidance note regarding identification and adherence to instructions by the supervising member of Trust staff. Access will be denied if there is any uncertainty about security of the records.

The system will commence on 1st September 2015 and will be reviewed after 6 months, so we would welcome your valuable feedback as it proceeds.

I would also like to take this opportunity of reminding legal representatives of their need to adhere to the Law Society Practice Note on Representation Before Mental Health Tribunals which can be found here:

<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/advice/practice-notes/mental-health-tribunals/>

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Guy Davis".

Guy Davis
Associate Director of Mental Health Law