

Information Governance for GPs

There has been some confusion on the **information governance requirements** for general practice - both in relation to what these encompass, and what is and is not mandatory.

The information outlined below aims to provide some clarification between the Information Governance Toolkit (IG Toolkit) and the Information Governance Training Tool (IG Training Tool).

GPC IT and JGPITC will be working with NHS Connecting for Health (CFH) to ensure that future versions of the IG Toolkit and IG Training Tool are relevant and more user-friendly.

The Information Governance Toolkit

The IG Toolkit encompasses 13 requirements for general practice to self-assess against. CFH state that completion of these self-assessments is necessary in order for practices to ensure that their CFH services continue to be provided. This is because every practice receiving these services needs to sign up annually to an IG Statement of Assurance, and the only way this can be signed or submitted is through the IG Toolkit online assessment.

While completion of the IG Toolkit is not a contractual requirement, GPs cannot decline to do it if asked- it is de facto compulsory as practices rely on N3 connections, including for internet connection, path links with the acute trust, NHS mail, QMAS, GP2GP etc.

An updated version of the IG Toolkit is available each year in June-July with a deadline for practices to submit their self-assessments by 31 March of the following year. The IG Toolkit is now on version 10 - with a deadline for completion of 31 March 2013.

We recommend that practices submit their 2012-13 IG Toolkit self-assessments by the deadline.

[View the GP requirements on the IG Toolkit website](#)

Completion of the IG Toolkit self-assessments can be achieved relatively quickly, provided that the underlying work on IG has been undertaken. One person from the practice will have been nominated as the IT lead - s/he will register for a user account and complete the online self-assessments on behalf of the practice.

For General Practice, completing the self-assessments involves:

1. Answering each of the 13 IG Toolkit requirements (which involves putting a score between 0 and 3 depending on how well the practice thinks it is meeting each of the criteria)
2. Selecting the 'Publish' button.
3. Finally, reading and accepting the 'IG Assurance Statement'.

The practice is given an overall score, and if it is deemed not to be meeting particular criteria, then the PCT will discuss this with the practice and make a plan for improvement to ensure that this is met the following year.

Requirement 10-117

The screenshot shows the NHS Information Governance Toolkit interface. The top navigation bar includes the NHS logo, the title 'Information Governance Toolkit', and the Department of Health logo. A breadcrumb trail indicates the user is in 'Requirements > General Practice > 10-117'. A left-hand menu lists various sections: Home, News, IG Bulletin, IG Meetings, Requirements, Reports, Resources, and Help. The main content area is titled 'Requirement Details' and features a table with the following information:

Requirement No:	10-117
Initiative:	Information Governance Management
Organisation Type:	General Practice
Version:	10.0

Below the table, there are navigation buttons for 'Previous', '10-117', 'Next', and 'Done'. A list of expandable sections is provided: Requirement Description, Guidance, Attainment Levels, Knowledge Base Resources, Training, Requirement Origins, and Changes. A second set of navigation buttons is located at the bottom of the content area. At the very bottom, page processing and rendering times are noted: 'Page Processing Time: 0.17 seconds' and 'Page Render Time: 2.52 seconds'.

The requirement which has caused the most confusion is **Requirement 10-117** which states that 'All staff members are provided with appropriate training on information governance requirements'.

The key word here is 'appropriate' and the requirement itself does not state that all GP staff must complete the IG training tool modules (see section on IGTT below for more information).

If you expand 'Guidance' here, paragraph 7 states that 'The NHS undertakes mandatory on-line training using the NHS IG Training Tool which provides a valuable base on which to build. E-learning modules have also been developed specifically for community pharmacy dental practices and general practices'.

However, Connecting for Health has confirmed with us that the IG training tool modules are only mandatory for PCT staff but not for GPs and GP staff. Practices may, of course, choose to use these modules in order to meet requirement 10-117 of the IG Toolkit, but they do not have to, and can choose to provide 'appropriate training' through other means.

The Information Governance Training Tool (IGTT)

This is compulsory for PCT staff but CFH has confirmed that it is not compulsory for GPs and GP staff.

[View the modules on the Information Governance Training Tool website](#)

There are 12 IG modules, ranging from 0.5 to 2 hours each, however, the majority of the material is for a specialist audience e.g. Caldicott Guardians or Freedom of Information Leads. There is one core module providing basic information governance training for GP practice staff.

Practices may opt to ask staff to use this module, in order to meet requirement 10-117 of the IG Toolkit.