

# **NHSmail – Accessing data within an NHSmail account**

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## What should a Local Administrator do if access is needed to data in an NHSmal account where the user is unavailable or unable to give permission for access

As outlined in the [NHSmal Acceptable Use Policy](#), NHSmal is a communication tool to support the secure exchange of information and is not designed as a document management system. Documents, emails or messages that are required for retention/compliance purposes should be stored within your organisation's document management system in accordance with local Information Governance policies.

If access to data is required in the absence of the user, the Local Administrator should have the support from their Medical Director, HR Director or Caldicott Guardian and authorisation should only be actioned in line with the organisation's governance procedures. Access should never be granted, especially in the users' absence, unless there is a critical need and it is formally sanctioned by the above mentioned. This is due to patient or confidential data being in the mailbox which should only be seen by that person.

### If a user is on long-term sick or annual leave

If it is imperative to gain access to the account, the Local Administrator for NHSmal should change the password and retrieve the specific email/data. The mailbox should not be left accessible for anyone to view. Once the data has been retrieved, the account should remain untouched after this. The individual concerned should be informed that their account has been accessed, by whom and for what reason via email. When access to the account is required by the user returning to work, they will have to contact their LA as the password for their account will need to be re-set.

### If a user is suspended from work, part of a formal investigation or has left unexpectedly

The NHSmal account may need to be marked as 'disabled' if the user should not be allowed access to the mailbox whilst the investigation is undertaken.

For forensic investigations to access data older than that detailed in the Data Retention policy, please follow the guidance to access data at <https://portal.nhs.net/Help/policyandguidance> within the Policy section.

If the data remains within the account, the Local Administrator should follow the guidance detailed in the previous section (when a user is on sick/long-term leave).

## Links to further guidance

There are a number of relevant training and guidance materials available:

- [NHSmal Acceptable Use Policy](#) – the agreement that all users abide by when joining the service and explains the importance of the information shared over NHSmal.
- [NHSmal Data Retention Policy](#) – details how data can be recovered, including forensic investigations.

- [NHSmail Information Management Policy](#) – explains the information management approach for NHSmail and defines the minimum retention periods for which data will be kept. It also includes an overview of the lifecycle of user accounts.
- [NHSmail Local Administrator Portal guidance](#) – specific guidance for Local Administrators detailing how to manage leavers and joiners on NHSmail.