

Ref: 090528 NHS Number Programme – information paper

DH proposed national mail-out of NHS Numbers

- NHS CFH and DH have had early discussions about undertaking a national mail out of NHS Numbers (England & Wales), CHI Numbers (Scotland) and Single Health and Care Number (Northern Ireland).
- The work will be DH led, with significant support from COI (The Central Office of Information), who have excellent relations with the suppliers used for national comms mail-outs.
- The decision to actually undertake the mail-out has not yet been taken.
- Joint work between DH and COI is underway to look at, among other things:
 - costs
 - data protection and IG issues
 - identification of gate keepers
 - use of PDS data
 - mailing houses who are already signed up to NHS data use
 - additional publicity to support the mail out
- Work has begun also on letter content. This will need to be tested with the public when the initiative gets the green light from the DH. The content will be based on the findings from the Tees NNPAC project.
- Also being considered is a push out card with the NHS Number and other basic information - similar to medical card, but will be thinner and made of paper. Work will need to be done on design and content.
- At this stage, it has been decided not to go down the route of mentioning pandemic flu in the letter or on the card.
- DH and CFH to agree degree of involvement of NHS Number team.
- The possibilities of joining up with other initiatives - such as a potential Summary Care Record national public information programme - will be explored .