Enriching SCRs with additional information

Patient consent and considerations for those patients who lack capacity to consent

GP practices and clinicians should follow existing guidance (such as that produced by the General Medical Council) and their usual processes for gaining consent and making best interest decisions on behalf of patients.

All patients should be appropriately informed and supported to come to a decision as to whether they would like additional information to be added to their SCR. Information should be provided in a way and format that individual patients can understand, so that patients are appropriately supported to come to their decision and to communicate this. There are resources available to support discussions with patients to seek their informed consent.

Where a patient lacks capacity to consent to the inclusion of additional information in their SCR, reasonable attempts should be made to establish whether there is someone who has a legal delegated responsibility on behalf of the individual. Clearly, if someone has a Health and Welfare Lasting Power of Attorney that grants them the necessary powers and is registered with the Office of the Public Guardian, then they can legally give the consent on behalf of a person who lacks capacity - provided they are acting in the patient's best interests.

Where a patient lacks capacity to give informed consent and has not previously appointed an Attorney, the GP can make a decision in the patient's best interest to create an SCR with additional information. It would be best practice to discuss this with their relatives and carers and to take into account their views and any preference that the patient might have expressed in the past. However, the ultimate decision lies with the GP who is looking after the patient and they are obliged to consider the patient's best interests in this regard.

Therefore, if the GP believes that it would be in the patient's best interest to make additional information available in the SCR, the GP can upload the additional information.

It would be good practice to clearly record how the decision has been made to upload information in the patient's best interest without their consent. This should include recording how the assessment of a lack of mental capacity was arrived at. There is the option to add free text when the SCR consent status is changed in the GP system.