# FAX SAFE HAVENS

One of the most common breaches of confidentiality occurs when documents that contain patient identifiable information are sent by fax machine. Many fax machines are in corridors or open plan offices and are used by several different departments. People come and go collecting faxes but do not always check that all the pages belong to them; this increases the risk of information being seen by unauthorised persons.

To combat this, many NHS organisations have designated certain fax machines as 'Safe Haven' machines. These are machines that are located in a secure area such as our office upstairs and are used to receive documents of a private and confidential nature.

***If you are sending a fax to another organisation, ask for the Safe Haven fax machine.***

If the organisation that you need to fax does not have a Safe Haven fax machine, then follow a few simple rules

**DO …**

- Telephone the recipient of the fax let them know that you are about to send a fax containing confidential information
- Ask if they will wait by the fax machine whilst you send the document
- Ask if they will acknowledge the receipt of the fax
- Make sure that you have clearly stated on the fax cover sheet that the information you are sending is confidential. Use a clinic Fax header for this purpose.
- Check the fax number you have dialled and check again that it is correct before sending
- Request a report sheet to confirm that the transmission was O.K.

**DO NOT…**

- Send faxes to where you know that the information will not be seen for a time.
- Send faxes at  times that maybe outside the recipients hours of work
- Leave information unattended whilst a fax is being transmitted

If you receive confidential information on your fax machine, it is your responsibility to inform the sender that you have received this information.

This guidance covers personal information about staff as well as patients