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LMC advice on SystmOne instant messaging service

In January 2009, TPP released new functionality to SystmOne allowing users to send instant messages to any other member of staff logged on to SystmOne at their organisation. This means that staff members can be alerted to something without their consultation being interrupted. Instant Messaging is intended to be used for quick, non-clinical messages that don't require an audit trail. However, unlike EMIS, SystmOne messages cannot be deleted and remain permanently accessible. EMIS instant messages can be deleted, but a permanent record remains that a user has deleted a message.

The LMC has received concerns that clinical and non-clinical practice staff may be using this service inappropriately, including for patient level information. Please note that under the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), if patients request their medical record they should also be able to request any communications about them. Using instant messaging for patient level information creates the following risks:

- medico-legal issues
- performance management
- CQC/NHSE issues
- governance implications
- GDPR implications

Please ensure that all practice staff are aware of these risks and are using this service appropriately.