



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
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Security Certificate Changeover Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: What is this all about?

Globally, security certificates are being strengthened and this must be completed before the end of 2016. Various advisory notes are available on the subject as follows;

- <https://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/security/2880823.aspx>
- <https://googleonlinesecurity.blogspot.ie/2014/09/gradually-sunset-sha-1.html>

Q2: What do I need to do now?

Users of old computing infrastructure, e.g. operating systems such as Windows XP and old browser versions should make plans to support SHA-2 security certificates. At the end of 2016, inability to support SHA-2 certificates may limit or prevent use of the internet altogether for access to many web sites.

PCRS will issue the new certificates in a similar manner to the standard renewal and you should follow the instructions provided carefully.

Q3: What will happen to the existing PCRS issued certificates on my computer?

These will become less relevant and will stop working or will expire during the course of 2016. However, you will have a new certificate in place before that happens to ensure uninterrupted access.

Q4: Will existing certificates continue to be renewed?

For now, yes. There will be no change until there is further communication. This means that as existing certificates expire these must be renewed to maintain your access to the PCRS GP Application Suite.

Q5: Will the new certificates work on Tablet devices?

Yes. It is planned to support tablet devices with Android, Apple and Windows operating systems.

Q6: Can certificates be linked so that multiple GP accounts can be accessed more easily?

Yes. As GP certificates are rolled out, a new facility will also be added to facilitate easier movement between GP accounts. Further communication will issue to GPs on this topic.

Q7: Will Primary Care Contractors still be able to use all existing technology, e.g. Windows XP etc.?

The HSE has not prescribed which technology should be adopted to support SHA-2 certificates. This choice remains in the hands of the Primary Care Contractor so long as the choice means they can support the required security level, i.e. SHA-2. In an engagement with the Data Protection commissioner in 2015, the expectation was evident that health actors must be very careful to be taking care of data properly including the obligation to ensure that older unsecure technology could not compromise data safety.

The HSE PCRS will not be in a position whereby it would maintain access to unsecure older versions of technology in such a way as to increase levels of risk. Primary Care Contractors have an obligation to ensure appropriately secure technology is used in their own right as data controllers.