

- Where a serious crime, such as assault is being investigated or where it could be prevented.
- Where a formal court order has been issued.
- Where there is a legal requirement – for example, if Road Traffic offence was alleged.

Our guiding principle is that we are holding your records in strict confidence and with a high level of security.

Who are our partner organisations?

The principal partner organisations, with whom information may be shared, are:

- Strategic Health Authorities.
- NHS Trusts.
- Primary Care Trusts.
- General Practitioners (GPs).
- Ambulance Services.

Your information may also, subject to strict agreements describing how it will be used, be shared with:

- NHS Common Services Agencies such as dentists, ophthalmic services, etc.
- Social Care and Health.
- Education Services.
- Local Authorities.
- Voluntary Sector Providers.

How we ensure your information is accurate

We also have a duty to ensure that your information is accurate and up-to-date, to make sure that we have the correct contact and treatment details about you. To do this we undertake Information Quality Assurance assessments to ensure that we deliver improvements in the quality of the information we record about you.

How can you get access to your own health records?

The Data Protection Act 1998, which came into force on 1 March 2000, allows you find out what information about you is held by the Trust. This is known as 'the right of subject access'. It applies to your health records.

If you have left the Hospital or after a Consultation, and wish to see or have a copy of your records, you should write to the Trust's Medical Records Manager to make a formal request. You may be charged an administration fee. If you wish to see your records informally at the time of a Consultation or during in-patient treatment you should contact a member of nursing staff. For both formal and informal access, you should be aware that in exceptional circumstances some information may be withheld to protect you from undue harm, or where a third party is involved.

Further information

If you would like to know more about how we use your information, you can:

- Speak to the person in charge of your care
- Write to the Trust's Caldicott Guardian (senior member of staff responsible for the confidentiality of patient information). The staff responsible for your care will be able to tell you how to contact the Guardian.

Please ask if you need this leaflet in large print, on audio tape or help through our interpreting service. You can also view this information on our website:
www.bwhct.nhs.uk

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Your Information



A guide to why the NHS collects information about you and how it is used

Introduction

This leaflet explains why information is collected about you and the ways in which the information may be used.

Why we collect information about you

Your doctor and other health professionals caring for you keep records about your health and any treatment and care you receive from the National Health Service (NHS). These help ensure that you receive the best possible care from us. They may be written down (manual records), or held on a computer. The records may include:

- Basic details about you such as name, address, date of birth, NHS number and next of kin.
- Contacts we have had with you, such as clinic visits.
- Notes and reports about your health and any treatment and care you need.
- Details and records about the treatment and care you receive.
- Results of investigations, such as X-rays and laboratory tests.
- Relevant information from other health professionals, relatives or those who care for you and know you well.

How your records are used to help you

Your records are used to guide and administer the care you receive to ensure that:

- Your doctor, nurse, midwife or other healthcare professionals involved in your care have accurate and up-to-date information to assess your health and decide what care you need when you visit in the future.

- You can be contacted if you should need further health checks or tests.
- Full information is available should you see another doctor or be referred to a specialist or another part of the NHS.
- There is a good basis for assessing the type and quality of care you have received.
- Your concerns can be properly investigated if you need to complain.

How your records are used to help the NHS

Your information may also be used to help us:

- Review the care we provide to ensure that it is of the highest standard.
- Plan services for the future.
- Monitor the way that public money is spent.
- Conduct health research and development.
- Teach and train health professionals.

Some of the information will be held centrally, but where this is used for statistical purposes, stringent measures are taken to ensure that individual patients cannot be identified. Anonymous statistical information may also be passed to organisations with a legitimate interest, including universities and research institutions.

Where it is not possible to use anonymised information, personal identifiable information may be used for essential NHS purposes. This will only be done with your consent, unless the law requires information to be passed on to improve public health.

How we keep your records confidential and secure

Everyone working for the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential and secure.

You may be receiving care from other organisations as well as the NHS (such as Social Care and Health). We may need to share some information about you so we can all work together for your benefit. We will only ever use or pass on information about you if others involved in your care have a genuine need for it. When we pass on any information, we will ensure that it is kept confidential and secure.

We will not disclose your information to third parties without your permission unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as when the health or safety of others is at risk, or where the law requires information to be passed on. Again, if we do not need to disclose your information, we will ensure that it is kept secure.

Anyone who receives information from us is also under a legal duty to keep it confidential and secure.

We are required by law to report certain information to the appropriate authorities. This is only provided after formal permission has been given by a qualified health professional. Occasions when we must pass on information include:

- Notification of new births.
- Where we encounter infectious diseases which may endanger the safety of others, such as meningitis, tuberculosis (TB) or measles (but not HIV/AIDS).
- Where there is a risk of harm or abuse to you or other people.