



A GUIDE TO HOW WE USE YOUR HEALTH RECORDS



This guide explains why information is collected about you, what is collected and the ways in which it may be used.

Why do we collect information about you?

Health professionals caring for you keep records about your health together with any treatment and care you receive from the NHS in order to ensure that you receive the best possible care.

These records are known as health records.

To provide a safe, professional and efficient service, we need to keep information on record. Your personal details will be handled with sensitivity and confidentiality. If you think any information we hold about you is not accurate, please let us know by speaking to the health professionals involved in your care.



What information is collected?

We collect and use three different types of information:

- **Personal confidential data**

This is information which on its own or with other information can identify you. Personal confidential data may include:

- Basic details about you, such as address, date of birth, next of kin
- Details, notes and reports about your health, treatment and care

- **Anonymised data**

This data is where identifiable information, such as your name and full address, have been removed so the information is no longer 'identifiable'. This type of data is often used for producing statistics.

- **Pseudonymised data**

This is where personal confidential data about you is replaced with a 'code'. We have the 'key' to this code and could use this to identify which person this information relates to but a third party, such as a commissioner (the people responsible for buying healthcare on your behalf), who we share this data with could not.

How are your records used?

Your care records are used to guide health professionals involved in the care you receive to:

- Provide accurate and up to date information to assess your health and decide the most appropriate care and treatment for you
- Review and improve the quality of care you receive and ensure it is safe and effective
- Ensure appropriate information is available if you need to see another doctor, or be referred to a specialist or another part of the NHS
- Investigate your concerns if you have a query, complaint or legal claim

Our staff will only have access to information that is necessary for them to complete the activity they are involved in

Your information may also be used to:

- Provide evidence of treatment given, so that the correct payments are processed
- Identify which patients need additional care to prevent further ill health or worsening of current conditions.

This is called 'risk stratification' and will be done by our commissioners using pseudonymised records. Only health professionals involved in your care will be able to see the patients identified 'at risk' using the 'key' to the code, as described earlier in this leaflet.

An example of this is where all patient records are used to identify which patients are at high risk from a heart attack. We will contact those patients at risk to ensure correct treatment is given to help prevent them from having a heart attack.

This information may also be used to plan and commission services but only anonymised/pseudonymised data will be used for this purpose by our commissioners. This means that you won't be identified.

There are many other different areas where your anonymous and pseudonymised information is beneficial for everyone and can be used without you being identified. Some examples include:

- Health research and development
- Management of different health services e.g. diabetes care
- Teaching/ personal development/review (particularly for doctors and nurses)
- Commissioning/contract monitoring
- Staff and patient surveys

Who might we share your information with?

We may share your information for direct care purposes - this is when information is used for healthcare and medical purposes. e.g. directly contributing to your treatment, diagnosis, referral and care. This also includes any relevant supporting administrative processes and audit/assurance of the quality of the healthcare service provided, such as appointment bookings, management of waiting lists, inputting test results. Some of the organisations involved in your care may include:

- General practitioners (GPs)
- Out of hours services
- Ambulance services
- NHS hospital trusts
- Social Services
- Other care providers contracted by us

With your consent, we may also share your information with other organisations. This information will only be shared for your benefit and will be subject to strict sharing protocols. Examples of organisations we may share your information with include:

- Education services
- Local authorities (councils)
- Private and voluntary health care providers

We may also use your personal information when required to by the law (for example following a court order to release documentation) and, in exceptional circumstances, where the use of your personal information is justified in the public interest. For example, when assisting the police with the investigation of a serious crime, or if there are concerns regarding child protection, it may be necessary for us to share your personal information with external agencies.

For all other uses of your personal information we will either directly ask for your consent or use data that does not identify you. Our main partner organisations that may use this anonymised/pseudonymised data include:

- Clinical Commissioning Groups (the organisations that buy healthcare on your behalf)
- NHS England (the body that oversees the budget, planning, delivery and day-to-day operation of the NHS in England)
- NHS Commissioning Support Units (provide support services to clinical commissioning groups)
- Health and Social Care Information Centre (provider of information, data and IT systems for health and social care)

If, for any reason you do not wish to have your information used in any of the ways described above, please speak to the health professionals concerned with your care. The possible consequences will be fully explained to you to allow you to make an informed decision.

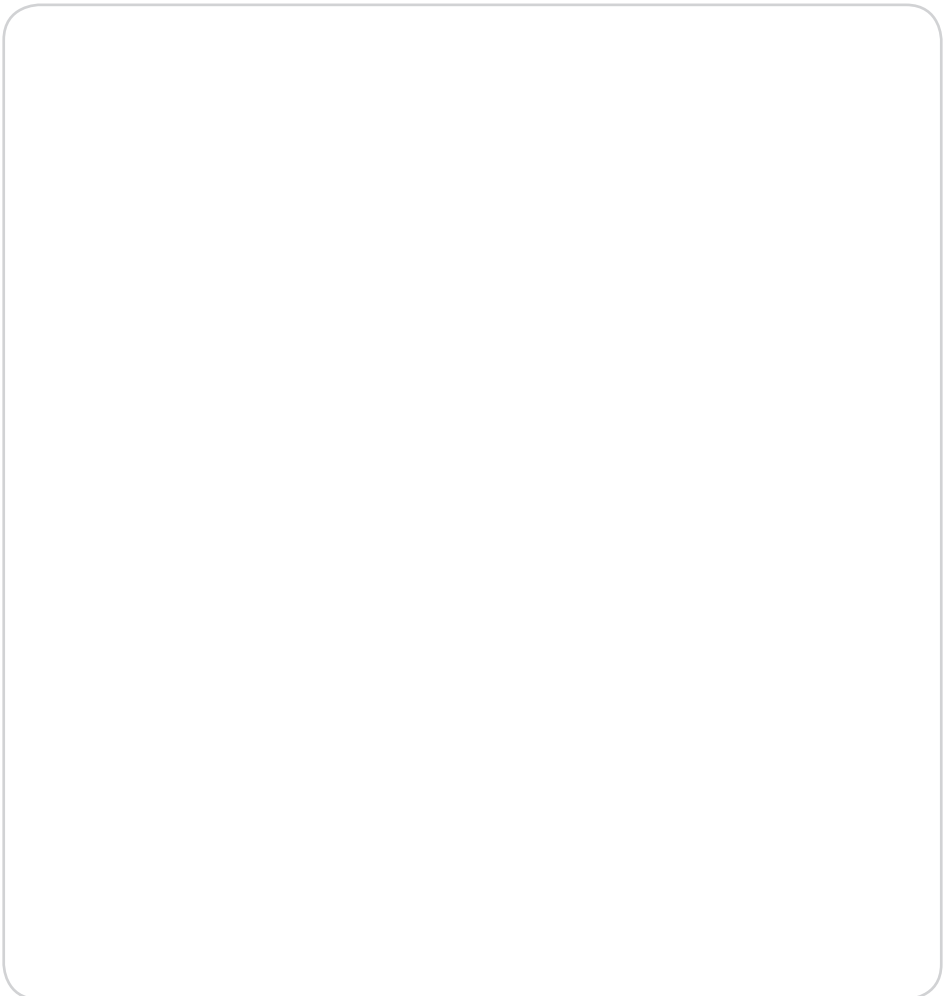
How we keep your records confidential and secure?

In addition to the Data Protection Act everyone working for the NHS is subject to the 'Common Law Duty of Confidence'. Information provided in confidence will only be used for the purposes stated and with the patient's consent, unless there are other circumstances covered by the law. Under the NHS Confidentiality Code of Conduct, all of our staff are also required to protect your information, inform you of how your information will be used, and allow you to decide if and how your information can be shared.

We may use external companies to process personal information such as for archiving or destruction of data. These organisations are bound by contractual agreement to ensure information is kept confidential and secure in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

Your right to see your records

The Data Protection Act gives you the right of access to the information we hold about you. If you would like to see your records you can make a written request to us (which must include your authorising signature). You are entitled to receive a copy of your records; however, there may be a charge. Information may be withheld if it is believed it may cause serious harm or distress to you or to another person. Written requests should be addressed to:



To ensure services provided by us are accessible, information is available upon request in a variety of formats, including large print, Braille or in audio format. We can also provide help for British Sign Language users and provide information in languages other than English. Please speak to the health professionals involved in your care to make a request.