

## How to get access to your medical records

The Data Protection Act 1998 allows you to find out what information about you is held on computer and in certain manual records. This is known as “right of subject access.” It applies to your health records.

If you want to see them you should make a written request to the practice manager. You are entitled to receive a copy but should note that a charge will usually be made to cover costs. You should also be aware that in certain circumstances your right to see some details in your health records may be limited in your own interest or for other reasons.

## Access to the records of another person

This is only possible with the written consent of the other person or evidence of a legal authority (eg power of attorney). Parents do not have an automatic right of access to the medical records of their children, where the child may be deemed competent to decide for themselves whether their parent may have access to their medical record. . The right to confidentiality also extends to a deceased person. In this case, medical information may only be released to persons under certain, limited circumstances.

## Further information

If you would like to know more about how we use your information or if, for any reason, you do not wish to have your information used in any of the ways described in this leaflet please speak to the practice manager. If you would like a large print Version of this leaflet, please ask at reception.

**Our guiding principle is that we are holding your records in the strictest confidence.**



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# How we use your medical information and how we keep it secure



## 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 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 address 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:

- your doctor, nurse or any other healthcare professionals involved in your care have accurate and up-to-date information to assess your health and decide what care you may need in the future
- full information is available should you see another doctor, or be referred to a specialist or another part of the NHS
- they are 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:

- help identify the health care needs of the Community
- audit NHS accounts and services
- investigate complaints, legal claims or untoward incidents
- make sure our services can meet patient needs in the future
- prepare statistics on NHS performance
- review the care we provide to ensure it is of the highest standard
- teach and train healthcare professionals
- conduct health research and development

Some of this 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 (for research purposes), community safety units and research institutions.

Where it is not possible to use anonymous information, personally identifiable information may be used for essential NHS purposes. These may include research and auditing services. 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

Everyone working for the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential. You may be receiving care from other organisations as well as the NHS (eg Social Services). 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. 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.

Anyone who receives information from us is also under a legal duty to keep it confidential. We are required by law to report certain information to 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 or measles (but not HIV/AIDS)
- where a formal court order has been issued

## Who are our partner organisations?

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

- Health Authorities
- NHS Trusts
- Clinical Commissioning Groups
- 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 Primary Care Support Services
- Social Services
- Education Services
- Local Authorities
- Voluntary Sector Providers
- Private Sector Providers