

# Your Health Care Records:

## A guide for patients

This leaflet is a guide to the information we hold about you and how we access this information. It covers your rights, what you need to do and who to contact if you have any questions.



**The National Health Service (NHS) aims to provide you with the highest quality of health and social care. To do this, we must keep records about you, your health and the care we provide or plan to provide.**

## What information is kept about me?

We keep information about you so that we can provide you with safe, fair and effective care. It helps us to make improvements to services, understand your needs, and direct our services to the right people in the right places.

The information we may keep about you includes:

- Name
- Address
- Contact details
- Place and date of birth, sex, age and NHS number
- GP
- Next of kin
- Ethnicity, disability and first language.

Information we keep about your health includes:

- NHS services that you have used such as, outpatients, physiotherapy, hospital admissions.



As a CCG we have access to activity data, information about treatments you have had in hospital and health services for which we have commissioned. We don't hold the clinical notes, these are held by individual GPs and hospitals. We do not hold the clinical detail of the attendances, these are retained by the health care provider. If you wish to complain about the services we will ask your permission to examine the clinical detail.

## How are my records kept?

Details of the services you have used are kept secure in an electronic record. Permission to view these records are carefully controlled by a senior health professional called a Caldicott Guardian.

In nearly every case it is not necessary to release information which identifies or can be linked to an individual. It is only when the Caldicott Guardian considers it essential is patient identifiable information released for a specific purpose to a specific individual.

## What is my information used for?

Your information is used to plan and evaluate the quality and appropriateness of services we commission, and help you to make good decisions about your health.

We sometimes use your information to:

- Provide a good basis for all health decisions made by you and healthcare professionals.
- Allow you to work with those providing care.
- Make sure your care is safe and effective.
- Work effectively with others providing you with care.
- Carry out research - (if information is required for research we will always seek your consent).
- Help the NHS plan for the future.
- Teach healthcare professionals.
- Check the quality of care (such as a clinical audit).
- Keep track of NHS spending.
- Help investigate any concerns or complaints you or your family have about your healthcare. \*



\* We can access detailed clinical records, if necessary, when we are asked to investigate a complaint about the quality of the service we commission. In these circumstances, we will always seek the appropriate consent before access is granted.

## When we might use or share information that names you without asking you.

In rare circumstances, where it is proven to be necessary and there is a specific need, we may have to use patient identifiable information. However; before doing this, the request is carefully reviewed and considered by the Senior Health Professional. If the Caldicott Guardian agrees there is a need to grant access to this information, they will give permission to a named person to access only the information relevant to that request.

Sometimes we have a legal duty to give information about people, for examples:

- Registering births.
- Reporting some infectious diseases.
- Reporting gunshot wounds to the police.
- Because a court orders us to do so.

Sometimes special permission will be given to use information that identifies you without your consent. This may be for medical research, keeping registers of cancer patients or checking quality of care. This permission is given by the Secretary of State for Health on advice from the National Information Governance Board for Health and Social Care under strict conditions.

Special permission may also be given when the public good outweighs your rights to confidentiality. This is very rare, but some situations where this might happen include:

- When a serious crime has been committed.
- When there are serious risks to the public or NHS staff.
- To protect children or vulnerable adults who are not able.
- To decide for themselves whether their information should be shared.



## We promise to:

- Keep full and accurate records about the care we provide you.
- Keep your records confidential, secure and accurate.
- Hold and dispose of your records securely.
- Make sure that your records are not kept any longer than they need to be.
- Make sure that your records are only shared amongst the people providing your healthcare and who need to know.
- Make sure that we do not share information which identifies you outside of the health service:
  - unless you say we can
  - we have to by law
  - if others could be put at risk if we did not share the information.
- Provide you with information relating to your records, if you ask for it in writing. We cannot give you confidential information about other people or provide information if a healthcare professional believes it could cause physical or mental state harm to you or another person.
- Make sure that everyone who sees your records are trained and understands that they must keep them confidential.
- Take appropriate action against anyone who looks at your records without permission or with good reason.

## What rights do I have?

- Confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998, the Human Rights Act 1998 and common law duty of confidence.
- To ask for a copy of all records held about you (there may be an administration charge for providing these).
- To ask for a list of everyone who has looked at your records and when.
- To stop your information being used by organisations to contact you and promote services or goods.
- Ask for compensation if you suffer as a result of a breach (break) of confidence.
- Under current law, only you can make decisions about the sharing of your health information. The exception to this is parents or legal guardians of children or people with powers under mental health law. If you decide that you do not want your information shared, this may have an effect on your healthcare. Your healthcare professional will be able to discuss this with you.

## How secure is the access to my information?

All health records are private and personal. The NHS Care Records Service will use the strongest national and international security measures for handling your information. Every patient registered with the NHS has a unique NHS number. We use this to link all of your information together and to make sure we place it onto the right record.

Anyone wanting to look at your healthcare records must:

- Be involved in caring for you.
- Have a security NHS Smartcard with a chip and pass code.
- Only see the information they need to do their job.
- Have their details recorded (who they are and what they have done with your record).

## What action do I need to take?

- Tell us if any information we hold about you is wrong.
- Let us share as much of your information as we need to so that we can provide you with effective health and social care.
- Be careful who you show your medical records to and only provide the information that is needed (e.g. solicitors, etc).
- Tell us immediately if you change your mind about the sharing of your health records.



## Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information or would like to see your health records, talk to the person who is caring for you.

You can also contact the NHS Anglia Commissioning Support Unit, Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), who will put you in contact with the appropriate person to help answer your questions:

**Tel:** 0800 587 4132

**Email:** [angliacsu.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:angliacsu.PALS@nhs.net)

**The NHS Care Record Guarantee for England** is a more detailed version of this leaflet which you can order from the NHS Care Records Service Publications Order Line on **08453 700 750**. Alternatively, you can download a copy from [www.nhs.uk/healthcare-records](http://www.nhs.uk/healthcare-records)

If you would like a copy of this publication in another format such as Braille, large print, audio cassette or in another language please contact HealthEast on Tel: **01502 718629**

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