

Your medical records are used to help the National Health Service (NHS) provide you with the best possible care.

The purpose of this leaflet is to tell you:

- How your medical records are used to help you
- How the confidentiality of your records is safeguarded
- How you can arrange to see your own records

### **How your records are used to help you**

Your doctor and the team of health professionals caring for you keep records about your health and the care you receive from the NHS. These are important to help ensure that you receive the best possible care from us. Your records are used in the following ways:

- To ensure that your doctor or nurse has up to date and accurate information to assess your health and decide what care you may need at a future visit
- To ensure that full information is available if you see another doctor, or are referred to a specialist or another service in the NHS
- To ensure that there is a good basis for looking back and checking on the type and quality of care you have received
- To allow us to contact you for health checks (for example immunisations, clinic appointments for long standing conditions such as asthma and diabetes)
- To ensure that your concerns can be properly investigated if you need to complain
- Some information from your record may be used by the NHS for service planning and medical research unless you explicitly opt out

If you do not want certain information placed on your records, please talk to your doctor.

### **Keeping your records confidential and secure**

Your doctors, their staff and everyone else working for the NHS have a legal duty to maintain the highest level of confidentiality about patient information.

In some instances you may be receiving care from other people as well as the NHS. We may need to share some information about you with them so that we can all work together for your benefit. Anyone who receives confidential information about you from us is also under a legal duty of confidence.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, for example when the health or safety of others is at risk, we will not disclose your information to third parties without your permission. We will only give your relatives, friends and carers information if you want us to and if you explicitly consent to this.

In certain circumstances we are required by law to report information to the appropriate authorities. This information is only provided after formal authority has been given by a qualified health professional. For example:

- notification of new births
- where we encounter infectious diseases that may endanger the safety of others (eg meningitis or measles, but not HIV/AIDS).
- where a formal court order has been issued

However, our guiding principle is that we are holding your records in strict confidence.

## How you can see your own records

Under the Data protection Act 1998, you have the right to ask to see the information written in your health records (known as the right of subject access), although we may withhold certain information if it could seriously harm your mental or physical health, or identify a third party.

If you want to see you records, please ask for an application form, or apply in writing giving your:

- Full name, including any former names
- Date of birth
- NHS number (if known)
- Current address and telephone number
- Former address/es (if applicable)
- Whether you wish to view records or to receive a copy of the record
- If possible please specify what is being looked for eg. treatment from a particular Consultant or within specific dates, or for a specific illness
- A declaration that you are the person applying or that you are the patient's representative acting with the consent of the patient (patient consent will be verified)

You will also need to prove your identity before the application can be processed, by showing us photo ID (passport or driving licence) and proof of address (utility bill or similar)

**Please note that there will be an administration charge for this work. The actual amount will be dependent on the amount of records to be provided but will not exceed a maximum charge of £50.**



# Your records are safe with us

