

Your NHS health records

How we use your personal information to improve healthcare

The information we hold

When you receive treatment or any other service from the Trust, we collect information about you. This normally includes your name, date of birth, NHS Number, contact details such as your address, your religion and ethnic origin, and information about your health and the care that you have received.

We may also receive information about you from other health and social care providers in order to support the care you receive from us.

Keeping your information safe and accurate

We always keep your information securely and have strict rules about how it can be used. We do our best to keep it accurate and up to date, so we will often check it with you when you attend our hospitals or clinics.

This leaflet describes the circumstances in which we may share your information with other organisations. We expect all our partner organisations to apply the same strict security to your records as we do, and we make sure that appropriate safeguards are in place before sharing any information.

We will only share your information in strict accordance with the law, and we never use it for commercial purposes without your explicit permission.

Supporting direct care

We use your personal information to provide healthcare to you, and for purposes directly related to that healthcare (such as booking and managing your appointments). Sometimes we use third-party organisations to help us to do this more effectively, and we put strict contracts in place to protect your information in compliance with the law.

Your information may be used for clinical audit, where the team involved in your care and those working to support them will check the quality and outcomes of the treatment provided. Your information may also be used to investigate incidents and complaints.

If you receive care from other health and social care professionals, we may share with them relevant information that we hold about you to improve your care. The **Local Care Record** allows some of our partner organisations in the local area to have direct access to the information that we hold about you, but they will only do so with your permission or in an emergency. In some cases, such as when we deliver a service jointly with other healthcare provider organisations, we may share information about all patients receiving that service. If this applies for the particular type of care that you are receiving, the department where you are being treated will provide more detail.

If you do not want us to share your information with other health and social care professionals caring for you, please tell the team looking after you. You can opt out of the Local Care Record by contacting our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), using the details at the end of this leaflet. These decisions may affect the care that you receive.

Where necessary, we will share information with appropriate agencies for safeguarding and child protection purposes.

Supporting other medical purposes

We may use information about you, and the healthcare that you have received, to improve the care that we provide to all patients. This includes medical research, monitoring and improving our services, and for other medical purposes when we believe there is a public benefit. We also participate in national schemes, such as health registries, patient surveys and audits of care, which collect data from NHS organisations all over the country. The department where you are being treated will provide information about any local or national schemes for the particular type of care that you are receiving.

Whenever information is shared outside the team that provided care to you, or those working to support them, we normally first anonymise it so that you cannot be identified. We do not share identifiable information without your explicit permission or, in some cases, specific authority from the Secretary of State for Health or the Health Research Authority.

Your right to object

You have a right to object to the use of your information for any purpose other than your own direct care.

If you register an objection with us, we will **exclude** your information from such other uses whenever possible, or else **anonymise** it so that you cannot be identified. For example:

- We regularly participate in national surveys (such as the A&E Survey) and invite some of our patients to complete questionnaires. We would exclude your information completely from this type of survey.
- We are required to submit data on hospital attendances to a national database known as the Secondary Uses Service. We cannot exclude your information, but we would anonymise it so that you cannot be identified.

You cannot selectively opt out of certain uses by doing this. If you object to your information being used for **any** purpose other than your direct care, we will register you as having opted out of **all** such uses.

We are required by law to report certain information to other public authorities, including notifications of births, deaths and infectious diseases. In these and other exceptional circumstances when we believe there is an overwhelming public interest, such as in a public health emergency or to prevent very serious crime, we may share your information despite your objection. We have a legal duty to treat your information confidentially, and would only do this if we were certain that it was necessary.

Telling us about your objection

If you want to object to your information being used for any purpose other than your own direct care, you can write to our Information Governance department using the details at the end of this leaflet.

You should enclose proof of identity (such as a photocopy of your passport or other government-issued identity document). **Please do not send original documents, as they cannot be returned.**

You can change your mind at any time by writing to us in the same way.

Your objection will only apply to the information that is held by Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust. If you want to opt out of other NHS organisations using your information for wider healthcare improvement purposes, you should contact your GP practice, which will be able to advise you further about national initiatives (such as the Summary Care Record) and about other organisations that may hold information about you.

Other rights

You have a right to see the information that we hold about you, subject to certain exemptions established in law.

You can always ask your health professional to show you the information that is available to them while they treat you. If you do not understand parts of it, they will be able to explain it. Otherwise, you can make a formal **subject access request** to us for a copy of your health records, for which we will normally charge a fee. There are particular legal requirements to this process, so we provide separate detailed guidance to help you to make an application – please see our website or contact the Information Governance department using the details at the end of this leaflet.

If you think that information in your health records is incorrect, please talk to the health professional looking after you, in the first instance, or else contact the Information Governance department using the details below. If the information is factually inaccurate, we will correct it. If the information is the opinion of a health professional or otherwise not a factual inaccuracy, you will be given an opportunity to have a statement of your views added to the record.

Carers and parents

The rights described above apply to individuals, and can be exercised by somebody else only when that individual is incapable of making their own decisions.

If you have lasting power of attorney for health and welfare for a patient, you may be able to exercise their rights on their behalf when they are incapable of doing so themselves. If you are a carer but do not have this legal power, you should speak to the health professional treating the patient. They will be able to make a decision based on the patient's best interests, taking your views into account.

If you have parental responsibility for a child, you can only make decisions or exercise their rights on their behalf until they are mature enough to understand and make an informed decision for themselves. We will normally consider asking for independent consent from any child aged 12 or over.

Contact us

Information Governance

To request a copy of your own health records, or to register an objection to the Trust using your information for any purpose other than your own direct care, write to us at: Information Governance, First Floor South Wing, St Thomas' Hospital, London SE1 7EH

t: 020 7188 7525

e: subjectaccess@gstt.nhs.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To opt out of the Local Care Record as described in this leaflet, or for other advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service:

t: 020 7188 8801

e: pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and Accessible Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815

e: languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

Useful sources of information

For more information about **accessing your health records**, see our website:

www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patients/your-care/health-records.aspx

The **Local Care Record** connects our patient record systems with our partner organisations: King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, and GP practices in the local area.

www.kingshealthpartners.org/localcarerecord

Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust is committed to the **NHS Care Record**

Guarantee: systems.digital.nhs.uk/rasmartcards/strategy/nhscrg

You can find out more about your information rights on the website of the **Information**

Commissioner's Office: www.ico.org.uk

Leaflet number: 3608/VER3

Date published: January 2017

Review date: January 2020

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