

# Your NHS health records

**This leaflet describes how we use and share your personal information to deliver and improve healthcare.**

## The information we hold

When you receive treatment or any service from the hospital, we collect information about you. This normally includes your name, date of birth, NHS Number, contact details (such as address and telephone number), your religion, ethnic origin, and information about your health and the care that you have received. You don't have to give us any information, but it may affect the care you receive, and in some cases we may not be able to treat you at all.

We may also receive information about you and your health 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 come to our hospitals or clinics. We try to keep information for your lifetime (or the longest time allowed by law) in order to give you continuity of care.

We expect all our partner organisations to apply the same strict security to your records as we do, and we make sure that those restrictions are in place before sharing any information. We only share your information in strict accordance with the law.

## Supporting direct care

We use your personal information to provide healthcare to you, and to help with that healthcare (such as booking and managing your appointments). Sometimes we use other organisations to help us do this, some of which are international, and we have strict contracts in place to protect your information.

Your information may be used for clinical audit, where the team involved in your care will check the quality and results 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 information we hold about you to improve your care. The Local Care Record allows our partner organisations to have access to your information, but they will only do so with your permission or in an emergency. If we deliver a service jointly with another healthcare organisation, we may share information about all patients receiving that service. If this applies for the care that you are receiving, the department treating you 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, details at the end of this leaflet). These decisions may affect the care that you receive.

If we need to, we will share information with agencies for safeguarding and child protection purposes.

## Supporting other medical uses

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 medical purposes where we believe the public will benefit. We also take part in national schemes which collect data from NHS organisations all over the country. The department where you are being treated will give you information about any local or national schemes for the type of care that you are receiving. You can find out more information about medical research using the details at the end of this leaflet.

When information is shared outside the team that cared for you, we take out any details that would identify you, unless we have your permission or specific authority from the Secretary of State for Health or the Health Research Authority.

## Your rights 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 avoid using your information whenever possible, or we will take out your specific details so that you cannot be identified. We will do this for all purposes other than your own direct care. For example:

- We regularly participate in national surveys, 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 attendance to a national NHS database. We must supply your information, but we make sure that you cannot be identified.

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 situations 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 even though you have told us not to. We have a legal duty to treat your information confidentially, and would only share it if we were sure 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 (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). **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 object to other NHS organisations using your information for healthcare improvement purposes, you should contact your GP practice, which will be able to tell you more.

## Other rights

You have a right to see the information that we hold about you.

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. You can also make a formal subject access request, for a copy of your health records. There are legal requirements to this process, so there is separate guidance to help you make a request – please see our website or contact the information governance department.

If you think that any information in your health records is wrong, please talk first to the health professional looking after you, or contact the information governance department. If the information is wrong, we will correct it. If the information is right, or the opinion of a health professional, you will be given an opportunity to have a statement of your views added to the record.

In some cases, you may have the right to ask us to limit how we use your data, or to erase it entirely. We will consider these requests case by case. Please contact the information governance department for more information.

## Carers and parents

If you have health and welfare lasting power of attorney for a patient, you might 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 what is best for the patient, 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 direct decisions from any child aged 13 or over.

## Legal basis for using your data

Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust is the data controller for the activities described in this leaflet. We use personal data as part of our official authority, and because it is necessary for the provision of care and treatment and for the management of healthcare systems and services.

Sometimes, Guy's and St Thomas' may seek your consent to use your data for other purposes. This will be made clear to you at the time, and is separate from any consent that may be required for certain types of treatment or other NHS services.

## Useful sources of information

For information about accessing your health records:

w: [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patients/your-care/health-records.aspx](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/patients/your-care/health-records.aspx)

For information about use of data within research:

w: [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/research/patients/use-of-data.aspx](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/research/patients/use-of-data.aspx)

The Local Care Record connects our patient record systems with our partner organisations: King's College Hospital, South London and Maudsley Hospitals, and GP practices in south-east London: w: [www.kingshealthpartners.org/localcarerecord](http://www.kingshealthpartners.org/localcarerecord)

Guy's and St Thomas' is committed to the NHS Care Record Guarantee. You can find out more about it here: [w: www.digital.nhs.uk/services/registration-authorities-and-smartcards](http://www.digital.nhs.uk/services/registration-authorities-and-smartcards)

To find out more about how your information is used by the NHS nationally:  
[w: www.nhs.uk/your-nhs-data-matters/](http://www.nhs.uk/your-nhs-data-matters/)

Guy's and St Thomas' is not yet able to apply your national data opt-out to information that we hold locally. For this, you should follow the objection process described in this leaflet.

You have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office, the supervisory authority for data protection in the UK. You can find out more about your information rights here, [w: https://ico.org.uk/](https://ico.org.uk/)

## Contact us

To request a copy of your own health records, or to register an objection to Guy's and St Thomas' using your information for any purpose other than your own direct care, write to, Information governance, First Floor, South Wing, St Thomas' Hospital, London SE1 7EH  
**t:** 020 7188 7525, **e:** [subjectaccess@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:subjectaccess@gstt.nhs.uk)

If you are concerned about how Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals use your data, or want to register any of your other information rights, contact our data protection officer – through the information governance department, or directly on [dpo@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:dpo@gstt.nhs.uk).

For information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets)

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk)

## NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health. **w:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

## Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, please get in touch.  
**t:** 0800 731 0319 **e:** [members@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:members@gstt.nhs.uk) **w:** [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership)

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