

Looking after your personal information



This booklet explains why information is collected about you and the ways in which it may be used

Why we keep information about you

The health and social care professionals caring for you record information about your health and any treatment and care you receive from the NHS. The information is vital in helping to ensure that you receive the best possible care.

They may be written down (manual records) or held on a computer and may include:

- Basic details about you, such as address, telephone number and next of kin
- Contacts we have had with you, such as clinic or home visits
- Notes and reports about your health, treatments and care, such as doctor's notes and medication reports
- Results of investigations, such as X-rays and laboratory tests
- Relevant information from other health professionals, relatives or those people who care for you and who know you well

How your information is used to help you

Your information is used to guide and administer the care you receive to:

- Ensure your doctor, nurse or other healthcare staff involved in your care has accurate and up-to-date information to assess your health and decide what care you need
- Ensure information is available should you need to see another health or social care worker
- Ensure there is a sound basis for providing the type and quality of care you have received
- Enable your concerns to be properly examined if you wish to complain about any aspect of your care or our services

How your information is used to help us

Your information may also be used to help us:

- Review the care we provide to ensure it is of the highest standard to you
- Make sure our services can meet patient needs in the future
- Investigate complaints, legal claims or untoward incidents by patients or staff
- Teach and train health and social care staff
- Conduct health and social care research and development
- Prepare statistics on performance

When we use your information for statistical purposes every care is taken to ensure that individual patients cannot be identified.

Statistical information may also be passed to organisations with a valid interest, including universities, community safety units and research institutions.

Personally identifiable information may be used for essential NHS and social care purposes. These may include research and auditing services in these incidents this will only be done with your consent, if you do not wish to be asked to be involved in these services please inform the person responsible for your care.



How we keep your information safe

Everyone working for the NHS and Social Services has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential and secure.

You may be receiving care from several organisations including the NHS, Social Services and voluntary organisations. 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 professionals involved in your care have a genuine need for it.

We will not disclose your information to organisations such as the police without your permission. However, if there are exceptional circumstances, such as when the health or safety of others is at risk or when the law requires it, we are required to pass information on.

Everyone who receives information from us is also under a legal duty to keep it confidential and secure.

We are required by law to report certain information to the 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:

- Where we encounter a disease which may endanger the safety of others, such as meningitis or measles.
- Where a formal court order has been issued.
- Prevention and detection of crime.

Our guiding principle is that we hold your information in strictest confidence.



Who do we share information with?

Your information will be shared with the professionals involved in your care including those from our Trust and other agencies, so we can all work together for your benefit. We will only ever pass on information if others involved in your care have a genuine need for it. If you have any concerns about this, please speak to the person responsible for your care.

Subject to strict agreements describing how it will be used, your information may also be shared with:

- Other NHS agencies
- Social Services
- Education Services
- Local Authorities
- Voluntary Sector Providers
- Private Sector Providers.

How we ensure your information is accurate

We also have a duty to ensure your information is accurate and up to date to make certain we have the correct contact and treatment details about you.

To do this we routinely ask you if your personal information is recorded correctly and update it accordingly.

Your rights under Data Protection Law

- Right of access to your information (further information in this leaflet)
- Rights to rectification (if you feel your information is recorded incorrect please discuss with the person responsible for your care)

How you can get access to your own health and social care information

The Data Protection Law allows you to know what information is held about you on computer and in manual records. You have a right to access your information; this is known as 'right to access'.

It applies to your health and social care records. If you want to see them you can make a written request to the organisations where you are being, or have been, treated.

You are entitled to view your records and if you wish, receive a copy.

In rare circumstances your right to see some details in your health records may be limited in your own interest or for other reasons. A decision not to disclose some details would be taken by clinical staff responsible for your care.

Your written request should include:

- Your full name
- A clear description of what information you would like, for example, if you require information related to a hospital stay it may be useful to provide the dates of your stay.
- Your address and any other information that may prove useful in locating your information, such as your date of birth.
- A forwarding address for correspondence.

Alternatively, an application form is available from the contact below.

Send your request to:

**Information Governance
Team
Health Records Department**

**Lawton House
Bellringer Road
Trentham**

Stoke-on-Trent

ST4 8HH

Email: nscht.informationgovernance@combined.nhs.uk

Further information

Speak to your health or social care staff if you wish to know more about how we use your information.

You can also contact the Data Protection Officer of the organisation where you are being treated or cared for.

You can contact the Data Protection Officer for North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare at:

Information Governance
Team
Health Records Department
Lawton House
Bellringer Road
Trentham
Stoke-On-Trent
ST4 8HH

Tel: 0300 123 1535
E-mail:
nscht.informationgovernance
@combined.nhs.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Alternatively, you can contact PALS. The PALS team is there to help you, whether it is with a question, an information request or a problem you are experiencing when using the NHS.

You contact PALS in local NHS Trust on the following phone numbers:

North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare
PALS 0800 389 9676

NHS North Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Partnership
PALS 0800 783 2865

Commissioning Support Services
PALS 0800 030 4563

University Hospital of North Midlands
PALS 01782 676455 or 01782 676450

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This publication is available in other formats

The information in this booklet can be made available to you in another language, large print, Braille or on audio cassette tape. Contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **free phone 0800 389 9676**.

**North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust
Harplands Hospital
Hilton Road, Harpfields,
Stoke-on-Trent
ST4 6TH**

www.combined.nhs.uk

E-mail: PatientExperienceTeam@northstaffs.nhs.uk