

EPR Frequently Asked Questions:

What is an electronic patient record (EPR) system?

An EPR system is a digital platform that brings all your patient information - from medical history to results of investigations and medications prescribed - together in one place.

Currently, we hold your records in different places, such as paper-based notes and on several digital systems.

With our new EPR system, all your medical information will be kept together in one single electronic patient record. This means your clinician can see everything relating to your care in real time, helping to improve the quality of care we provide.

The system we are introducing is supplied by Oracle Health.

Why are we introducing a new EPR system?

The introduction of EPR will support us in transforming how we work every day, helping us to be safer and more efficient, make better clinical decisions and run our services with the information we need at our fingertips. It will also help us to consistently deliver care according to best practice.

EPR will bring information currently stored in different places together into one place, so we have access to it when we need it.

Having access to all your information in one place will help improve the quality of care we provide. For example, clinicians will have a full picture of your medical history and treatment in our Trust instantly available. EPR will save our staff time in finding your records, which will help inform and speed up decision-making so they can focus on what's most important – your care.

What will change when we introduce the new EPR system?

At present, patient records are held in different ways, including paper-based and handwritten notes, forms, and computer records on different systems.

The EPR system we are introducing (supplied by Oracle Health), is an electronic (or digital) version of a set of patient records. It connects data and information to give clinical staff immediate and secure access to a patient's complete health record. This will remove the need for hand-written notes and forms.

All clinical staff directly involved with a patient's care will have some level of access to the EPR system. It will save them time and give them all the relevant information they need instantly so they can deliver consistently high-quality and safe care for the patient.

When will the EPR system be introduced?

We will be introducing our new EPR system from 15 June 2024.

How secure is EPR?

Access to patient records will only be available to authorised staff and there is a strict governance policy around this. The information will be electronically stored off site at a UK-based location. The data will therefore be less vulnerable to cyber-attack or to outside agencies.

What will happen to paper records?

Over time, paper records will gradually become less relevant and the need to access and store them will reduce. Paper records that need to be accessible on the new EPR system can be scanned in.

Does the system provide links across primary, secondary and community care?

Our EPR is on offsite hosted system running through the University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust network. Any community site that has access to the UHCW network, and also has the correct permissions, will be able to log into the system.

What are the benefits for GPs?

Doctors have immediate access to detailed information about patients and will quickly be able to form a more complete picture. The more information they have got, the better decisions they can make, and they will be able to give the patient more relevant information about what's happening to them.

UHCW clinicians will have access to the GP summary word within the EPR record, supporting more effective continuity of care and coordination of joint care.

Will EPR link up with other local trusts and healthcare providers (e.g. my GP)?

GPs and other local care providers will be able to view a summary of the EPR relevant to your care.

Will patient safety be improved in your hospitals?

Yes. One of the biggest benefits of EPR is that our clinicians can see what's happening with your treatment from any of our sites.

The system will give prompts to clinicians such as doctors, nurses and therapists to make sure that you get the right care at the right time. Plus, it will flag up important information such as allergies.

Can I opt out of having an electronic patient record?

Your electronic patient record is key in ensuring we provide the best care possible and can continue to improve the way we work, so you can't opt out. There will not be alternative record keeping systems.

What happens if the system goes down and you can't access my record?

There will be several plans in place, including a back-up system which will give access to essential information.

Will I be able to see my EPR?

Yes, you will be able to request your records, as you can do currently.

If you want copies of your child's health records, you will also need to supply proof of your identity and your parental responsibility.

Access to health records legislation allows us to share health records of a deceased person with authorised representative(s) or any person who may have a claim arising out of that person's death. If you are requesting personal information about someone who has died you will need to supply a copy of their death certificate and proof that you are the executor or a beneficiary within the last will and testament.

How will the EPR help to manage the hospital?

As an advanced scheduling and care management system, what we do within the system will help us deliver care more efficiently. The EPR will hold information about all patients in our two hospitals. We will be able to see how many patients are in hospital, where we have empty beds, and also when we are expecting to discharge patients. This means we will be able to manage the flow of patients through our hospitals better and plan ahead. Also, the system will help us with reporting (internally and also to external bodies) as well as supporting our audit work.

How will the EPR help us to make patient care safer?

There are several tools built into the system to support clinical decision-making. Having a holistic view of a patient's condition and care will help our clinicians make better decisions. The intelligent computer system follows best-practice care pathways and takes the information clinicians put into it to suggest next steps in the care of a patient. This will help us to ensure patients always receive the right care and that decisions are applied with equity.

Computers can never replace the knowledge and good judgement of a clinician. However, they can support care, alert us to things we should look out for and act as a guiding hand in our work. They could also alert us if a dose of medicine has been missed or a patient is due for an observation or test.

EPR will reduce the likelihood of human error, removing the need to decipher people's handwriting or find crucial information that's been recorded on the right piece of paper.

Who will look after the EPR system once it's been introduced?

EPR is a system that is used by 90% of NHS Trusts across the country. When the NHS makes national recommendations or requirements, the EPR will be updated for all users. UHCW will continue to have a contract with the supplier, Oracle Health, to ensure that the software works and updates are installed each time they are available. IT support will be managed locally and EPR support will be by a joint technical and clinical team.

Will EPR help to reduce the amount of time I need to spend in hospital?

The amount of time a patient spends in hospital will always be a clinical judgement. However, things such as ordering tests, developing discharge plans and managing TTOs (take-home medications) should be more efficient. The information in EPR will support clinical decision-making and may result in an earlier discharge. This will support patients leaving hospital in a more timely way.

Will I be able to use EPR as a patient?

In time, EPR will empower patients too, so you'll be able to manage your own appointments, review your test results, and respond to messages through a secure online portal.