

## Patient Quality & Safety

# Your Health Records: A guide to why the NHS collects information about you and how it is used

This leaflet explains why University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust collects personal information about you; your information is used to help the National Health Service (NHS) provide the best possible care for you. This leaflet also explains the ways in which your personal information may be used and your rights under Data Protection laws. It also explains how you can access your health records.

### The purpose of this leaflet is to tell you:

- How we use your information
- Who we may be required to share your information with
- How we keep your information confidential
- How you can arrange to access your own (or your child's) health records
- How you can request copies of clinical letters sent to your GP
- What to do should you not wish your personal information that we hold to be shared



We **Care.** We **Achieve.** We **Innovate.**

## **How we use your information**

Health professionals caring for you (or your child) manage information about your health and the care you receive from the NHS. This information is recorded in health records, manually or electronically and is important to help ensure that you (and your child) receive the best possible care from us. Your information is used in the following ways to guide and administer the care you receive:

- To ensure that your health professional has accurate and up to date information to provide a good basis for any treatment or advisory services we provide to you.
- To ensure that full and correct information is available to other healthcare providers from whom you may be receiving treatment.
- To ensure your treatment is safe and effective, and the advice we provide is appropriate and relevant to you.
- To ensure that there is a good basis for referring to and checking on the type and quality of treatment you have received in the past.
- To ensure that your concerns can be properly investigated should you wish to complain.

## **Who we may be required to share your health information with**

We may be required to share information about you with the NHS regulatory authorities, for example the Care Quality Commission. The legal basis for processing your information for these purposes is that the NHS is an official authority with a public duty of care for its patients. The Department of health provides guidance in line with Data Protection laws where the NHS is allowed to share personal information for health and social care treatment of patients, and the management of health and social care systems and services. 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 in the following circumstances:

- Notification of new births
- Where we encounter infectious diseases which may endanger the safety of others
- Where a formal court order has been issued
- Safeguarding concerns (for both children and adults)

- If a serious crime has been committed

Whilst always preserving your confidentiality, your information may also be used when:

- Assisting with teaching and training of health care professionals.
- Assisting with health research (if this research requires identifiable information, your written permission/consent will be sought prior to research being undertaken).
- Assisting with national and local audits. Clinical audits help the Trust to know we are meeting clinical standards of care.

## **Sharing information**

The Trust is a signatory with partner organisations and other agencies in the locality for information sharing protocols and agreements which set out the ethical and legal principles for information exchanges. They also set out the limited and defined circumstances under which personal information is shared. The other agencies that we may share information with are:

- Social Services
- Education Services
- Local Authorities
- Voluntary Sector Providers
- Police
- Public Health

## **Keeping your information confidential**

All health professionals working for the NHS have a duty to maintain the highest level of confidentiality about patient information. In some instances, you may be receiving care from other organisations as well as the NHS. We may need to share some information about you with them, so we can all work together for your benefit. Anyone who receives confidential information about you from us is under a duty of confidence and unless there are exceptional circumstances, for example; when the health or safety of others is at risk (including child protection or safeguarding vulnerable adults concerns), we will not disclose

your information to third parties without your permission. We have a legal duty to keep your health records confidential and in order to do so we maintain full and accurate records of the care we provide to you, and keep records about you confidential, secure and accurate.

## Your rights

Data Protection laws give you rights in respect of the information that we hold about you. These are:

- To know what information we hold about you, what we use it for and if the information is to be shared, who it will be shared with.
- To ask for information to be corrected if inaccurate or incomplete.
- To ask for information to be deleted or removed where there is no need or legal obligation for us to continue processing it (in line with the Department of Health Records Management Code of Practice).
- To ask us to restrict the use of your information (provided there is no detriment to the care and treatment we provide you).
- To ask us to provide your information in a portable format (as per GDPR).
- To challenge any decisions made about you where there has been no human intervention (automated decision making).

## How you can request copies of your personal information

Please note that currently a charge will be made for processing your request. There will be no charge from 25 May 2018 onwards. To request access and copies of the information we hold about you please contact the [FOI and Access to Health Records Department](#) (details below).

Requesting access to your records covers: the right to obtain a copy of your record in permanent form and the right to have the information provided to you in a way you can understand, where it is explained to you and abbreviations .

You can also visit our website at [www.uhcv.nhs.uk](http://www.uhcv.nhs.uk) for more details about the information in this leaflet under the section called 'Your Information'

FOI and Access to Health Records Department  
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University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

Clifford Bridge Road  
Coventry CV2 2DX  
Telephone: 024 7696 8813

## **How you can request copies of clinical letters sent to your GP**

You are entitled to request copies of letters written between health professionals about your care; for example copies of letters sent to your GP following a clinic appointment or hospital stay. If you would like to receive copies of letters, please ask your consultant or their secretary who will arrange it for you.

## **If you do not wish your personal information to be shared**

If you do not wish personal information that we hold about you to be used or shared in the way that is described in this leaflet, please discuss the matter with us. You have the right to object, but this may affect our ability to provide you with care or advice.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 5400 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

### **Document History**

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