

# Patient Confidentiality

## How we use and share your information

This leaflet explains the information that we collect about you, how we respect your confidentiality and only use and share your information legally and fairly.

**1 2 3 4 5**  
**Living our values**

This is how we do things around here. This is how we Live Our Values.

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## Why we keep and share information

- We keep your information and the details of the care that you have received in order to help plan your current and future healthcare.
- If you receive care from outside the NHS (e.g. private healthcare or social services) we may need to share certain information to enable us to work together.
- Wherever possible we will seek to gain your consent before your information is shared. However, there may be times where we are required to share information without your consent e.g. to notify a health visitor or a birth or to protect vulnerable people.

## Who might ask to see your information?

### NHS (Care) Providers:

- Health professionals in the course of their work (e.g. doctors, nurses, community health workers, therapists and technicians)
- GP's refer patients for treatment and are kept informed of the care the patient has received (e.g. appointments, medications, tests, treatments)
- GPs must keep commissioners informed of patient registrations and certain procedures carried out.
- GPs may also share information with commissioners to help with national public health programmes (e.g. cervical smear testing and breast screenings)
- Hospitals share with NHS commissioners and the NHS executive to monitor how patient care is provided.
- Hospitals are required to inform the Department of Health about certain infectious diseases (e.g. measles or meningitis (but not H.I.V)) for public health reasons
- Other NHS practices; hospitals and social services staff in order to help in the delivery of your care

### External (non-care) Organisations (some examples):

- The Benefits Agency – may sometimes ask for medical reports. Your signed consent is required before sharing.
- Solicitors – may ask for medical reports. Your signed consent is required before sharing.
- Life Assurance Companies – often ask for medical reports. Your signed consent is always required before sharing.
- Law Courts – can request the sharing of health records

## **The information we hold and where we hold it**

Confidentiality is at the heart of good medical practice and is based upon trust and confidence.

- Your health record contains general information such as name, address, date of birth. The record also contains details of your care e.g. consultations; illnesses; investigations undertaken; prescriptions received and treatment carried out.
- Your health records are held at the GP practice that you are registered or the hospital where you are being treated.
- During the course of your care information will be collected and recorded to help health and social care professionals plan and carry out your care.
- This information forms your health record.
- Most health records at this Trust are electronic.
- All health professionals are responsible for the accuracy and safe keeping of health records.
- When you change GP your health records will be automatically sent to your new GP.
- Where medically necessary, your hospital records can be passed onto the local hospital.

## **The law strictly controls the management of all personal information**

- Anyone who receives information about you has a legal duty to keep it confidential.
- Your right of privacy allows you to keep your health records confidential between you and your health professional, with some exceptions.
- Your information is kept in accordance with the NHS Records Management Code of Practice, written by the Department of Health.

## How we use your information

- For your direct healthcare needs
- To help us protect the health of the public
- To help the NHS plan services, train staff and account of its actions.
- To carry out medical and other health research for the benefit of everyone.
- To prepare statistics on NHS performance.
- To investigate complaints or legal claims and respond to your concerns.
- To help care staff and clinical audit teams review the quality of care provided to ensure that it is of the highest quality.

### We have a duty to ensure that your health records are accurate.

Please help us to keep your records up to date by telling us about changes to your name, address, contact details or marital status as soon as possible.

### And finally...

- You have the right to see all the information that we hold about you (except where this contains information from / about a third party). Please see the **Access to Health Records** leaflet for more information on how to apply to see your records.
- If you have any concerns about who might see your health records, or have any other questions about your records please contact:
  - GP records – your GP practice manager at the practice you are registered
  - Hospital / Community Health records - your care co-ordinator or the Health Records team (01785 887695)

For more information, email [informationgovernance@sssft.nhs.uk](mailto:informationgovernance@sssft.nhs.uk)

If you require this information in another language, in larger print, in easy read or any other format, please contact PALS on 01785 783028, or [pals@sssft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@sssft.nhs.uk)

