

How we keep your records confidential

Everyone working for the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential. Records will be kept in line with the Department of Health Records Management Code of Practice which determines the minimum retention periods records should be kept for.

We have a duty to

- maintain full and accurate records of the care we provide to you;
- keep records about you confidential, secure and accurate; and
- provide information in a format that is accessible to you (for example, in large type if you are partially sighted).

We **will not** share information that identifies you for any reason, unless:

- you ask us to do so;
- we ask and you give us specific permission;
- we have to do this by law;
- we have special permission for health or research purposes; or
- we have special permission because the interests of the public are thought to be of greater importance than your confidentiality.

Our guiding principle is that we are holding your records in

strict confidence



Sharing your information

We may share information as **part of your healthcare** pathway with the following main partner organisations:

- strategic health authorities
- NHS Business Services Authority
- NHS trusts (hospitals or primary care trusts)
- general practitioners (GPs)
- community health units i.e. district nurses, health visitors
- special health authorities
- ambulance services
- third party contractors undertaking specific work on our behalf

We may also share your information, **with your consent** and subject to strict sharing protocols about how it will be used, with:

- social services
- education services
- police authority
- local authorities
- voluntary sector providers
- the private sector

If you have any concerns about how your information may be shared, please discuss them with your healthcare provider, i.e. gp, nurse, dentist, consultant.

Further details about how your health information is shared safely and securely can be found in the NHS Care Records Service - Your questions answered leaflet. Contact your local patient advice and liaison service (PALS) by telephoning 01274 237555 to order a copy.

If you require this leaflet in a different format or language or you need further information or assistance, please contact:

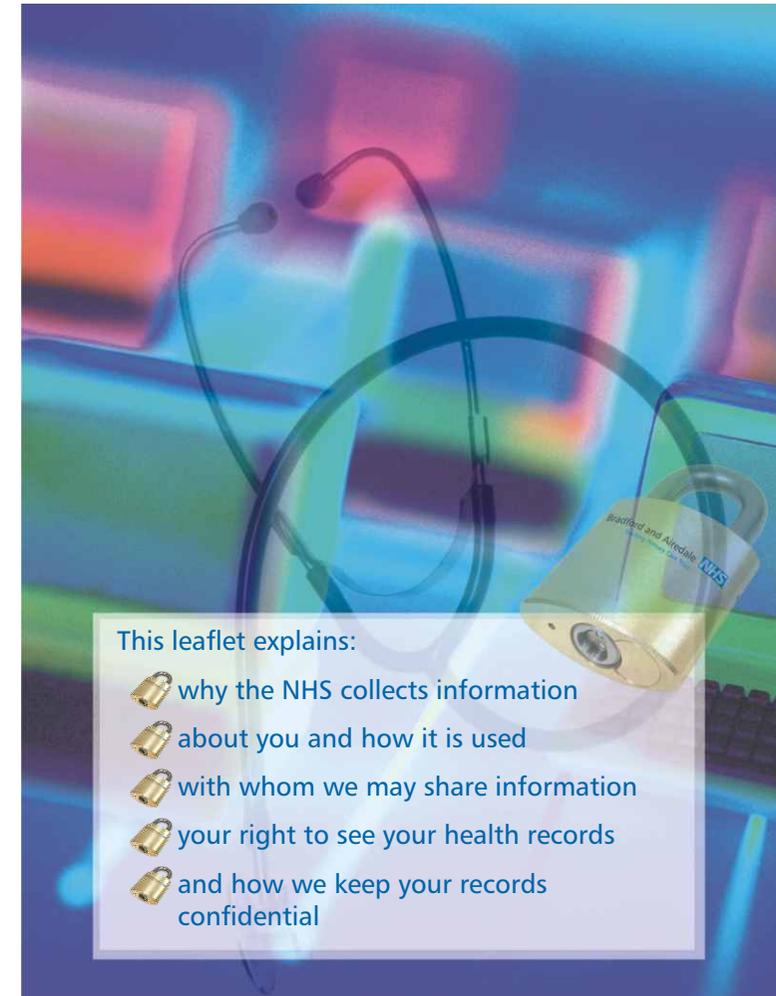
NHS Bradford and Airedale Information Governance Team

Email: Infogov@bradford.nhs.uk
www.bradfordairedale-pct.nhs.uk



How we use your health records

Better information, better health



This leaflet explains:

- why the NHS collects information
- about you and how it is used
- with whom we may share information
- your right to see your health records
- and how we keep your records confidential

Why we collect information about you



In the National Health Service we aim to provide you with the highest quality of healthcare. To do this we must keep records about you, your health and the care we have provided or plan to provide to you.

It is therefore very important that you inform your healthcare provider(s) immediately if you change your address or telephone number(s).

These records may include:

- basic details about you, such as address, date of birth, next of kin;
- contact we have had with you such as clinical visits;
- notes and reports about your health;
- details and records about your treatment and care;
- results of x-rays, laboratory tests etc;
- relevant information from people who care for you and know you well, such as health professionals and relatives.

It is good practice for people in the NHS who provide care to:

- discuss and agree with you what they are going to record about you;
- give you a copy of letters they are writing about you; and
- show you what they have recorded about you, if you ask.



How your records are used

The way in which health information is recorded has evolved and it is now possible for healthcare professionals involved in your care to add information into a central clinical system which links directly to your GP record. **This undoubtedly provides you with the best level of care as the people caring for you have accurate and up-to-date information about your health.**

The people who care for you use your records to:

- provide a good basis for all health decisions made by you and care professionals;
- allow you to work with those providing care;
- make sure your care is safe and effective; and
- work effectively with others providing you with care.

Others may also need to use records about you to:

- check the quality of care (such as clinical audit);
- protect the health of the general public;
- keep track of NHS spending;
- manage the health service;
- help investigate any concerns or complaints you or your family have about your health care;
- teach health workers; and help with research.

Some information will be held centrally to be used for statistical purposes. In these instances we take strict measures to ensure that individual patients cannot be identified.

Your healthcare record can contain lots of information about you concerning your healthcare pathway. Solicitors acting on your behalf in the event of a claim for damages may ask for your consent for the release of your full medical record.



You should always consider what may be contained in your record before agreeing to the release of the full record. A healthcare professional is obliged to check the record before it is passed to the requester and remove any third party information or information which, in their opinion, could cause harm or distress to you or to anyone with whom you may share the record.

You have the right

You have the right to confidentiality under the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA), the Human Rights Act 1998 and the common law duty of confidence (the Disability Discrimination and the Race Relations Acts may also apply).

You also have the right to ask for a copy of all records about you.

- Your request must be made in writing (email is acceptable) to the organisation holding your information.
- There may be a charge to have a printed copy of the information held about you.
- We are required to respond to you within 40 days. You will need to give adequate information (for example full name, address, date of birth NHS number, etc) and you will be required to provide identification before any information is released to you.

If you think anything is inaccurate or incorrect, in your record please inform the organisation holding your information.

Notification

The Data Protection Act 1998 requires organisations to notify the Information Commissioner of the purposes for which they process personal information.

The details are publicly available from:

The Information Commissioner:
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545745

www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

