

**PROTECTION AND USE OF  
PATIENT INFORMATION**

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Issue Date:  
Review Date:  
NCA8212: 11/10 REV 4

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## Introduction

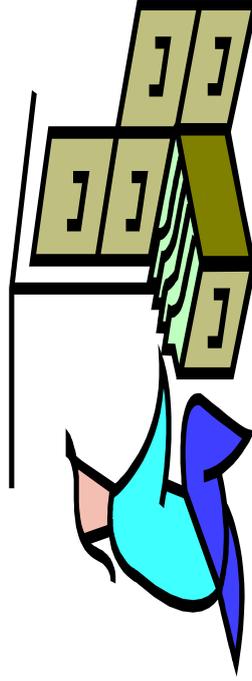
This leaflet explains why information is collected about you and the ways in which this information may be used.

### Why we collect information about you

Your doctor and other health professionals caring for you keep records about your health and any treatment and care you receive from the National Health Service. These help ensure you receive the best possible care from us. They may be written down (manual records), or held on a computer.

The records may include:

- basic details about you, such as address and next of kin
- contacts we have had with you, such as clinic visits
- notes and reports about your health and any treatment and care you need
- details and records of the treatment and care you receive
- results of investigations, such as X-ray and laboratory tests
- relevant information from other health professionals, relatives or those who care for you and know you well



treated. You are entitled to receive a copy but should note that a charge will usually be made.

If you wish to apply for access to your data, application forms, together with guidance notes are available from:

The SAR Co-ordinators  
Medical Records Department  
Cumberland Infirmary  
Carlisle CA27HY

The SAR Co-ordinators  
Medical Records Department  
West Cumberland Hospital  
Whitehaven CA28 8YG

email: [foi.requests@ncuh.nhs.uk](mailto:foi.requests@ncuh.nhs.uk)

Or from the Trust's website:

<http://www.ncuh.nhs.uk/acute/patientsandvisitors/accessingyourinformation.aspx>

### E-mail communication with you

Unless you have stated in a face-to-face meeting with a member of Trust staff that you would prefer future contact to be by e-mail, the Trust cannot enter into this type of correspondence with you. You need to consider the potential security risks before you ask for this type of contact, and we will record your consent.

**If you require this leaflet in larger print, or in another language please use the contact details above.**

## Who are our partner organisations?

Our principal partner organisations, with whom information may be shared are:

- Health Authority
- Other NHS Trusts
- General Practitioners (GPs)
- Ambulance Services

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

- NHS Common Services Agencies such as Primary Care Trusts
- Social Services
- Education Services
- Local Authorities
- Voluntary Sector Providers
- Private Sector Providers

***Our guiding principle is that we are holding your records in strict confidence***

## How you can get access to your own health records

The data Protection Act 1998 allows you to find out what information about you is held on computer and in certain manual records,

This is known as “right of subject access” and it applies to your health records.

If you want to see them you should make a written request to the NHS Organisations where you are being, or have been

## How your records are used to help you

Your records are used to guide and administer the care you receive to ensure:

- your doctor, nurse or any other healthcare professional involved in your care has accurate and up-to-date information to assess your health and decide what care you need when you visit in the future
- full information is available should you see another doctor, or be referred to a specialist in another part of the NHS
- there is a good basis for assessing the type and quality of care you have received
- your concerns can be properly investigated if you need to complain

## How your records are used to help the NHS

Your information may also be used to help us:

- look after the health of the general public
- pay your GP, dentist and hospital for the care they provide
- audit NHS accounts and services
- investigate complaints, legal claims or untoward incidents
- make sure our services can meet patient needs in the future
- prepare statistics on NHS performance
- review the care we provide to ensure it is of the highest standard
- teach and train health care professionals
- conduct health research and development

- Enable clinicians to audit aspects of their service
- Enable us to provide statutory information such as cancer data and communicable disease data.

Some of this information will be held centrally, but where this is used for statistics purposes stringent measures are taken to ensure that individual patients cannot be identified. Anonymous statistical information may also be passed on to organisations with a legitimate interest, including universities, community safety units and research institutions.

Where it is not possible to use anonymised information, personally identifiable information may be used for essential NHS purposes; these may include research and clinical auditing services. For research purposes, (e.g. the National Joint Registry) consent will always be obtained unless there are some very exceptional circumstances. The use of clinical audit to evaluate clinical performance against standards is an essential part of modern healthcare provision. Where possible the Trust participates in National audits subject to regulation under the NHS Act 2006 for which consent will not be sought and similarly for local audits where the Trust has been involved in providing treatment, subject to approved Clinical Audit guidelines



## How we keep your records confidential?

**Everyone working for the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential.**

You may be receiving care from other people as well as the NHS (like Social Services). In order to help us to work together for your benefit we may need to share some information about you. We will only ever use or pass on information about you if others involved in your care have a genuine need for it.

We will not disclose your information to third parties without your permission, unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as when your health or the safety of others is at risk or where the law requires information to be passed on.

**Anyone who receives information from us is also under a legal duty to keep it confidential.**

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:

- notification of new births
- where we encounter infectious diseases which may endanger the safety of others, such as meningitis or measles (but not HIV/AIDS)
- where a formal court order has been issued