

How we handle your information

Introduction

This leaflet explains how we handle your health records. Your records contain detailed information about your medical history. We want to assure you that your personal information is always handled with your confidentiality in mind.

How we use your information

We have a legal duty to keep accurate, complete and up to date health records. We keep your information on both paper and in computer records. This enables:

- **Delivery of safe care** by providing our clinicians and supporting staff with the information they need to care for you
- **Sharing information** when needed to give you safe care and treatment
- **Work to improve** our services and care and to plan new services. This includes monitoring the quality of care provided to check services are efficient, effective and safe

Delivery of safe care

Your health records contain your name, address and facts about your health, such as the treatments you receive and who saw you. The records also contain details of your appointments, test results and the professional opinions of the staff who have cared for you. Having your health records helps us to care for you in the best way to meet your individual needs.

Sharing information

When you require care it is often the case that several organisations will be involved. This includes other NHS Trusts and hospitals that are involved in your care, your GP or the ambulance services and sometimes other partner agencies such as Social Services, Education, Housing and the voluntary sector.

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Patient Information

We have a duty to share information with those organisations caring for you, and their staff, when it is in your interests to do so, to help with your care. Staff should discuss with you, what information they are sharing, who with, and why, but if this is not possible information will still be shared when necessary for your care unless you have asked us not to. You can always ask if you have any concerns.

Sometimes it may be very important for your information to be shared in order to prevent you or someone else coming to harm. We only share information in such situations where we have either spoken to you, or where it is vital to do so quickly and we are unable to talk to you.

There are also circumstances where the NHS is required to share information by law, such as child protection cases, controlling infectious disease and protecting vulnerable individuals.

Working to improve

In addition to providing the care you need, the NHS uses information for a number of other important activities such as research, quality monitoring, and improving and developing our services.

When information is used for these activities we will remove information which identifies you where possible. You also have a choice in many cases about whether you want your confidential personal information to be used in this way. To find out more about the wider use of your confidential personal information and your choices please visit www.nhs.uk/your-nhs-data-matters/.

You may be invited to take part in research studies. All research is approved by a 'Research Ethics Committee' before it can start and there are detailed checks over how patient information will be handled. Details about your health will not be passed to researchers unless you choose to take part.

Patient Information

Your rights and our staff responsibilities

All staff receive training and regular updates about how to handle your information. Everyone working within the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential. Similarly, anyone who receives information from us has a legal duty to keep it confidential.

All the information we hold is subject to very strict security controls. Regular security audits of computer systems and our procedures to collect and store data, take place to make sure that everything is working well.

You have a right to access the information we hold about you in our records. For more information on accessing your records, please visit our website www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk and search for 'Subject access'.

Keep us up to date

It is important that we have up to date information about you. Out of date or wrong information could lead to mistakes being made with your care. If any of your circumstances change, please tell us straight away. On occasion, we will ask you to confirm your details so we have up to date records. If you are unable to provide up to date details, we may ask people who accompany you, such as your relatives.

Contact information

If you have any concerns, please speak to the person in charge of your care or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Ground Floor, Gloucestershire Royal Hospital
Great Western Road, Gloucester, GL1 3NN

Office open: Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm

Freephone: 0800 019 3282

Email: ghn-tr.pals.gloshospitals@nhs.net

At busy times, evenings and weekends, your call may be transferred to an answer phone. Please leave a message with your name and number and someone will be in touch.

Patient Information

We also have an office at Cheltenham General Hospital on the Upper Ground Floor of West Block, close to the Blue Spa Café. If this office is not open, please contact our main office at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital.

Further information

For more information about how the Trust uses and looks after your information and your rights please see the Privacy Notice on our website at: <https://www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/privacy-notice/>

If you would like a paper copy of the current privacy notice, please send your request to ghn-tr.dataprotection.officer@nhs.net or ask the PALS advisors (see previous page) to do this for you.

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