

WHITBY GROUP PRACTICE

YOUR INFORMATION:

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



A leaflet to explain
why information is collected about you,
and the ways in which
this information may be used.

WHY DO 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 that you receive the best possible care from us.

These records may be written down and stored (manually) or may be held on our computer system. These records will 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 have received
- details and records about the treatment and care you receive
- results of investigations, such as X-rays and laboratory tests
- relevant information from other health professionals, or those who care for you and know you well

HOW ARE YOUR RECORDS USED TO HELP YOU?

Your records are used to guide professionals in the care you receive to ensure that:

- your doctor, nurse or any other healthcare professionals involved in your care has accurate and up-to-date information to assess your health and decide what care you need
- full information is available if you see another doctor, or are referred to a specialist or another part of the NHS
- your concerns can be properly investigated if you need to complain

HOW ARE YOUR RECORDS USED TO HELP THE NHS?

Your information may also be used to help us:

- assess the needs of the general population
- make sure our services can meet patient needs in the future
- review the care we provide to ensure it is of the highest standard

- teach and train healthcare professionals
- conduct health research and development
- pay your GP, dentist and hospital for the care they provide
- prepare statistics on NHS performance
- investigate complaints, legal claims or untoward incidents

Some of this information will be held centrally, but where this is used for statistical purposes stringent measures are taken to ensure that individual patients cannot be identified. Anonymous statistical information may also be passed to organisations with a legitimate interest, including universities, community safety units and research institutions. Where it is not possible to use anonymous information, personally identifiable information may be used for essential NHS purposes. These may include research and auditing services. This will only be done with your consent, unless the law requires information to be passed on to improve public health.

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 organisations as well as the NHS (like Social Services). We may need to share some information about you so we can all work together for your benefit. 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 the health or 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

Our guiding principle is that your records must be held in strict confidence

WHO MIGHT YOUR INFORMATION BE SHARED WITH?



The principal partner organisations we might share information with are:

- Health Authorities
- NHS Trusts
- General Practitioners (GPs)
- Ambulance Services

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

- Primary Care Agencies
- Social Services
- Education Services
- Local Authorities
- Voluntary and Private Sector Providers

HOW CAN YOU ACCESS YOUR HEALTH RECORDS?

The Data Protection Act 1998, which came into force on 1st March 2000, allows you to find out what information about you is held on computer systems and in certain manual records. This is known as “right of subject access”. If you want to see your health records then you should make a written request to the NHS organisations where you are receiving or have

received treatment. You are entitled to receive a copy but should note that a charge will usually be made. You should also be aware that in certain circumstances your right to see some details in your health records may be limited in your own interest or for other reasons.

FURTHER INFORMATION...

If you would like to know more about how we use your information or if, for any reason, you do not wish to have your information used in any of the ways described in this leaflet, please speak to the health professionals concerned with your care.

You can also contact the NHS organisation - such as the hospital, clinic, and GP surgery - where you are being treated.



A helpful website for finding out more about data protection is the Information Commissioner's Office:
<http://www.ico.gov.uk>