

How we use and look after your information

This leaflet will tell you about how we use, protect and look after your information.

What information do we keep?

We keep information about you and the treatment you receive in both paper and electronic records.

This information is vital to the operation of the NHS and is needed to provide you and others with the best possible healthcare.

What is confidential information?

Confidential information is used in a general sense to mean sensitive and/or personal information. This is information where access is subject to restrictions and may refer to information about an individual such as yourself or a business.

If it's personal it's private!

What information does the Trust record and why?

The Trust holds information such as:

- Basic details about you, for example your address, next of kin contacts, status etc.
- Details about your treatment, care and support that you need and receive
- Investigation results, notes and reports, such as x-rays and laboratory tests
- Any information you tell us that is important to your treatment or your illness

This information can help us to:

- Confirm your identity when we need to contact you
- Make decisions about your care
- Check your care is effective, correct and safe

How do we use your information?

Your information is used in the best interests of you and the care you require. Every effort is made to ensure your information is relevant and confidential. We need to keep this information in order to provide proper care.

Who has access to your information?

- Doctors who need to make notes about your care. Your doctor may also need to provide information under certain acts of parliament to protect you and others.
- Nurses and other health professionals require access to your records to add their own notes and to read treatment history if they are part of your care package.
- Secretaries, receptionists and other clerical staff have limited access to your records to allow them to complete administrative tasks such as booking appointments and sending letters etc.

How and why do we need to share your information?

We only share information with people who need to know about you to aid with consistency in the care you require.

Some of your personal information has to be shared with other people in the hospital and in the community. If you would like further information then please speak to your care professional or see the contacts at the end of this leaflet.

Examples of other people we may share your information with could be any of the following and is not comprehensive:

- Doctors and clinicians
- Nurses
- Your family doctor
- Social services

Example of sharing could be for any of the following purposes:

- **Teaching** - some medical files are needed to teach students about real and/or rare cases. These materials allow students to understand and learn real scenarios before qualifying.
- **Medical research** - you may be given information about research projects and asked to take part in a study/trial. If you do not consent to taking part you will not be included in the study/trial. Similarly if you change your mind about taking part, you can withdraw at any time. For more information please search for Research and Development on the Trust website.
- **Planning** – we provide information to NHS governing bodies to aid with management, decision making and to ensure we are following the law. Some restricted information concerning treatments, drugs prescribed and numbers of patients seen is needed and hospitals and GPs must provide this information to central bodies. The Trust will always remove personal information from these reports.
- **Legal obligations** - sometimes we are required by legislation to provide information because of the law. This is only ever provided to protect you and others. For example the sharing can be for the prevention and detection of a crime, the prevention of abuse and neglect or in accordance with a court order.

National Surveys and Audits

These allow us to manage our services, prepare statistics on our performance and review the care we are providing by ensuring we are meeting patients' needs and national NHS obligations.

Surveys are a task carried out in the interests of the public and your mailing information (name and address) may be provided to a third party conducting the survey on the Trust's behalf. This information is only used for the purposes of the survey.

Examples of national surveys are as follows:

- NHS Patient Survey Programme
- Cancer Patient Experience
- Maternity and Breastfeeding

The Trust will provide details of surveys on the website and onsite in leaflets and posters. You do not have to participate in these surveys and the information will contain contact details to opt out. Alternatively you can contact the Trust's Data Protection Officer.

The following NHS websites offer more information on national surveys:

- NHS Surveys website: <http://www.nhssurveys.org/>,
- NHS England
- National Patient and Staff surveys
 - National Patient and Staff surveys
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/patient-surveys/>
 - Clinical Audit webpage <https://www.england.nhs.uk/clinaudit/>

How do we keep your information safe?

The Trust knows the information it keeps is important and private. Any personal information is kept confidential.

All staff including contractors, casual staff and volunteers is governed by the Data Protection Act and confidentiality clauses within their contracts and are trained to respect their duty of confidentiality to you and your information.

We keep paper and electronic records securely and access to information is controlled through employee job roles and on a need to know basis. This access is regularly reviewed, audited and updated to ensure staff can only access what they need to access.

Trust information governance policies and procedures support staff by providing guidance and best practices when they are managing, handling accessing and using information.

The information governance policies and procedures can be found on the Trust website by searching for "Policies and Procedures".

How long do we keep your information for?

The Trust follows the Records Management Code of Practice for Health and Social Care 2016 which includes corporate and staff records. This is available on the internet and stipulates how we should manage, store, retain and dispose of these types of records.

Currently we keep health records for a minimum of eight years. Staff records for six years after termination of the contract and then a summary record is kept until their 75th birthday. Maternity records are kept for 25 years and children's records until their 26th birthday.

What choices do you have on how we use your information?

You have choices on how we use your information, a right to access the information, a right to have the information corrected if incorrect and a right to request restrictions on the information.

Please be aware that any restrictions you request may have an impact on the level of care that we could provide. We would advise discussing planned restrictions with your health professional before final decisions are made to ensure it would not impact on your treatment and/or care.

The Trust will always do its best to process your information in accordance with your wishes.

Can you have access to your information?

You can request to see the information we hold about you or a copy of that information can be provided to you, this is called a "Subject Access Request" and includes corporate staff records.

All requests must be submitted to the Trust in writing. We have a form that can be used which asks for information to enable us to process your request and is available on the Trust website by searching "Health Records and Personal Information" or you can contact the team directly at the following:

Post: Patient Disclosure Team
Health Records Department
Queen Elizabeth Hospital
Sherriff Hill, Gateshead
NE9 6SX

Telephone: 0191 445 3557 or 0191 445 3661 for more information or assistance.

Trust Contacts

Data Protection Officer can be contacted if you require any further information on this leaflet, data protection, and confidentiality practices or you wish to discuss any confidentiality concerns you have.

Post Data Protection Officer
c/o Information Governance Team
Trust Head Quarters, Queen Elizabeth Hospital
Sherriff Hill, Gateshead
NE9 6SX

Email: ghnt.ig.team@nhs.net

Telephone: 0191 445 8418

External Contacts

Information Commissioner's Office can be contacted if you are not content with the outcome of your confidentiality and data protection complaint and/or concern raised with the Trust.

Post Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House, Water Lane
Wilmslow, Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Email: casework@ico.org.uk

Helpline: 0303 123 1113 (Local Rate) or +44 1625 545 745 (outside UK)

Useful Information

Other Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust Leaflets available:

IL9 How we use and look after your personal information (easy Read)

IL11 Accessing your health records

Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust Website: <http://www.qegateshead.nhs.uk/>

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) Website: <https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/>

Records Management Code of Practice for Health and Social Care 2016 Webpage:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/article/1202/Records-Management-Code-of-Practice-for-Health-and-Social-Care-2016>

This leaflet can be made available in other languages and formats upon request