

Patient information

Your personal information and how we use it

The purpose of this leaflet is to tell you

- How your health records are used to help you.
- How the confidentiality of your health records is safeguarded.
- How you can arrange to see your own health records.

Why we need information about you

Whenever you visit our hospitals or use our community services as a patient (for a clinic appointment, an examination or test, or as an inpatient), you will be asked to give details about yourself such as name, ethnicity, address, General Practitioner (GP).

You may be asked for the same details on several occasions - this is to ensure that each patient is correctly identified and that any correspondence is sent to the right address and the right GP.

Your health record is used to record information about the care and treatment you receive in order to ensure what happens during each visit is available to any clinician who is treating you.

Where your information is kept

Everything relating to your visit/s is recorded on paper in your health record or electronically on a secure database.

Paper records are stored in areas which can only be entered by authorised members of staff. Electronic databases are only accessible by authorised staff with individual passwords.

Who may see your health records

Information relating to your health care will be used by:

- Medical staff, nurses and therapists including trainees.
- Other staff working with the NHS and partner organisations (eg, social services) who are involved in your healthcare.
- Administrative staff who provide support to clinical areas.
- All technical staff that provide support in respect of diagnostic tests and procedures.
- Managers and their staff to ensure efficient use of resources (e.g. to plan theatre time and bed usage).
- Other staff e.g. finance, internal auditors or legal staff may sometimes need to see identifiable patient records in order to fulfil their responsibilities in the trust.
- Researchers, with your consent, to develop improved healthcare

Details of the care you receive in hospital will be sent to your GP and other healthcare agencies, eg, social services, involved in providing or managing your treatment.

Information that identifies you may be sent to organisations which monitor particular conditions and evaluate the effectiveness of the treatment offered. This can be used for purposes of research, planning and analysis throughout the NHS and is strictly controlled; such data is anonymised or de-identified so that individuals are not identifiable.

If you are found to have a condition that could adversely affect public health, the trust is obliged to inform another part of the NHS which monitors rare or highly infectious diseases.

If any request is made for information which may identify you personally, which is to be used for any reason other than the healthcare or administration purposes outlined in this leaflet, we will ask for your express permission beforehand.

Confidentiality and security

The trust is bound by law to comply with Data Protection legislation and every effort is made to ensure that information held by us is treated confidentially and securely. The trust must also comply with the duty to share. This states that staff must share information in the best interests of their patients and was recommended in the Caldicott Review and supported by the Government (June 2020).

Information is only disclosed to those who need to know, in order to carry out their duties and every member of staff signs a confidentiality clause as part of their employment contract.

The trust has policies governing data protection, computer security and the management of records, all of which are overseen by the Trust Board.

The Department of Health stipulates that each NHS trust appoints one of the Trust Board members to the role of Caldicott Guardian. In ESHT the Medical Director undertakes this role and has specific responsibility for safeguarding the security and confidentiality of information about patients. In situations whereby it is in the public interest, information may be disclosed.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) regularly inspect all NHS organisations and as part of that process the inspectors may look at a small number of patient records which will not be removed from the premises.

Disclosures to friends and family

Telephone

While you are in hospital, relatives, friends or colleagues may wish to telephone the ward to enquire about your condition and progress. Unfortunately ward staff can only disclose very few details unless you have specially asked for a message to be passed on to a particular person. You will be able to use the phone yourself if you are well enough and the majority of beds have the 'Patientline' system available with personal telephone.

In person

Doctors and nurses who are asked by a relative or friend for information about your condition must satisfy themselves that you have given consent it is in your best interest for any disclosure to be made.

Access to health records

Under the Data Protection legislation you have a legal right to see your health records and to have copies of the information contained in them.

If you wish to access your records please access the Trust's website: www.esht.nhs.uk/about-the-trust/transparency/requests-for-health-records/ or email: esh-tr.SAR@nhs.net .

Alternatively, write to the Request for Information Team, Corporate Governance, East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust, Eastbourne District General Hospital, Kings Drive, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 2UD. You will then be sent an 'Application for Access to Health Records' form to complete and return.

Should you request to review your records while you are an inpatient, you should make your wishes known to your consultant or a senior member of the nursing team.

In some circumstances the Trust is allowed, under law, to charge a fee for supplying you with copies of your information and you will be notified of any charges and your legal rights when you make the request.

For security reasons, anyone other than you or your legal representative must have your written permission to apply for access to your records.

Where can I get more information?

If at any time you would like to know more about how we use your information, please write to the trust's Information Governance Manager (guardian of information about patients):

Information Governance Manager
Duncan House
East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
Eastbourne District General Hospital
Kings Drive
Eastbourne
East Sussex, BN21 2UD

Or email: esh-tr.infogov@nhs.net

How can you help us?

The trust needs to keep your personal information correct and up to date. You can help us in the following ways:

- Always give your full first and last names (eg Christine NOT Chris).
- Always confirm any particular spelling (eg Linda or Lynda, Geoffrey or Jeffrey).
- Always give your full address (eg Flat 1, Milburn House, Milburn Court NOT 1, Milburn Court) and your postcode.
- Advise us of any changes of name, address, telephone number or next of kin. Tell us if you change your GP.

If you would like to notify us of any changes please tell a member of staff or write to the hospital you are attending at the following:

The Health Records Department
Eastbourne District General Hospital
Kings Drive
Eastbourne
East Sussex, BN21 2UD

If you have a serious complaint about the trust's handling of information about you, please write to the Complaints Department at the address shown.

Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Data Protection legislation does give individuals some rights around the use of personal data, and if you have concerns or questions about how your information is used, then do contact us. These will need to be discussed on an individual basis as there are complex issues that affect both patients and the trust whilst complying with your preferences and current legislation.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: 0300 131 4731 (direct dial) or by email at: esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net

Other formats

If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.

Tel: 0300 131 4434 Email: esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

The group that have agreed this patient information leaflet:
The Patient Information Group

Next review date: October 2024
Responsible Clinician/Author: Information Governance Manager