



# Frequently asked questions for patients: Data Sharing

## Frequently Asked Questions

Below you can find a list of frequently asked questions about the information sharing process.

### 1) Why share information?

The NHS organisations in Dudley work together and share information to ensure that the care you receive is effective, good quality and meets your needs.

### 2) What information do we keep about your health?

Healthcare professionals working with you keep records about your health and any care or treatment you receive.

These records may be written and held by the professionals involved in your care, such as GPs, and nurses, and may be shared with other health professionals. Some or all of your records may be held on a number of computer systems. The records we keep about your health care may include:

- Basic details that you have given us, like your address or next of kin
- Notes and reports about any treatment and care you need or receive
- Results of your tests
- Relevant information from other professionals, relatives or those who care for you or know you well
- Any contacts you have with us such as visits or appointments.

### 3) What will we do with your information?

Your records are used to guide and record the treatment and care you receive. Your records are vital in helping to ensure the people involved in your care have access to the most up to date information about you.

### 4) What if you have concerns about the information shared?

If you have concerns about the information that you share with a professional involved in your care, please discuss with them how it is kept and what will be shared with others.

The law protects your right to confidentiality and we will ensure your records are kept confidential at all times. If you do not want your information to be shared please speak to your GP Practice.

Everyone working in the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential. Anyone who receives information from us is also under a legal duty to keep it confidential.

From time to time we may share information with other healthcare professionals. This may be, for instance, to provide other healthcare professionals with the most up to date information about your health which helps us provide 'joined-up' care for you; or when your care team needs to discuss your case with other professionals who are not in the same team, in order to plan your care.

We do this in order to provide the most appropriate treatment and support for you and your carers. We will only share information if it is considered necessary.

### **5) Do I have to agree to sharing of my data?**

No. You will be asked for your consent before your record is accessed by the doctors or nurses providing your care, except in an emergency or if you are unconscious when your consent will be assumed.

If you do not want your information to be shared you can opt out by speaking to your GP practice.

If you're not sure you want your information to be shared or have concerns speak to your GP practice and they will explain what this means.

Your instructions with regard to the sharing of your information will be recorded on your GP record. This, together with the recording of your consent before your record is accessed, will control whether or not your information is shared.

### **6) Can my information be shared without my consent?**

There may be circumstances when we must share information with other organisations. In these rare circumstances we are not required to seek your consent.

Examples include:

- If there is a concern that you are putting yourself at risk of serious harm
- If there is concern that you are putting another person at risk of serious harm
- If there is concern that you are putting a child at risk of harm
- If we have been instructed to do so by a Court
- If the information is essential for the investigation of a serious crime;
- If you are subject to the Mental Health Act 2014, there are circumstances in which your "nearest relative" must receive information even if you object;
- If your information falls within a category that needs to be notified for public health or other legal reasons e.g. certain infectious diseases.

## **7) What are the benefits of information sharing?**

- Joined-up and safer care
- More time to spend on care
- Less paperwork
- Informed decision making
- You don't have to repeat details to different professionals.

## **8) Can anyone view my shared records?**

Only health professionals directly involved in your care will see your health record. We won't share it with anyone who isn't providing your treatment, care or support. Your details won't be made public, passed on to a third party or used for advertising.

## **9) How do I know my shared records are secure?**

By law, everyone working in, or for, the NHS and social care must respect your privacy and keep your information safe. Information about your health is held on secure computer systems by the NHS. The system records anyone who looks at a person's information, the time and date of access and the information they viewed. Data Protection is taken very seriously and we check that your information is only accessed by the people who need to see it.

## **10) How do I see my record or opt out from data sharing?**

If you want to see your records or opt out of local information sharing contact your GP practice. They have a form they will ask you to sign. If you opt out then this may have an effect on the people involved in your care not having access to the most up to date information about you.

## **11) Who are our partner organisations?**

**We may share information with the following main partner organisations:**

- NHS England
- NHS Trusts (Hospitals, CCGs – Safeguarding & Continuing Healthcare, CSUs)
- Healthcare Providers
- Other General Practitioners (GPs)
- Ambulance Services
- HSCIC (Health and Social Care Information Centre)

We will share information from time to time in connection with your Health and Social Care with the relevant person/s involved in your care at the Local Authority, Private Sector and relevant healthcare providers.

**12) Where do I go for more information?**

For further details about who your information may be shared with, please access your practices website and locate the Fair Processing Notice/Privacy Notice/How we share your information. Alternatively, you can obtain a printed copy from reception.

If you would like to speak to someone further about data sharing and what that means for you, please contact the Practice Manager who will direct you to the most appropriate person.