

Protecting Privacy

Your medical record is a life-long history of your consultations, illnesses, health tests, prescriptions, and other treatments. This information is important for your care and is also a record of your relationship with health care staff, doctors, nurses and others, over the years. This relationship is based on mutual trust and confidence and we, the Wirral NHS organisations, continue to do everything possible to protect that trust. The NHS asks for information about you and this leaflet will help explain what information is collected and the reasons why it is needed. You can also choose to limit who has access to your information.

What information do we collect about you?

The information we collect from you helps ensure that you receive the best possible care from us. It is important that the details you provide are accurate and you let us know of any changes, for example, if you change your address. Information may be written down (manual records), or held on computer (electronic records). The information includes:

- basic details about you, such as name; date of birth; address; NHS number 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 receive
- results of investigations such as laboratory and x-ray results
- relevant information from other health professionals, relatives, or those who care for you and know you well

How do we use the information?

Your records are used to guide and administer the care you receive and this will ensure that:

- your GP, nurse or any other healthcare staff involved in your care have accurate and up-to-date information to assess your health and make decisions about the care you need
- we can contact you when you need immunisations, cervical smears, breast screening or other preventative treatment; or to remind you of your appointment. This could be by text, email or telephone call
- your GP practice and the hospital have enough information to ensure continuity of care. Therefore information will be passed from your GP practice to the hospital providing care and back again. In some cases, this is an automatic process
- your concerns can be properly investigated if you need to complain

Originator: Quality and Governance Service

Continued overleaf...

Who has access to the information?

Doctors, nurses, dentists, pharmacists and other healthcare staff need access to your records. However, this is on a strict need-to-know basis and only includes those directly involved in your care. Secretaries, receptionists, and other clerical staff will need limited access in order to carry out administrative tasks such as typing letters and booking appointments. All staff employed by the NHS organisations listed overleaf have a legal duty to keep information about you confidential and secure. NHS staff in Wirral work to a Code of Conduct for handling personal information (available on request).

What else do we do with the information?

Your information may also be used for one of the purposes listed below. This would normally be anonymised so that your name, address and anything else which could identify you are not visible.

- to pay your GP, dentist and hospital for the care they provide
- to review the care we provide to ensure this is of the highest quality
- to plan services to meet future healthcare needs
- to prepare statistics on NHS performance
- to teach and train other health professionals
- to conduct health research and development. You will be specifically asked for consent to any research project in which you participate directly
- to help plan your ongoing care with other agencies, for example, Social Services
- to audit NHS accounts and services, which may be carried out by external quality assurance teams

The NHS is also required to have processes in place to manage patient information (e.g. keeping and updating records) and your medical information will be included within these processes.

The NHS is required by law to report certain information to the relevant authorities. Examples of this are:

- certain infectious diseases such as, measles and meningitis must be notified (this does not include HIV/AIDS)
- notification of births and deaths
- a court of law can insist that medical information be disclosed to them in certain circumstances

Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 1998 allows you to see information held about you, subject to certain conditions. Information on how to access your health information is available on our website, www.wirralct.nhs.uk

Further Information

If you would like this information in another format or language, or would like to provide feedback about any of our services, please contact our Patient Experience team using the details below:

Tel: 0151 514 6311 Freephone: 0800 694 5530 or email: patient.experience@wirralct.nhs.uk