

# Fair Processing - Research

The Trust, and the wider NHS, is committed to ensuring that our patients have the best care now and in the future. Your health information is vital for us to achieve that. It also helps us to research, plan and improve the health and care services in the Trust and, as far as research is concerned, for the UK as a whole.

We adhere to the legislation concerned with data protection and confidentiality and the Trust website gives details of when and how we can use your data, together with your rights under the legislation, to opt out of some data processing activities.

You can choose whether or not your confidential patient information is used for research and planning.

## **Your patient information**

Sensitive patient information (known as special category data) is information which identifies you and says something about your health, care or treatment. You would expect this information to be kept private. Information that only identifies you such as your name and address is not classed as special category data and may be used to contact you.

## **Using your patient information**

Your patient information is used in two different ways:

### **To provide your individual healthcare**

Healthcare professionals will use your patient information to help with your treatment and care.

For example, when you visit the hospital, either as an outpatient or as an inpatient, staff will access your records for important information about your health, and will share it with other health professionals, where relevant.

### **Research and planning**

Patient information is also used to:

- plan and improve health services
- research and develop cures for serious illnesses

Most of the time, only anonymised data for research and planning – meaning that we only use data that cannot identify you, in any way. So your sensitive patient health information isn't always needed.

## **You have a choice**

There are occasions where we need to be able to identify patients and to use sensitive health information. Where this is the case, you will ALWAYS be asked for your consent before any information is shared. If you don't want your health information to be used for research and planning, you can opt out of this. If you do opt out, there are some specific situations where your

data may still be used, where we are legally obliged to share information, such as our legal obligation to safeguard children and adults. This is not consent-based sharing and you would not be able to opt out. Also, your patient health information will still be used to support your individual care and any requests you make to opt-out of sharing will not change this.

If you opt out, your decision will only apply within the health and care system in England. Your opt-out will not apply to your health data where you have accessed health or care services outside of England, such as in Scotland and Wales.

### **Manage your choice**

You may use the online opt-out service (details available [here](#)), or you can contact the Trust's Data Protection Officer at [Information Governance](#)

You can also manage a choice on behalf of another individual by proxy. For example, if you are a parent or guardian of a child under the age of 16 (or younger – age 13 – if they understand the choices you are making for them).

### **Research:**

Prevents serious illness

Develops new treatments

Learns more about diseases

Your patient health information provides numerous benefits. It is used in research to find cures and better treatments for diseases like diabetes and cancer.

With your information, we are better able to develop and improve healthcare services for the future.

### **Planning:**

Plans NHS health services

Makes services safer

Improves quality of care

Patient health information can also be used to plan health and care services more effectively. The NHS (and local authorities) are able to plan where they need to provide further care services more efficiently.

This helps to improve health and social care for you and your family.

### **Who can use your data**

The NHS collects healthcare data from all NHS organisations, trusts and local authorities. It also collects data from private organisations, such as private hospitals providing NHS funded care. Research bodies and organisations can request access to this data.

Research bodies and organisations include:

- university researchers
- hospital researchers
- medical royal colleges
- pharmaceutical companies researching new treatments

Any request to use this data is handled according to strict guidelines and governance and, as stated above, generally only anonymised data is used. Where identifiable health data is required, you will always be asked to provide consent before we use your information.

### **Who can't use your data**

patient information is used to support the delivery of healthcare.

Access to patient information will **NEVER** be given for:

- marketing purposes
- insurance purposes

(unless you specifically request this).

### **How your data is used**

You can access the Data Release Register to find out how your data has been used by NHS Digital, for purposes beyond your individual care.

[NHS Digital Data Release Register - Page opens in new window](#) (opens in new window).

