

Your healthcare records – your information



Information Governance

Why do you collect information about me?

We ask for information about you to assist your doctor and health professionals in providing you with the best care and treatment possible and will allow for continuity of care.

Our guiding principle is that we hold your records in strict confidence.

Information we collect includes:

- Details about you, e.g. name, address, date of birth, next of kin, telephone numbers, ethnicity, disability, language preferences, religion.
- Contacts we have had with you, for example clinic visits.
- Notes and reports about your health and any treatment and care you need.
- Results of investigations, for example x-rays and laboratory tests.
- Relevant information from other health professionals, relatives or those who care about you and know you well.

How is my healthcare record used to help me?

- Your doctor, nurse or any other healthcare professional involved in your care needs to have accurate and up-to-date information to assess your health.
- A record of any treatment or care you receive in hospital needs to be kept, in case you return for further treatment.
- This information is available should you have to see another doctor at the Royal Surrey County Hospital, be referred to a specialist at the Royal Surrey or another hospital, or receive treatment elsewhere in the NHS.
- Your records are a good basis for hospital staff to assess the type and quality of care you have received.

- Your information will be shared with hospital services to support you during your time in hospital, e.g. Department Chaplaincy & Pastoral Care, Hotel Services.
- Your concerns can be properly investigated if you need to complain.

How is my healthcare record used to assist the NHS?

Your information will be used to provide you with direct care and may also be required for secondary use purposes, e.g.

- To review the care we provide for you and other patients, to ensure it is of the highest standard.
- Make sure our services can meet all patients' needs in the future.
- Teach and train healthcare professionals.
- Conduct health research and development.
- Make sure your hospital gets paid for your treatment.
- Audit NHS services and accounts.
- Prepare statistics on NHS performance.
- Investigate complaints, legal claims or untoward incidents.

Some of this information will be held centrally by the Health & Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) – for further information visit www.hscic.gov.uk

Strict security and governance measures are taken to ensure information is only used for purposes of health benefits.

Anonymous statistical information may also be shared with organisations who have a legitimate interest in health care and its management, including universities, community safety units and research institutions.

Where it is not possible to use anonymous information, personally identifiable information may be used for essential NHS purposes such as research and auditing. This will only be done with your consent, unless the law permits the information to be passed on to improve public health.

How is the information in my records kept confidential?

Everyone working for the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential.

You may receive care from other people as well as the NHS (like Social Services). We may need to share some information about you so that we can all work together for your benefit. We will only ever use, or pass on, information about you if others involved in your care have a genuine need for it such as our partner organisations listed below.

We will not disclose your information to third parties without your consent unless there are exceptional circumstances. These may be in situations when the health and safety of others are at risk, or where the law permits information to be passed on.

Anyone who receives information from us is also under a legal duty to keep it confidential.

We are required by law to report certain information to the appropriate authorities. This is only provided after formal permission has been given by a qualified health professional. Occasions when we must pass on information include:

- Notification of new births.
- Where we encounter infectious diseases which may endanger the safety of others, such as meningitis or measles (but not HIV/AIDS).
- Where a formal court order has been issued.
- The duty to inform the Police, when asked, of the name and address of drivers who are allegedly guilty of an offence contrary to the Road Traffic Act 1998, such as driving under the influence of drugs/alcohol, failing to stop at the scene of an accident.
- The duty not to withhold information relating to the commission of acts of terrorism contrary to the Terrorism Act 2000 – it is an offence NOT to voluntarily give information to the Police that may be of material assistance in preventing terrorism or apprehending terrorists.

- Under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984) this allows doctors, nurses and midwives to pass information in the public interest to police if they believe that someone may be seriously harmed or death may occur if the police are not informed.

Who are our partner organisations?

The principle partner organisations with which information may be shared are:

- Clinical Commissioning Groups
- Other NHS Trusts
- General Practitioners (GPs)
- Ambulance Service

Relevant information may also be shared with the organisations below. Where this is done it will be either to benefit your treatment plan or to help plan future services for others. When this is done the information will be covered by strict agreement describing how the information is to be used (an Information Sharing Protocol). We may also ask for your consent to share information with these providers:

- Social Services
- Local Authorities
- Education Services, such as research at universities
- Voluntary Sector Providers such as patient groups or health charities
- Private Sector Providers such as care homes and drug companies

How can I get access to my health records?

The Data Protection Act 1998 allows you to find out what information is held about you on computer and in certain manual records, including your health notes. This is known as “right to subject access”. If you would like access to or copies of your records please write to the:

Healthcare Records Department

Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Egerton Road
Guildford
GU2 7XX

You are entitled to receive a copy, but a charge will be made for administration. You should also be aware that in certain circumstances your right to see some details in your health records may be limited in your own interest (to prevent mental or physical harm) or for other reasons such as not revealing third party information.

Further information

The Trust has a legal obligation to ensure your information is accurate and up to date. If any of the information held about you is incorrect, please contact a member of staff who will arrange for your information to be updated.

Reference source

Data Protection Act 1998

Notes

Contact details

Healthcare Records Department

Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Egerton Road
Guildford
GU2 7XX

Royal Surrey County Hospital (RSCH) NHS Foundation Trust fully subscribes to the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) *Being Open* best practice framework, November 2010.

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–4.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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Author: Ruth Drewett

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