

## **Your Health Records - What you need to know**

Below we explain why information is collected about you and the ways in which this information may be used.

### **Why we collect information about you**

Your doctor and other health professionals caring for you keep records about your health and any treatment and care you receive from the National Health Service. These help ensure that you receive the best possible care from us. They may be written down (manual records), or held on a computer. The records may include:

- basic details about you, such as name, address, date of birth, 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 need
- details and records about the treatment and care you receive
- results of investigations, such as X-rays and laboratory tests
- relevant information from other health professionals, relatives or those who care for you and know you well.

### **How your records are used to help you**

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

- your doctor, nurse or any other healthcare professionals involved in your care have accurate and up-to-date information to assess your health and decide what care you need when you visit in the future
- allow us to contact you for health checks (for example, immunisations, cervical smears, breast screening or other preventative treatment)
- full information is available should you see another doctor, or be referred to a specialist or another part of the NHS
- there is a good basis for assessing the type and quality of care you have received
- your concerns can be properly investigated if you need to complain.

### **How your records are used to help the NHS**

Your information may also be used to help us:

- look after the health of the general public
- pay your GP, dentist and hospital for the care they provide
- audit NHS accounts and services
- investigate untoward incidents or complaints
- make sure our services can meet patient needs in the future
- prepare statistics on NHS performance
- review the care we provide to ensure it is of the highest standard
- teach and train healthcare professionals
- conduct health research and development

Where information is used for statistical purposes, stringent measures are taken to ensure that individual patients cannot be identified. Anonymous statistical information may also be passed to other organisations with a legitimate interest, including universities, community safety units and research institutions.

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

### **Who are our Partner Organisations?**

Partner organisations, with whom information may be shared:

- Strategic Health Authorities
- Trusts

- Ambulance Services
- Clinical Commissioning Groups

Your information may also, subject to strict agreements describing how it will be used, be shared with:

- NHS Common Services Agencies such as dentists, ophthalmic services and so on
- Social Services
- Education Services
- Local Authorities
- Voluntary Sector Providers
- Private Sector Providers

### **How you can get access to your own health records**

The Data Protection Act 1998, which came into force on 1 March 2000, allows you to find out what information about you is held on computer and in certain manual records. This is known as "right of subject access". It applies to your health records.

If you want to see them you should make a request to the NHS organisations where you are being, or have been, treated. If you require a copy of your GP records please contact your practice direct. For primary care services offered please contact Public Health in writing to the address on page 7 of this leaflet. You are entitled to receive a copy but should note that a charge will usually be made. 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 or for other reasons.

### **Who are we?**

This leaflet has been compiled by the various health organisations which treat and care for people within the Dorset CCG. In working together in this way, we hope that everyone who uses our services will have clear and consistent advice about how we use and safeguard your information.

### **How we keep your records confidential and secure**

**Everyone working for the Practice has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential and secure.**

You may be receiving care from other organisations as well as the Doctors (like Social Services). We may need to share some information about you so we can all work together to benefit. We will only ever use or pass on information about you if others involved in your care have a genuine need for it. When we pass on any information we will ensure it is kept confidential and secure.

We will not disclose your information to third parties without your permission unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as when the health or safety of others is at risk or where the law requires information to be passed on. Again if we do need to disclose your information we will ensure it is kept secure.

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

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

**Our guiding principle is that we are holding your records in strict confidence and with a high level of security**

### **Further information**

If you would like to know more about how we use your information or if, for any reason, you do not wish to have your information used in any of the ways described in this leaflet please speak to the health professionals concerned with your care (for example your Doctor),

For further information you can also contact:

Rhonda Halling, Public Health

Vespasian House

Bridport Road

Dorchester DT1 1TS

If you would like a large print version of this leaflet or for a leaflet in a language other than English or in another format such as Braille or audio tape please contact the Practice Manager at the Surgery address.