

Access to Information

This page provides information about why the NHS records information about you and how it is used; with whom we may share information; your right to see your health records; and how we keep your records confidential.

Why the Suffolk GP Federation collects information about you

The Suffolk GP Federation aims to provide you with the highest quality health care. To do this we must keep records about you, your health and the care we have provided or plan to provide to you.

Your doctor and other health professionals caring for you, such as nurses or physiotherapists, keep records about your health and treatment so that they are able to provide you with the best possible care.

These records are called your 'health care record' and may be stored in paper form or on computer and electronic systems and may include:

- basic details about you, such as your address, date of birth, NHS number, and next of kin
- contact we have had with you, such as clinical visits
- notes and reports about your health
- details and records about your treatment and care
- results of x-rays, laboratory tests etc.

Your health care records are used for the following reasons:

- by health care professionals looking after you to have accurate and up-to-date information about you to help them decide on any future care you may require
- to ensure accurate and complete information is available should you see another doctor or be referred to a specialist or another part of the NHS
- to have a good basis for assessing the type and quality of care you have received
- to ensure your concerns can be properly investigated if you need to complain.

How your records are used to help Suffolk GP Federation

In order for the NHS to make the best use of its resources we need to understand what care we are providing and to whom. Whenever we do not need to know it is about you individually we will only use your information in an anonymised form. Your information can help the NHS to:

- plan services to ensure we meet the needs of our population in the future
- report events to the appropriate authorities when we are required to do so by law
- undertake clinical audit of the quality of services provided
- report and investigate complaints, claims and untoward incidents
- prepare statistics on our performance for the Department of Health.
- review our care to make sure that it is of the highest standard
- conduct health research and development.
- pay your hospital for the care you have received
- audit NHS accounts

How we keep your information safe

Everyone working for the NHS has a duty to keep your information confidential and secure.

However, from time to time, there may be a need to share some or all of your information with other health care professionals or NHS organisations so that we can work together to provide the best possible care.

Suffolk GP Federation aims to provide you with the highest quality care that is safe, based on good quality information and which allows us to work effectively with others involved in your care. To do this we must keep records about you, your health and the care we have provided, or plan to provide. These records may include:

- Basic details such as address, date of birth and next of kin
- Contact we have had with you
- Notes and reports about your health
- Details and records about your treatment and care

SHARING YOUR INFORMATION

Others may also need to use records about you to:

- Check the quality of care you are receiving
- Protect the health of the public
- Keep track of NHS spending
- Help investigate any concerns or complaints you or your family have about your health care
- Teach health workers

- Help with research

Sometimes we share your information with third parties such as:

- Hospitals
- Social care
- Community Health
- Clinical Commissioning Groups
- Mental Health
- Companies providing us with IT services

We will not share information that can identify you with others unless;

- We ask and you give us permission
- When required or allowed in law
- We have special permission for health or research purposes (e.g. if you have agreed to take part in a research trial)
- It is in the public interest (e.g. there is a risk of serious harm or crime)

If you have any concerns about how your information may be shared, please contact us and we will be happy to help.

How we keep your records confidential

Everyone working in the NHS or for Social Services has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential. Records will be kept in line with the Department of Health Records Management Code of Practice which determines the minimum length of time that records should be kept for.

Our guiding principle is that we hold your records in strict confidence. We have a duty to:

- maintain full and accurate records of the care we provide to you
- keep records about you confidential, secure and accurate
- provide information in a format that is accessible to you (for example, in large type if you have a visual impairment).

We only share information that identifies you if

- It ensures you receive the best care possible
- You ask us to do so
- We ask and you give us specific permission
- We have to do this by law
- We have special permission for health or research purposes
- We have special permission because the interests of the public are thought to be of greater importance than your confidentiality.

What is a subject access request and how do I make one?

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, you can make a request to see the information that Suffolk GP Federation holds about you; this is referred to as a Subject Access Request

To access a copy of your health records please write to the following address giving as much detail as possible on the record(s) you wish to access:

Julie Smith

Information Governance Lead

Suffolk GP Federation

Riverside Clinic

2 Landseer Road

Ipswich

IP3 0AZ

We will also ask you for proof of your identity and proof of your address.

Can I access the records of my children?

You may be able to access the records of your child/children providing they are under 16. However, if a clinician has stated that he/she believes your child/children to be competent to make their own decisions, then you will not have that right.

To apply for access, please use the procedure above.

How long will it take?

We are obliged to comply with our obligations promptly and within 40 days following the date your request is received. If clarification of your request is needed, the 40 day period does not start until that is received.

How much will it cost?

- Charges may be applied for requests under the Data Protection Act.
- Please see the following tariff
- under the Data Protection Act 1998 a maximum of £50 for paper records
- A maximum of £50 for a mixture of electronic and paper records £10 for electronic records

Can I be refused access to my health records?

You can be refused access to your records or part of them:

- If your doctor thinks you or someone else could be harmed as a result
- the information relates to, or was provided by, a third party (that is someone other than yourself or a clinician) and they have not given their permission for their comments to be divulged to you.

Should you be unhappy with the outcome of your request, you should in the first instance contact the named individual at Suffolk GP Federation who responded to your request.

You are also free to contact the Information Commissioner directly in the event you remain dissatisfied:

Information Commissioners Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

The Caldicott Guardian

All NHS organisations are required to appoint a Caldicott Guardian to ensure compliance with patient data confidentiality. Suffolk GP Federation's Caldicott Guardian is Dr Paul Driscoll, a GP member of the Federation's CIC Board, who is responsible for protecting the confidentiality of patients' and service-users' information and enabling appropriate information-sharing.

The Caldicott Guardian plays a key role in ensuring that NHS, Councils with Social Services responsibilities, and partner organisations, satisfy the highest practical standards for handling patient identifiable information.

Acting as the 'conscience' of an organisation, the Guardian actively supports work to enable information sharing where it is appropriate to share, and advises on options for lawful and ethical processing of information.

Further Information

For additional information please refer to:

[The Care Record Guarantee](#)

[The NHS Constitution](#)

If you would like a large print version or a translation of this leaflet in another language, please contact:

Suffolk GP Federation

Riverside Clinic 2
Landseer Road
Ipswich
IP3 0AZ

Email: info@suffolkfed.org.uk

Tel: **0845 241 3313**