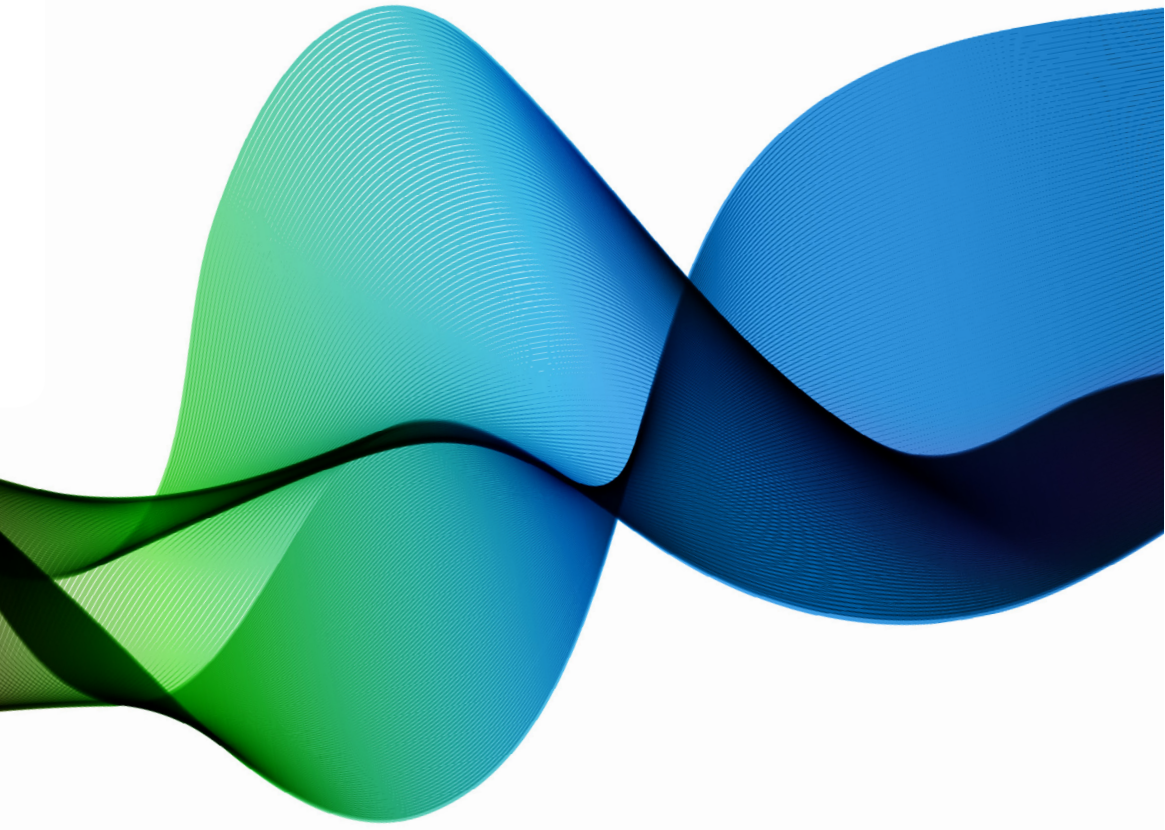
Better information means better care



This leaflet contains important information about your health records.

You, and everyone who lives with you, should read this leaflet carefully. It is important that everyone knows how we share, protect and use information about their health.

You have a choice.

Introduction

We want to improve the quality of care and health services for all. By using information about the care you have received, those involved in providing care and health services can see how well they are doing, and where improvements need to be made.

NHS organisations share information about the care you receive with those who plan health and social care services, as well as with approved researchers and organisations outside the NHS, if this will benefit patient care. As a patient, you may receive care and treatment from a number of places such as your GP practice, hospitals and community services. By bringing this information together from all the different places, we can compare the care provided in one area with the care provided in another, so we can see what worked best.

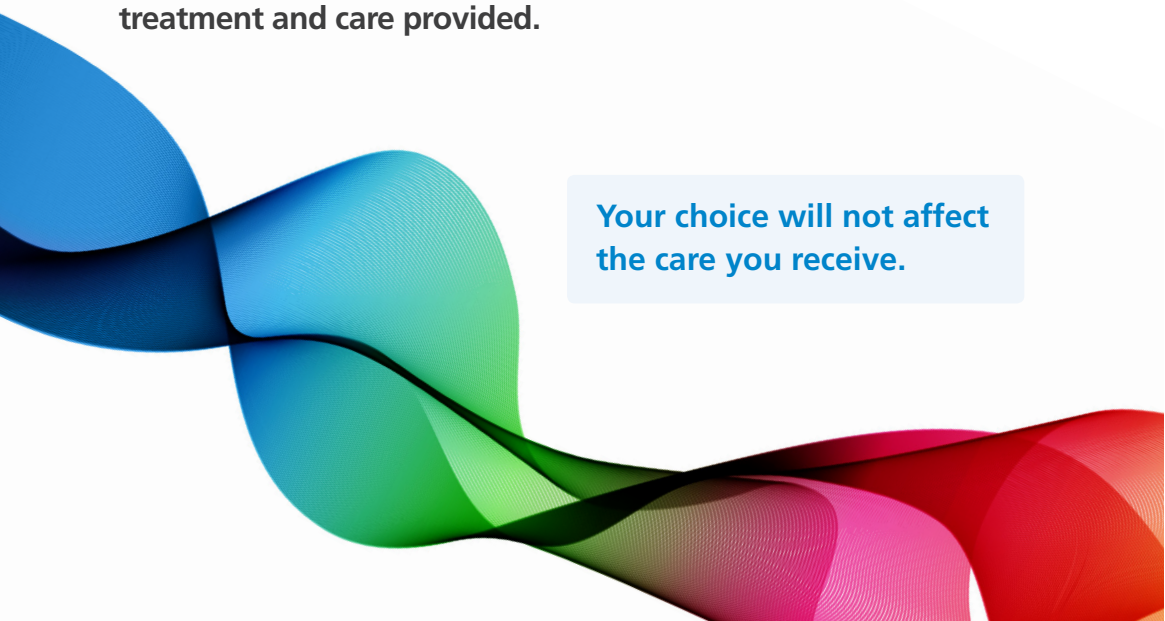
We will use information such as your postcode and NHS number to link your records from these different places. Records are linked in a secure system so your identity is protected. Details that could identify you will be removed before your information is made available to others, such as those planning NHS services and approved researchers.

We sometimes release confidential information to approved researchers, if this is allowed by law and meets the strict rules that are in place to protect your privacy.

What are the **benefits** of sharing my information?

Sharing information about the care you have received helps us understand the health needs of everyone and the quality of the treatment and care provided.

It also helps researchers by supporting studies that identify patterns in diseases, responses to different treatments, and the effectiveness of different services.



Your choice will not affect the care you receive.

Information will also **help** us to:

- find more effective ways of preventing, treating and managing illnesses
- make sure that any changes or improvements to services reflect the needs of local patients
- understand who is most at risk of particular diseases and conditions, so those who plan care can provide preventative services
- improve your understanding of the outcomes of care, giving you greater confidence in health and social care services
- guide decisions about how to manage NHS resources so that they can best support the treatment and care of all patients
- identify who could be at risk of a condition or would benefit from a particular treatment
- make sure that NHS organisations receive the correct payments for the services they provide.

What will we do with the **information?**

We will only use the minimum information needed to improve patient care and services.

We are very careful with the information and we follow strict rules about how it is stored and used, and have a thorough process that must be followed before any information can be shared.

When we share information we will make sure we do so in line with the law, national guidance and best practice.

Information that we publish will never identify a particular person.

What **choice** do I have?

We have explained how useful information about you is, and the steps that we take to protect your privacy. However, you may want to prevent confidential information about you from being shared or used for any purpose other than providing your care (except in special circumstances allowed by law, such as when there is a public-health emergency).

continue overleaf

continued

If you do not want information that identifies you to be shared outside your GP practice, please ask the practice to make a note of this in your medical record. This note will prevent your confidential information from being used other than in special circumstances.

Information from other places where you receive care, such as hospitals and community services, is collected nationally. You should also let your GP practice know if you want to prevent the information from those places being shared.

The practice will make a separate note of this in your medical record.

You may have already asked for information about you not to be shared with others, such as your medical record being shared for your care. You still need to let your GP practice know if you have concerns about your information being shared for the purposes described in this leaflet.

Do I need to **do anything?**

If you are happy for your information to be shared you do not need to do anything. There is no form to fill in and nothing to sign. And you can change your mind at any time.

If you have any questions or are not happy for information about you to be shared, speak to your GP practice.

Where can I get **more information?**

Visit the NHS Choices website at:
www.nhs.uk/caredata
for more information, a list of common questions, or another format of this leaflet.

Speak to staff at your GP practice.

Call our dedicated patient information line on:
0300 456 3531
This line also offers translation and text phone services.

More details about how we look after confidential information and how it may be used can be found on the website at:
www.hscic.gov.uk/patientconf

Crystal Mark 21087
Clarity approved by Plain English Campaign

NHS