

Managing the data

We need to be able to move electronic information from system to system, extracting the data and modifying it for the next system.

Occasionally, tests will need to be made on the data to check that it has been transferred correctly. This will only be done under carefully controlled conditions, and all employees and contractors will be under strict contractual obligations to protect your confidentiality.

Other Agencies

The NHS is not the only government service to provide you with care, and it will be necessary for us to provide other agencies with appropriate information, but only with your consent (or that of your relatives if you are too ill).

How we protect your information

The sensitivity of patient information is well understood within the NHS. All our staff are trained to respect their duty of confidentiality to you, and have this written in to their contracts of employment. We keep paper and electronic records securely to prevent unauthorised access or misuse. Wherever practicable, we remove references to personal details such as your name and address, and often restrict it further to reduce the chances of anyone identifying a record as relating to you.

What else?

You can have a say in how the NHS uses information about you, and we are required by law to allow you access to your medical records. If you wish to see your medical records, you may discuss this with your doctor, or you can contact our Practice Manager. We are allowed by law to charge a fee to cover any administration costs. If you want to find out more or have any concerns, please contact the Practice Manager.

**PERTH & SCONE
MEDICAL GROUP**

**YOUR MEDICAL RECORDS
AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

Further information is available
on the NHS web-site:
www.doh.gov.uk/nhsexipu/confiden/

What we record

Information about you, your medical treatment, and family background may be recorded, either on paper or in our computer files, as part of providing you with the best possible healthcare.

How we use your information

Your Doctor

Doctors need to make notes about any diagnosis, test results, treatments, including drugs prescriptions, and other information that you may provide which seems relevant to the treatment of your condition. We need to keep this information in order to provide proper care for you - for later treatment, or if you should be seen by another doctor - and to allow others to check the treatment that you have received. Nurses and other health professionals also need access to these records, and will add their own notes, as part of the overall healthcare provision.

Medical receptionists and other clerical staff need access to some of your records in order to do administrative tasks, such as booking appointments and communicating with you and other parts of the NHS.

Your doctor may also need to provide information under certain Acts of Parliament, e.g. the Communicable

Diseases Act 1978 - which is necessary to prevent the outbreak of certain highly contagious diseases - to protect you and others.

The Health Service

In order to manage the NHS, some restricted information concerning treatments, drugs prescribed, numbers of patients seen etc. is needed, and hospitals and general practices must provide this information to various central bodies. This information has personal details such as your name and address removed wherever possible.

To prevent fraud as part of the NHS's statutory obligations, it may be necessary to check that the information being forwarded from the practice is correct. This may result in you being contacted by an NHS Fraud Office to ask if you will consent to your records being checked. Only if you do consent will the auditors be allowed to access information in your medical records.

Teaching Clinicians

Some medical files are needed to teach student doctors and nurses about rare cases. Without such materials, new doctors and nurses would not be properly prepared to treat you. We also help to provide national statistics to allow planning ahead for

treatments, patient numbers etc., but this uses summary information, not personal information.

Medical Research

Some medical research will require your direct involvement (especially if taking part in clinical trials), in which case the circumstances will be fully explained to you and your express consent required. If you do not consent then you will not be included in the trial. Other researchers only require access to medical statistics and can greatly improve our understanding of health, and how to treat patients more effectively.

Generally researchers only need information about groups of people, so that no individual information is apparent. In some cases, they need individual records, but wherever we can we will provide these in an 'anonymised' form (so individuals cannot be identified). Sometimes researchers need access to individual medical files. We will contact you first for your consent (and before this the researchers must present their case before an Ethics Committee to check that their research is appropriate and worthwhile). Rarely, it may not be practicable (or possible) to contact individuals for their consent, in which case the researchers must make their case before a Confidentiality Committee to show that there is enough benefit to the public at large to justify this.