

Confidentiality of Patient Data

Introduction:

This document sets out the arrangements in the practice for the confidentiality of patient data.

Leaflet Wording (Patient Information Leaflet or Poster):

All patient information is considered to be confidential and we comply fully with the Data Protection Act 1998 and Caldicott principles. All employees in the practice have access to this information in relation to their role, have confidentiality clauses in their contracts of employment and have signed a confidentiality agreement. All staff members adhere to the Confidentiality: NHS Code of Practice 2003.

Where appropriate, patient information may be shared with other parties within the care team involved in the direct care of patients, based on implied consent. This will be on a “need to know” basis only and in order to ensure the safe, effective care of patients. Where a patient wishes information not to be shared within the team providing direct care then they must discuss this with their GP.

Patient information will not be shared outside of the direct care team without consent being sought. An individual has the right to refuse to have their information disclosed, although this may have an impact on their care, and their wishes will be complied with.

There are currently two national data extractions from which patients may wish to “opt out”.

Summary Care Record:

The SCR enables healthcare staff providing care for patients in an emergency and from anywhere in England, to be made aware of any current medications or allergies they may suffer from. This information from every patient record is sent electronically up to the Spine in order for this to happen. If patients wish their information to be withheld from the SCR they can “opt out”. Please ask at reception for the SCR Opt Out Form or download one at: <http://www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk/optout/optout.pdf>

Care.data programme

In order to try and improve health services, NHS England has commissioned a new programme of work to create a complete picture of care provided to patients by social care, GP practices and from hospitals so that they can work out what is working well and where services can be improved. In order to achieve this, from Autumn 2014, the Health and Social Care Information Centre at Leeds will be extracting data from all GP clinical systems. This data will include your date of birth, full postcode, NHS number and gender together with diagnoses, information about referrals, and prescriptions. Sensitive information including HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections, termination of pregnancy, IVF treatment, marital status, complaints, convictions, imprisonment, and abuse by others will not be extracted.

Once this information has been linked to the other information taken from hospitals a new record will be created. This new record will not contain information that identifies you. The type of information which is then shared, and how it is shared, is controlled by law and strict confidentiality rules.

If you wish to “opt out” and prevent an extraction of information from your record being taken please ask for further information at reception.

Protection against Viruses:

Data is vulnerable to loss or corruption caused by viruses. Viruses may be introduced from floppy discs, CDROM/DVDROM, other storage media and by direct links via e-mail and web browsing.

Precautions to be taken

Virus protection software is installed on ALL computer equipment. The supplier of our PC's manage the anti-virus software version control and regular updates.

The Practice's Responsibilities:

The practice will ensure that employees fully understand all their responsibilities with regard to confidential data by ensuring employees undertake Information Governance training and sign a written statement of the responsibilities they are undertaking towards the security of the data. Competency will be assessed as an ongoing process and as part of the appraisal process.

The practice will continue to complete and submit the IG Toolkit self-assessment on an annual basis.

The practice will also ensure that arrangements are in place for the confidential disposal of any paper waste generated at work or the employees' home.

The practice strictly applies the rules of confidentiality and will not release patient information to a third party (other than those involved in the direct care of a patient) without proper valid and informed consent, unless this is within the statutory exempted categories such as in the public interest, or if required by law, in which case the release of the information and the reasons for it will be individually and specifically documented and authorised by the responsible clinician.