

# GUIDE TO ACCESSING YOUR MEDICAL RECORDS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

When you are young, your parents are usually involved in your health care. They may make decisions for you, and speak to health workers on your behalf, but as you get older you have more rights. You can decide if you want your parents to be involved or not. This leaflet explains your rights once you are thought to be old enough to make your own decisions about your health care information.

Patients under the age of 16 should normally be accompanied by an adult when seeing a doctor or collecting medicines. However, under certain circumstances, patients below this age may be seen by a doctor, for example, if parents know that the child is at the surgery. Young people may also see a doctor without parental knowledge to discuss sexual health matters, including contraception.

## Who is this leaflet for and what's it about?

This leaflet is for you if you're under 16. It explains that anyone who looks after your health has to keep information about you private. This may be doctors, nurses, pharmacists or other health workers.

The leaflet tells you only about how things work in the health service, not other organisations such as your school or social services. If you want to talk to a health worker about something personal, they must keep this information confidential, even if you are under 16. This may be information about:

- Sex
- Relationships
- Pregnancy
- Contraception
- Drugs and alcohol, or
- Feeling down

Sometimes health workers do need to share information about you to give you good care. They may share information about you with other health workers who are looking after you, for example, health workers at another hospital or clinic if you have agreed to go there. This is to make your care safer, easier and faster.

They will only share information that is needed to give you the best care. If there are particular things that you don't want to be shared, tell your health worker. If they think you are at risk of serious harm or you are in danger, they may have to tell another adult about it to be able to help you. Even then, they should tell you they are going to do this and explain who they will tell and why.

Sometimes the law allows the health service to share information about you without you agreeing to it. This would only happen in very serious situations, for example, if you have an illness that puts other people at risk such as meningitis.

## How do I get a doctor?

If you're over the age of 16, you can register with a GP by yourself. You can find a list of local GPs in your area on the NHS website. If they are accepting new patients they will ask you to fill in a registration form. Some GPs also ask to see a proof of identity like a passport or proof of address like a mobile phone bill.

If you're under the age of 16, your parents or carers should register you at a doctor's surgery. If you don't want your parents to know, you can still register by yourself but you might be asked some questions to make sure you're okay.

### **How do I make an appointment?**

You can make an appointment by calling your GP surgery and speaking to the receptionist or going there in person. The receptionist will probably ask you who the appointment is for and why. This is to make sure that you see the right person at the right time.

If it's something personal then you don't have to tell them why – just say it's for something personal. You can also ask to see a male or female doctor if this would make you feel more comfortable.

### **Can I make appointments without speaking to someone?**

If you're struggling with anxiety or feeling worried, try explaining this when you make the appointment to see if they can help in any way.

Also, perhaps try to take a trusted friend or family member with you for support.

It can take a while to build yourself up to seeing someone, but it's so important because then you'll be able to get help to feel better.

### **Can I see a doctor by myself?**

Yes. There is no reason why you can't ask to see the doctor by yourself. They might want to find out why and might encourage you to tell your parent or carer but they should try to understand how you feel if you don't want to.

### **What happens if I don't like my Doctor?**

Most doctors are great at their job and care about their patients a lot. However there are times when people either don't get on with or feel uncomfortable with their doctor.

You can always ask to see someone else. You may not be able to do this straight away and might have to wait for another appointment, so it's better to say as early as possible.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

### **What does Confidentiality Mean?**

It means keeping information safe and private. The health service keeps all your health information confidential. This includes:

- Anything you say
- Information someone writes about you, and
- Details of any treatment you have had

You can talk to health workers about anything to do with your health.

### **Will my Parents be given information about me?**

Usually, health workers are not allowed to tell your parents anything you have talked to them about, unless you have agreed to this. However, the health worker may suggest that you speak to your parents or an adult you trust. A health worker may want to send out information to you. If you don't want parents to see this, you can:

- Ask them to post it to a friend's address
- Say you'll pick it up, or

- Ask them not to send anything

If you're feeling nervous or stressed, take a look at our anxiety and stress page for ways to cope.

## What if my parents want to look at my health records?

Your health records include information about your health and any treatment you have had. Your records can be written on paper, held on computer or both. Usually your parents can't see your health records, unless you agree to this. If there's something in your health records that you don't want your parents to see, tell a health worker.

If your doctor doesn't think you can make decisions about your health care, your parents may be allowed to see your health records without you agreeing to it although this would only happen if the doctor thought it was best for you.

## Can I see my own health records?

Yes. You should be able to see your records from the age of 11 or when you are deemed to be competent to do so. Any codes or words you don't understand should be explained to you. You may want to know about treatment you've had, or check that information about you is correct.

It's your choice whether to look at your health records. You can use the internet to book appointments with a GP, request repeat prescriptions for any medications you take regularly and you can review your full medical record. You can also still use the telephone or call in to the surgery for any of these services as well. It is your choice.

Being able to see your record online might help you to manage your medical conditions. It also means that you can even access it from anywhere in the world should you require medical treatment on holiday. If you decide not to join or wish to withdraw, this is your choice and practice staff will continue to treat you in the same way as before. The decision will not affect the quality of your care.

You will need to fill in a request form and provide the surgery with the necessary personal identification. Please be aware that immediate access to your information will not be possible until your notes have been reviewed by a doctor as any third party references will need to be removed from your notes. You will be given login details, so you will need to think of a password which is unique to you. This will ensure that only you are able to access your record – unless you choose to share your details with a family member or carer.

It will be your responsibility to keep your login details and password safe and secure. If you know or suspect that your record has been accessed by someone that you have not agreed should see it, then you should change your password immediately. If you cannot do this for some reason, we recommend that you contact the Practice so that they can remove online access until you are able to reset your password.

If you print out any information from your record, it is also your responsibility to keep this secure. If you are at all worried about keeping printed copies safe, we recommend that you do not make copies at all.

Before you apply for online access to your record, there are some other things to consider. Although the chances of any of these things happening are very small, you will be asked that you have read and understood the following before you are given login details:

**Forgotten History** – there may be something you have forgotten about in your record that you might find upsetting

**Abnormal Results or Bad News** – You may see something that you find upsetting to you. This may occur before you have spoken to your doctor or while the surgery is closed and you cannot contact them.

**Choosing to Share Your Information with Someone** – It's up to you whether or not you share your information with others – perhaps family members or carers.

**Coercion** – If you think you may be pressured into revealing details from your patient record to someone else against your will, it is best that you do not register for access at this time.

**Misunderstood Information** – Your medical record is designed to be used by clinical professionals to ensure that you receive the best possible care. Some of the information within your medical record may be highly technical, written by specialists and not easily understood. If you require further clarification, please contact the Practice for a clearer explanation.

**Information About Someone Else** – If you spot something in the record that is not about you or notice any other errors, please log out of the system immediately and contact the Practice as soon as possible.

## Who else can see my records?

Up to the age of 11, the person with parental responsibility for you (your parent or guardian) can be given 'proxy access' to your online medical records. This ends when you reach the age of 11 but with your consent and signature we can extend this from 11 to 16. This can be stopped by you at any time. This access will then be revoked once you reach the age of 16 and you will need to come into the surgery with photo ID if you would like access to Online Services on your own behalf.

Similarly if you have been sharing a mobile phone number or email address, then those details can be removed from your medical record once you are 16 years old. Please make us aware if your number is being shared and contact us when you reach 16 years old to request that we do this.

Sometimes people who inspect child protection services may ask to look at the records of young people who have been involved with these services. This is to make sure that children are protected from harm. These inspections must keep your personal information safe and private, unless they think you are in danger.

## What if I'm unhappy about how my information has been kept or used?

If you think that what you've told a health worker hasn't been kept private or that something in your health record is wrong, please tell one of the health workers who have been involved in your care, or ask your parent or another adult you trust to do this for you.

If you're still unhappy, it's okay to make a complaint. Please ask to speak to the Practice Manager or Assistant Practice Manager who will listen to your complaint and guide you through the process.

## OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

### Childline

Childline is a free and confidential helpline for all children and young people in the UK. You can call or write to Childline for help and advice about anything.

Freepost 1111  
Glasgow G1 1BR  
Freephone number (24 hours a day, seven days a week) 0800 1111  
Email: via the childline website  
Website: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

**Weobley Surgery**  
Gadbridge Road, Weobley,  
Herefordshire. HR4 8SN  
Telephone: 01544 318472

**Staunton on Wye Surgery**  
Staunton on Wye, Herefordshire HR4 7LT  
Telephone: 01981 500227