

Covid-19 and your information Supplementary Privacy Notice April 2020

This notice describes how we may use your information to protect you and others during the Covid-19 outbreak. This is to be read alongside our main Privacy Notice which is available on our website

The Health and Social Care system is facing significant pressures due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Healthcare information is essential to deliver care to individuals, to support Health and Social Care services and to protect public health. Information is also vital in researching, monitoring, tracking and managing the outbreak and in the current emergency it has become even more important to share health and care information across relevant organisations.

Existing law which allows confidential patient information to be used and shared appropriately and lawfully in a public health emergency is being used during this outbreak.

Using this law the Secretary of State requires **ALL** NHS services including, Public Health England, local authorities, health organisations and GPs to share confidential patient information to respond to the Covid-19 outbreak. Any information used or shared during the Covid-19 outbreak will be limited to the period of the outbreak unless there is another legal basis to use the data.

Summary Care Records

All patients registered with a GP have a [Summary Care Record](#), unless they have chosen not to have one. The information held in your Summary Care Record gives registered and regulated healthcare professionals, away from your usual GP practice, access to information to provide you with safer care, reduce the risk of prescribing errors and improve your patient experience.

Your [Summary Care Record contains basic \(Core\) information](#) about allergies and medications and any reactions that you have had to medication in the past.

Some patients, including many with long term health conditions, previously have agreed to have [Additional Information](#) shared as part of their Summary Care Record. This Additional Information includes information about significant medical history (past and present), reasons for medications, care plan information and immunisations.

Change to information held in your Summary Care Record

In light of the current emergency, the Department of Health and Social Care has removed the requirement for a patient's prior explicit consent to share Additional Information as part of the Summary Care Record.

This is because the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has issued a [legal notice to healthcare bodies requiring them to share confidential patient information with other healthcare bodies where this is required to diagnose, control and prevent the spread of the virus and manage the pandemic](#). This includes sharing Additional Information through Summary Care Records, unless a patient objects to this.

If you have already expressed a preference to only have Core information shared in your Summary Care Record, or to opt-out completely of having a Summary Care Record, these preferences will continue to be respected and this change will not apply to you. For everyone else, the Summary Care Record will be updated to include the Additional Information. This change of requirement will be reviewed after the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

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Why we have made this change

In order to look after your health and care needs, health and social care bodies may share your confidential patient information contained in your Summary Care Record with clinical and non-clinical staff in other health and care organisations, for example hospitals, NHS 111 and out of hours organisations. These changes will improve the healthcare that you receive away from your usual GP practice.

Your rights in relation to your Summary Care Record

Regardless of your past decisions about your Summary Care Record preferences, you will still have the same options that you currently have in place to opt out of having a Summary Care Record, including the opportunity to opt-back in to having a Summary Care Record or opt back in to allow sharing of Additional Information.

You can exercise these rights by doing the following:

1. **Choose to have a Summary Care Record with all information shared.** This means that any authorised, registered and regulated health and care professionals will be able to see a detailed Summary Care Record, including Core and Additional Information, if they need to provide you with direct care.
2. **Choose to have a Summary Care Record with Core information only.** This means that any authorised, registered and regulated health and care professionals will be able to see limited information about allergies and medications in your Summary Care Record if they need to provide you with direct care.
3. **Choose to opt-out of having a Summary Care Record altogether.** This means that you do not want any information shared with other authorised, registered and regulated health and care professionals involved in your direct care. You will not be able to change this preference at the time if you require direct care away from your GP practice. This means that no authorised, registered and regulated health and care professionals will be able to see information held in your GP records if they need to provide you with direct care, including in an emergency.

To make these changes, you should inform your GP practice or complete this [form](#) and return it to your GP practice.

National Data Opt-Out

During this period of emergency, patient opt-outs will not generally apply to the data used to support the Covid-19 outbreak, due to the public interest in sharing information. This includes National Data Opt-out.

GP Connect

In order to look after your health and care needs we may share your confidential patient information including health and care records with authorised clinical and non-clinical staff in other care settings, for example neighbouring GP practices, hospitals and NHS 111. In order to do this we are using a secure NHS Digital service called GP Connect. The NHS 111 service will also be able to book appointments for you into your GP practice or other specialised services that may be available in your area.

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Research for COVID 19

Under the current changes to law we are required to take part in Research for COVID 19. We are currently sharing information with the following research:

Biobank - <https://www.ukbiobank.ac.uk/2020/04/covid/>

We may also use the details we have to send public health messages to you, either by phone, text or email.

We are also required to share personal/confidential patient information with health and care organisations and other bodies engaged in disease surveillance for the purposes of protecting public health, providing healthcare services to the public, monitoring and managing the outbreak.

During this period of emergency we may also offer you a consultation via telephone or videoconferencing. By accepting the invitation and entering the consultation you are consenting to this. Your personal and confidential patient information will be safeguarded in the same way it would with any other consultation.

NHS England and Improvement and NHSX have developed a single, secure store to gather data from across the health and care system to help with the Covid-19 response. This includes data already collected by NHS England, NHS Improvement, Public Health England and NHS Digital.

New data will include 999 call data, data about hospital occupancy and A&E capacity data as well as data provided by patients themselves. All the data held in the platform is subject to strict controls that meet the requirements of data protection legislation. In such circumstances where you tell us you are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms we may need to collect specific health data about you. Where we need to do so, we will not collect more information than we require and we will ensure that any information collected is treated with the appropriate safeguards.

Changes to this privacy notice

This notice may be amended at any time, so please review it frequently. The date at the top of this page will be amended each time this notice is updated.