National Opt-out Policy

Document Control

A. Confidentiality Notice

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B. Document Details

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National Opt-out Policy

Summary information to give to patients

Your health records contain a type of data called confidential patient information. This data can be used to help with research and planning.

You can choose to stop your confidential patient information being used for research and planning. You can also make a choice for someone else like your children under the age of 13.

Your choice will only apply to the health and care system in England. This does not apply to health or care services accessed in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland

What is confidential patient information

Confidential patient information is when 2 types of information from your health records are joined together.

The 2 types of information are:

- something that can identify you
- something about your health care or treatment

For example, your name joined with what medicine you take.

Identifiable information on its own is used by health and care services to contact patients and this is not confidential patient information.

How we use your confidential patient information

Your individual care

Health and care staff may use your confidential patient information to help with your treatment and care. For example, when you visit your GP they may look at your records for important information about your health.

Research and planning

Confidential patient information might also be used to:

- plan and improve health and care services
- research and develop cures for serious illnesses

Your choice

You can stop your confidential patient information being used for research and planning. Find out how to make your choice.

If you're happy with your confidential patient information being used for research and planning, you do not need to do anything.

Any choice you make will not impact your individual care

When your choice about sharing data from your health records does not apply

If you choose to stop your confidential patient information being used for research and planning, your data might still be used in some situations.

- ***When required by law***
  If there's a legal requirement to provide it, such as a court order.

- ***When you have given consent***
  If you have given your consent, such as for a medical research study.

- ***When there is an overriding public interest***
  In an emergency or in a situation when the safety of others is most important. For example, to help manage contagious diseases like COVID-19 and stop them spreading.

- ***When information that can identify you is removed***
  Information about your health care or treatment might still be used in research and planning if the information that can identify you is removed first.

- ***When there is a specific exclusion***
  Your confidential patient information can still be used in a small number of situations. For example, for official national statistics like a population census.

Make your choice online

Use this service to:

- choose if your confidential patient information is used for research and planning
- change or check your current choice

Your choice will be applied by all health and care organisations.

Read more about the national data opt-out

Before you start you must:

- be aged 13 or older
- have access to your email or mobile phone
- have your NHS number or your postcode registered with your GP surgery

Where can I find my NHS number?

You can find your NHS number:

- by logging into the NHS App or your account on NHS website
- on any document or letter sent to you by the NHS, such as a prescription, test result or appointment letter
- by contacting your GP surgery

Your NHS number is a 10-digit number, for example 485 777 3456.
You do not need to know your NHS number to use NHS services.

Other ways to make a choice

You can also make or change a choice for:

- yourself by phone, email or post
- someone else (either a child under 13 or someone you can legally make decisions for) by email or post

Make or change a choice for yourself or a child under 13

You can make or change a choice for yourself by downloading and completing this form and emailing or posting it to the Contact Centre:

Make and manage your choice or your child's choice (PDF, 159kb)

If you're a parent or legal guardian of a child under the age of 13, you can also use this form to make and manage a choice on their behalf.

Information:

Email: enquiries@nhsdigital.nhs.uk

Postal address:

National Data Opt Out Contact Centre
NHS England
Freepost
PO Box 16738
Redditch
B97 9PT

You can also make or change a choice for yourself by phoning the NHS Digital Contact Centre. The phone number is 0300 303 5678 – Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm (excluding bank holidays).

A member of staff can:

- help you use the online service
- make or change a choice on your behalf
- print and post a form to you

Make or change a choice on behalf of another adult

To make and manage a choice on behalf of someone else, you must be one of the following to the person:

- health and welfare lasting power of attorney
- property and financial affairs lasting power of attorney
- Court of Protection deputy

Download and complete the following form and email or post it to the contact centre as detailed below.

Make and manage a choice for someone else (PDF,182kb)

Email: enquiries@nhsdigital.nhs.uk

Postal address:

National Data Opt Out Contact Centre
NHS England
Freepost
PO Box 16738
Redditch
B97 9PT