

# Information charter

We take the same care of  
**your**



as we do of  
**your**



# Introduction

This Information Charter sets out the standards that you can expect from NHS Wandsworth when we request or hold information. The standards cover all personal and non-personal information about you or your enquiries.

The Charter includes both personal data and other information we hold in connection with our duties under the Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003.

**When we ask you for information, we will keep to the law.**



# What is the Charter for?

This Charter will tell you how you can get access to the information about you that we hold and what you can do if you think standards are not being met.

It will also help any person or organisation in contact with NHS Wandsworth to understand how the information concerning them is treated and when we will consider releasing it on request.

The Charter will be reviewed regularly and updated to take into account any changes in legislation. This charter replaces our previous guidance 'How We Use Your Information.'



# How your information is managed

At NHS Wandsworth we manage, maintain and protect all information according to legislation, our policies and best practices. We have security measures in place to maintain and safeguard the confidentiality, reliability and availability of our systems and data. All information is stored, processed and communicated in a secure manner and made available only to authorised members of staff.

We are also committed to the sharing of information, to be open and transparent and will routinely publish information unless restricted by law or by public policy.





# Types of information we handle

NHS Wandsworth holds both personal and non-personal information in a variety of databases and information stores which are essential to delivering health care services, together with systems relating to our support functions such as human resources, information technology, facilities and finance.

Examples of the types of information this includes are:

- name, address, date of birth, postcode, sex, ethnicity, nationality, first language, NHS number, next of kin
- a record of appointments you've had with any health professional
- reports on your health and the treatment and care you need
- results of tests or scans you've had
- extra details about your health from health professionals, or others involved in your care

This is not a full list of the types of information we handle.

Where we use your personal health care information to support the delivery of health care services, your rights are also protected by the NHS Care Records Guarantee.

Visit [www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/nigb/crsguarantee](http://www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/nigb/crsguarantee) for more information.



# Why we need to handle information

The information that we handle is used to ensure that:

- professionals caring for you have accurate and up-to-date information to assess your health needs and decide what care you might need in the future
  - you can be contacted if you should need further health checks or tests
  - we have your full details available should you need another form of care, for example if you are referred to a specialist service
  - we can review the type and quality of care we provide to make sure it is of the highest standard
  - we can plan and manage our services appropriately
  - we can monitor the way public money is spent
  - we can carry out research on health conditions and improve treatments for patients
  - we can teach and train health professionals
  - we can deal with your concerns effectively
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# Handling your personal information

We know how important it is to protect your privacy and act within the terms of the Data Protection Act. We will safeguard your information and in most circumstances will not disclose personal data without consent.

If we ask you for personal information we promise to:

- make sure you know why we need it
- ask only for what we need and not collect too much or irrelevant information
- protect it and make sure it is only available to authorised members of staff
- let you know if we share it with other organisations, and if you can refuse permission
- make sure we don't keep it longer than is necessary
- not make your personal information available for commercial use without your consent
- consider your request if you ask us to stop processing data about you

In return we ask you to:

- give us accurate information
- tell us as soon as possible if there are any changes to your personal circumstances such as your address

This helps us to keep your information reliable and up-to-date.

# Examples of who we share personal information with

Examples of the people and organisations we share information with are:

- general practitioner (GP) practices
  - pharmacies, opticians, dentists
  - hospitals and primary care trusts
  - council departments including social services
  - NHS Direct and NHS walk-in centres
  - strategic health authorities
  - ambulance services
  - private hospitals and hospices
  - Sure Start
  - other public sector and non-public organisations for management, research, public health and auditing purposes
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# Sharing personal information

While we normally ask for your consent before we share your personal information, there are some circumstances where we are allowed by law to use certain personal information without permission. We only do this after it has been agreed by a senior health professional.

Occasions when we have to pass on information without consent include:

- notification of new births
- to stop the spread of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis
- if we need to help the police with a criminal investigation
- where a court order has been issued
- in the interest of the public

# Getting access to personal information we hold about you

We make every effort to handle all information in a way that respects your rights and which meets with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

If you would like to see the personal information we may hold about you, you can make a 'Subject Access Request' (SAR) under the Data Protection Act. You need to put the request in writing and address it to our Information Governance Manager at the address provided at the end of this booklet.

If we do hold personal information about you we will:

- give you a description of it
- tell you why we are holding it
- tell you who it can be disclosed to
- respond to a SAR once we have received payment of £10 made payable to Wandsworth Primary Care Trust

You can ask for SAR information to be in any reasonable format that meets your needs, and in languages other than English, but there may be an additional charge for this. We will discuss the likely cost of your request with you so that you can decide whether to go ahead. If someone else has copyright on the information you want, you may have to pay them to use it. If so, this cost will be out of our control.

If we do hold information about you, you can ask us to correct any mistakes by contacting the Information Governance Manager at the address at the end of this booklet.



# Getting access to non-personal information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives the public access to unpublished information from a public body subject to certain conditions. We are committed to the sharing of information, to being open and transparent and will publish information unless restricted by law. Like all other public sector organisations we are required to make the information we hold available unless it is exempt.

You can also obtain more information on:

- agreements we have with other organisations for sharing information
- circumstances where we can pass on your personal data without telling you, for example, to prevent and detect crime and to produce statistics (in which case your name is withheld)
- our instructions to staff on how to collect, use and delete your personal data
- how we check that the information we hold is accurate and up-to-date

# The law on disclosing your information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998 have a number of exemptions which must be considered before your information can be published or disclosed. However, we will not withhold information simply because it falls into a relevant exemption. We will assess the impact of disclosure in relation to the requested information and make a decision on a case-by-case basis (except where we have decided that information of that type should be published proactively).

Section 59 of the Data Protection Act 1998 makes it an offence for us to 'knowingly or recklessly disclose information that has been obtained or provided for the purposes of the Act without lawful authority.'





Factors we will take into account when considering whether information should be disclosed include the following:

- the extent to which the information, or some of it, is already in the public domain
- who is asking for the information and why they want it
- how confident we are that the information will remain confidential
- whether we can meet the needs of the request by supplying part of the information or supplying it in a different form
- whether the information is personal and how much of an intrusion its disclosure would be on your privacy
- what is reasonable for you or an organisation to expect in respect of confidentiality and any future disclosure
- whether disclosing the information would be likely to interfere with our functions, for example, by undermining how we provide health services or treat patients



## To find out more information

If you would like to find out more about getting access to your information please write to:

The Information Governance Manager  
NHS Wandsworth  
Wimbledon Bridge House  
Hartfield Road  
London SW19 3RU

**t** 020 8812 7975

**f** 020 8812 7780

**e** [caldicott.guardian@wpct.nhs.uk](mailto:caldicott.guardian@wpct.nhs.uk)

## Complaints

If you think that your information has been handled incorrectly, you can contact the Information Commissioner for independent advice about Data Protection, privacy and data sharing issues.

You can contact the Information Commissioner at:

Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire SK9 5AF.

**t** 01625 545745

**f** 01625 524510

[www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)



# Our personal information promise

We promise that we will:

- value the personal information entrusted to us and make sure we respect that trust
- adopt good practice standards
- consider and address any risk to your privacy when we are planning to use or hold personal information in new ways, such as when introducing new computer systems
- be open with individuals about how we use their information and who we give it to
- make it easy for individuals to access and correct their personal information
- keep personal information to the minimum necessary and delete it when we no longer need it
- have effective safeguards in place to make sure personal information is kept securely and does not fall into the wrong hands
- provide training to staff who handle personal information
- ensure there is enough funding and people to make sure we can live up to our promises
- regularly check that we are living up to our promises and report on how we are doing

