

YOUR RECORDS AND YOU

INFORMATION FOR SERVICE USERS



This leaflet tells you about the information we need to ensure we deliver high quality services to you. It explains how you can access your information and what to do if you are unhappy with the ways we handle it.

What we collect and why we need it

As an NHS provider, we must by law keep service user records. There are legally set time frames, for example, we must keep mental health records for 20 years after the date of last contact with the service (30 years for children).

Records are electronic; a record will include the following:

- full name, date of birth, and address
- NHS number
- reason for referral
- medical history
- other information such as family history, school, work status as these may be relevant to the development of your care plan
- any risks to your health/your child's health

We will make a note of each contact you/your child has with the service and document our assessments and the care plan that has been discussed with you. We will make notes about the progress of treatment. We will also record any concerns we have about risks to your health or your child's health, for example, where there is a risk of harm.

The record will also include correspondence (letters/notes of phone calls/ notes from email and text messages to/from other professionals/agencies) to other professionals involved in your care and our correspondence to you.

We need this information to provide appropriate and safe individual care, so we need to keep service user information up to date. If there are any changes to your circumstances during the time you are attending this service, for example, if you change your GP or address, please let us know.

If you believe that information in your or your child's record is inaccurate or incorrect, then please discuss with the worker involved in your care. Factual inaccuracies (such as the wrong date of birth) may be corrected. Note that the information originally supplied should not be erased as it must be available as part of the original record.

Clinical opinion, whether accurate or not, and observations may not be amended or destroyed as they form an important part of a service user's care. Information supplied by third parties should also not be amended. In these instances the service user's opinion can be noted on the record. Please contact your Worker in the first instance if you are concerned about the information in your record.

Sharing information

To provide you with good care we need to share information about you with other involved professionals, e.g. your GP. We may also share details with other members of the clinical team involved in your/your child's care either here or externally. Any organisation that receives information from us about you must legally keep your information confidential and to store it securely. If you have concerns about information sharing please let your worker know.

Disclosure without consent

Occasionally there are circumstances in which we have to disclose information and when we do not necessarily need to obtain service user consent. Examples of these circumstances are:

- where there are concerns about the safety of a child or vulnerable adult
- when it is in the wider public interest to do so, for example, in the case of a serious crime
- when disclosure is required by law, for example when we are ordered by a court to do so

Confidentiality and keeping your information safe

As NHS employees, we are required, by a common law duty of confidence and by the Data Protection Act (2018), to protect personal information that we may come to know during the course of our work. More details are available on the website www.understandingpatientdata.org.uk. We receive regular training to make sure we understand our legal responsibilities to keep your personal information safe and to know in what circumstances we may have to share confidential information.

Our Privacy Notice, which explains procedures and policies in place to make sure that your personal confidential information is secure and that access to your record is strictly controlled and on a need to know basis, can be found on our website: www.elft.nhs.uk

You have the right to receive copies of letters written by NHS professionals about your health care and treatment. Unless you tell us otherwise, we will always send a copy of correspondence about you that we send to others. You can change your mind at any time. If English is not your first language, we will endeavour to provide translated copies. However, there may be rare instances when a worker feels it is not appropriate to provide copies of letters/reports as it may cause you harm.

The Caldicott Principles

We follow the Caldicott Principles for sharing personal health information:

- we must justify why we are using the information
- we must not use personal information unless necessary
- we use only the minimum information necessary
- only those who need to know your personal information have access
- we understand our responsibilities and the legal framework within which we work and
- we understand the principle that the duty to share personal confidential data can be as important as the duty to respect service user confidentiality

Using service user data in anonymised form

Service user data is anonymised and used both internally and externally. For example: to inform our commissioners (the people who pay for the services we provide) of our levels of activity; and improving health, care and services through research and planning.

Communicating by email

Domestic (free to use) email communication is generally not secure and risks breaching your confidentiality. However, service users sometimes prefer to contact us by email and for us to reply in same way. If you wish us to correspond with you by email then please send us an email first then we know we have the correct address.

Seeing your own record

Under the Data Protection Act (2018) you can apply to see the information in your health record.

If you want to see this information, contact the manager where you received your care. If you are unsure who this is, contact the Information Governance Team at:

Email: elft.information.governance@nhs.net

Post: If you prefer to apply by post, please call 020 7655 4053 to get the address to which you need to send your information.