

Great North Care Record

This is to let you know about a change to the way we share information from your medical records within the NHS.

Doctors, nurses and health professionals are working to improve the way patient information is securely shared within the NHS – improving the care you receive and helping NHS services to run more efficiently.

As you may be aware, information about you is already shared with your GP practice when you visit a hospital or walk-in centre. In the future, we want to ensure that information from your GP records is available electronically to NHS healthcare providers including hospitals, mental health services, out-of-hours doctors and the ambulance service when they are caring for you.

This could include details of some medical conditions, medications, allergies, operations, treatments and tests, plus contact details for your next of kin or carers. These details are already shared, but this is generally when needed, using slower and less reliable methods like phone, letters or fax.

This will help us to provide you with better healthcare:

- With the most up-to-date and accurate information about your health, healthcare professionals can give you better advice and safer, more effective care
- You won't have to answer the same questions from different professionals - you will only need to tell your story once
- With less time wasted on checking details, we can reduce delays to treatment (for example, if you have to attend the Emergency Department when your GP is closed)
 - Better access to records may shorten your stay in hospital – or avoid it altogether
 - There will be less need to have the same tests undertaken more than once

Keeping your records safe

Electronic records will be viewed through a secure encrypted system, protected by stringent NHS security standards. Your record will be used only when healthcare professionals are caring for you. **You will always be asked for consent before professionals can view your records, for example when you visit a hospital.**

We are keen for all our patients to benefit from this improvement in NHS care, so you will be automatically included unless you contact us to opt out. **If you are happy with the new arrangement, you do not need to take any action.**