



How to see your Health Records

Who is this leaflet for?

It is for people who use the NHS in Scotland. People using private health care services can see their health records, but this leaflet explains only how it's done in the NHS.

What is this leaflet about?

It tells you:

- what your health records are
- how to apply to see your health records
- who can apply, and
- what to do if you're unhappy about your application to see your health records.

Why has this leaflet been produced?

It's been produced to explain your rights to read and have a copy of your health records.

What are my health records?

They are records that include information about your health and any care or treatment you've received. This could be, for example, test and scan results, x-rays or letters to and from NHS staff.

How and where are my health records kept?

- Your records can be written on paper, held on computer or both.
- Different parts of the NHS hold records. For example, your GP surgery and any hospital you have been to may hold records about you.
- Your records may only be kept for a certain period of time, after which they can be destroyed. The NHS has guidelines about how long health records should be kept. If you would like more information about this, speak to the person in charge of health records at the place where your records are kept. In your GP surgery this will probably be the practice manager, and in hospitals it will probably be the health records manager.
- It is important that your records are kept up to date. You should let NHS staff know when any of your personal details change, or if you expect to be out of the UK for a long period of time.

Your Emergency Care Summary

Most patients in Scotland now have an Emergency Care Summary. This gives basic information about your health (for example, your

medication) that may help NHS staff if you need urgent medical care when your GP surgery is closed, or if you go to an accident and emergency (A&E) department.

NHS staff can also use your Emergency Care Summary if your GP refers you to an outpatient clinic or for admission to hospital. For example, it will help NHS staff check whether your medication has changed since the GP wrote your referral letter.

Before any member of staff looks at your Emergency Care Summary, they will usually ask your permission. If you are too unwell to give permission they may need to read your Emergency Care Summary without your agreement, to give you the best possible care.

For more information, see the leaflet '**Your Emergency Care Summary – What does it mean for you?**' You can get a copy from your GP surgery, by phoning the NHS inform Helpline on 0800 22 44 88, or on the internet (www.hris.org.uk).

The Key Information Summary

Patients with particular needs (for example, palliative care, support at home or care from family members) and patients living with long-term conditions may also have a Key Information Summary. This includes information that patients want NHS staff looking after them to know (for example, who should be contacted in an emergency, what conditions they have and what treatment they receive).

Your GP will discuss with you what information can be included in your Key Information Summary, if you need one.

How do I ask to see my health records?

- You can read your records and, if you wish, you can get a copy.
- You don't have to read or get a copy of all of your records - you can ask for just some parts. You may have to give information to help identify the parts you want.
- If you ask a member of NHS staff providing your care, they may show you your records or ask you to come back to do this. However, staff don't have to show you your records unless you ask in writing.
- To ask in writing, send a letter to the practice manager at your GP surgery, or the health records manager at the hospital or other NHS organisation that has your records. In the letter you should say if you want to:
 - just read your records or also have a copy
 - get all or just part of your records.
- You may need to fill in an application form and give proof of your identity.
- You should say if you would like your records to be given to you in a format that meets your needs. This will be done wherever possible.
- You don't need to give a reason for wanting to get your health records.

Who can apply to see my health records?

- You can usually apply if you're able to understand what is involved in asking to read your records.
- Someone else can apply to read your records if you are an adult and:
 - you agree to this

