

Please take time to read this leaflet



# Changes to your health records



**We, (the NHS  
in England) are  
changing the  
way we store  
and manage your  
health records.**

**Please read this leaflet  
carefully. It will give you  
information about the new  
summary care records (SCRs)  
we are introducing.**

## What are the changes?

We are introducing summary care records (SCRs), as part of our NHS Care Records Service, to improve the safety and quality of patient care. SCRs will give health-care staff faster, easier access to reliable information about you to help with your treatment.

Today, records are kept in all the places where you receive care. These organisations can usually only share information from your records by letter, email, fax or phone. At times, this can slow down treatment and sometimes information can be lost along the way. Now there will be quicker ways to get important information to the NHS staff treating you, including in an emergency and when you use out-of-hours services when your GP practice is closed.

# About your SCR

You will have an SCR, which will be available to people providing you with care anywhere in England. At first, your SCR will contain important information about your health, such as details of any allergies, your current prescriptions and whether you have had any bad reactions to medicines.

After that, each time you use any NHS health service, we may add details about any health problems, summaries of your care and the professionals treating you to your SCR.

As we add new information to your record, you can discuss what is being added and how sensitive information is handled.

We are gradually introducing SCRs across England. We are telling you about this before your SCR is ready, so that you have time to think about your options.

If you choose to have an SCR, NHS staff will ask you if they can look at it every time they need to. If you do not want us to make an SCR for you, you can choose not to have one.

# How will this benefit me?

- Health-care staff will be able to share important information such as diagnoses and test results when necessary, giving a more complete and accurate picture of your health history.
- Health-care staff will have quicker access to your records, including prescriptions and any allergies you have, so they can provide more effective care.
- You can look at your SCR at any time at a secure website called HealthSpace ([www.healthspace.nhs.uk](http://www.healthspace.nhs.uk)). You will be able to make sure it is accurate and, in time, add things to it (for example, if you prefer us to contact you in a certain way or if you use a wheelchair and need special access). You must register for HealthSpace to keep it as secure as possible.

## How will you control who can see my records?

When the new system is fully up and running, anyone who has access to your records:

- must be directly involved in caring for you
- must have an NHS Smartcard with a chip and passcode (like a bank card and PIN)
- will only see the information they need to do their job
- will have their details recorded – who they are and if they have added or changed any of your information (you can ask to see this), and will ask your permission every time they need to look at your SCR.

Until these controls are fully in place across England, your local NHS organisations will have their own measures to protect your confidentiality. Your local NHS can give you more information.

# Your options

**If you are happy to have an SCR, you do not need to do anything and we will create a record for you.**

You can choose not to have an SCR if you want to. If you choose not to have an SCR, your health records will stay as they are now and you will not receive the benefits we have told you about. You can get more information on what you can do if you do not want an SCR from our website at [www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk) or page 11.

You can have an SCR but limit the information that health-care staff can access. You can discuss with your GP exactly what information is and isn't shared through your SCR.

Whatever you decide, you can change your mind at any time.

- If you decide not to have an SCR but then change your mind, we can still create one for you.
- If you decide after we have created your SCR that you do not want it, we will 'hide' your record to make sure that health-care staff who try to access it will not be able to see it. We will only make your record available again if whoever wants to see it asks in writing and if

an investigation has found it is necessary. It is possible to apply to have your record deleted rather than hidden, but that will be difficult if the record has already been used to give you care.

# How will you protect my confidentiality?

By law, everyone working for us or on our behalf must respect your confidentiality and keep all information about you secure.

We publish the NHS Care Record Guarantee for England. This says how the NHS Care Records Service will collect, store and allow access to your electronic records, and your options for taking part in the service. If you would like a copy, there is information on how to get one on the next page.

The NHS Care Records Service uses the strongest national and international security measures available for storing and handling your information.

In every place we treat you, there are people responsible for protecting your confidentiality. These people are often known as 'Caldicott Guardians', and you may contact them for more information and advice.

# What do I do now

If you are happy for us to create an SCR for you, you do not need to do anything and we will create one for you.

If you do not want us to create a record for you, please contact your GP or your primary care trust, or go to [www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk).

If you would like to know more before you decide whether or not to have a record, you can get more information in the following ways.

Get a copy of the leaflets 'Your health information, Confidentiality and the NHS Care Records Service' and 'The NHS Care Record Guarantee for England' from our website at [www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk),

from your GP's surgery, or phone 08453 700 750.

For leaflets in other languages and formats, such as in Braille, go to our website at [www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk), or phone 08453 700 750.

For more information about SCRs, phone our NHS Care Records Service Information Line on 0845 603 8510 or contact your local Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). Ask your local NHS for details or visit [www.pals.nhs.uk](http://www.pals.nhs.uk).

You can also get more information at [www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk), including information about all of the options in this leaflet.

# Please keep this leaflet safe

