



Northern Health  
and Social Care Trust

# Protecting and Using Your Information

Information for Patients and Service users

Processing of Personal Information

A close-up photograph of a computer keyboard. A prominent blue key in the foreground is labeled 'Data protection' in white text. Other keys visible include a key with a closing curly brace '}', a key with a closing square bracket ']', and a 'SHIFT' key with an upward-pointing arrow.

Data  
protection

## **Introduction**

In order for Northern Health & Social Care Trust to help provide a service for you we need to know some information about you. Personal information that we process about you is governed by the Data Protection Act 2018 and The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR.)

## **What information is collected?**

We only collect the information we need to. This will include your name, address, date of birth, contact details and relevant health and social care history. We may need to collect information about you from other people, for example, your family, carers, other health professionals, or if necessary, other external agencies.

## **How is it collected?**

Information you provide to us is recorded in your personal paper file and also on our computer systems. This can include information you provide in person, on an official form (either online or in paper form) by telephone, or by information recorded on CCTV cameras that operate within the Trust.

## **What do we do with your information?**

We collect this information to plan healthcare services for you. Other reasons your information may be used include:

- Helping to review the care given to you to ensure it is of the highest standard. This is done through internal audits of our standards or external inspections of our services.
- Training and educating staff
- Looking after the health and social welfare of the general public.
- Investigating complaints or legal claims
- Preparing statistics on the Trust's activity and performance

## Who will my information be shared with?

To help us provide the best care or service for you, we may need to share your information with authorised individuals directly involved in your care. This may include doctors, nurses, social workers and other allied health professionals. We only ever do this if it is needed in your interests.

Your relatives, friends and carers may be given information about you, but only if you agree, or in circumstances where it is necessary to ensure your health and well-being. Apart from this, we will not share your information with other individuals unless you have given us permission to do so. If we do want to share your information, we will contact you to seek consent and you have a right to withdraw your consent at any time, where relevant.

Your information may also be used in a way that does not identify you, for example, for research or to help identify trends (such as the increases in certain diseases).

## **Will it be shared with anyone else without my consent?**

There may be occasions where your information can be shared with other organisations without your consent but this will only happen when it is:

- Required by law
- Required by a court order
- Necessary to detect or prevent crime, including allegations or suspicions of fraud
- Necessary to protect the public from serious harm, eg the protection of vulnerable adults
- Required for monitoring certain health conditions, eg the Public Health Agency (PHA)
- Monitoring of deaths.

## **How will it effect me if I do not want to provide information?**

It is important to remember that the purpose of using your information is to provide you with safe, fast and effective care. Not providing information may have a significant effect on the appropriate care and protection that we and others provide to you.

## Security of your information

At Northern Health & Social Care Trust we take your privacy seriously. Staff will only access your information on a strict 'need to know' basis or when they are involved in your period of care. All staff have a legal duty to keep your information safe and confidential, as does anyone who receives information about you from the Trust. In line with legislation the Trust has a range of measures and strict standards to protect paper and electronically held information.

We will not transfer your data to other countries outside the European Union (EU) unless you have consented to it and the information has been secured in a way that safeguards it during and after transfer to the country receiving it.

## How long will my information be retained for?

We will retain your information in line with specific guidance issued by the Department of Health in Northern Ireland. The length of time we keep your information for will depend on the types of records created for your care. If you want to find out more about how long your records are retained, you can ask staff or view the "Good Management, Good Records" section under "Disposal Schedule" on Department of Health's website.

## Keeping your information up-to-date

It is very important that the information we hold about you is correct and up-to-date. You can help us to do that by telling us of any changes. Please tell us if you move house, change your GP, change your name or telephone number.

## How do I see my information?

If you want to see the information we hold about you or ask about how we use it, you can speak to the person in charge of your care. You have a right under the legislation to request a copy of your information.

Requests must be made in writing (this can include by email) and you will need to provide a copy of photographic identification. Please send your request to the Trust's Information Governance Department.

Contacts details can be found below. We will process your request as quickly as possible but you should be aware that the legislation allows the Trust one calendar month to respond to your request, however, there may be occasions where the legislation permits up to an additional 2 months for a response. There may be a fee for this service.

## Your Rights

You have a right to take action if you feel you have suffered damage and distress due to the Trust's use of your information. You also have a right to take action to correct, block, remove or destroy inaccurate information that the Trust holds on you.

## Is there any information that I cannot see?

There are occasions when other people have provided information relating to your care. We have a duty to keep certain information confidential and may not be able to share it with you. There are some other instances when information cannot be legally shared or released, for example investigations conducted by the Police.

## How can I find out more information or who can I complain to?

If you want to know more about how we use your information or if you are unhappy with any aspect about how we use your information or comply with your request you can contact:

Information Governance Department  
Causeway House  
8e Coleraine Road  
Ballymoney BT53 6BP  
E-mail: [info.governance@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:info.governance@northerntrust.hscni.net)  
Tel 028 2766 1227


If you wish to make a complaint you can contact the Information Governance Department, as per details above or alternatively you may wish to contact:

The Information Commissioner's Office 3rd Floor  
14 Cromac Place,  
Belfast BT7 2JB  
Telephone: 028 9027 8757



**CONFIDENTIAL**

If you would like to give feedback on any of our services please contact:  
Email: [user.feedback@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:user.feedback@northerntrust.hscni.net)  
Telephone: 028 9442 4655

 Northern Health and Social Care Trust

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[www.northerntrust.hscni.net](http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net)

## Our Vision

To deliver excellent integrated services in partnership with our community

## Our Values

**COMPASSION**



**C**

**OPENNESS**



**O**

**RESPECT**



**R**

**EXCELLENCE**



**E**