

KEEPING YOUR RECORDS

We comply with the 1998 Data Protection Act and this policy describes our procedures for ensuring that personal information about patients is processed fairly and lawfully.

What personal data do we hold?

In order to provide you with a high standard of dental care and attention, we need to hold personal information about you. This personal data comprises:

- your past and current medical and dental condition
- personal details such as your age, address and telephone number
- your national insurance number, NHS number, and your general medical practitioner
- radiographs (x-rays), clinical photographs and study models
- information about treatment that we provided or propose and its cost
- notes of engagements that might occur for which a record needs to be kept
- records of consent to treatment
- correspondence relating to other health professionals, e.g., hospitals or your GP

Why do we hold information about you?

We need to keep comprehensive and accurate personal data about our patients in order to provide them with safe and appropriate care. We also need to process personal data about you in order to provide care under our contractual arrangements and to ensure the proper management and administration of your contract with us and the NHS.

How we process the data:

We will process personal data that we hold about you in the following way:

Retaining Information

We will retain your dental records while you are a practice patient and after you cease to be a patient, for at least eleven years or for children until age 25, whichever is the longer.

Security of Information

Personal data about you is held on our IT system and in a manual filing system. The information is not accessible to the public and only authorised members of staff have access to it. Our IT system has secure audit trails and we back up data routinely.

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

In order to provide proper and safe dental care, we may need to disclose personal information about you to:

- your general medical practitioner
- the, hospital or community dental services
- other health professionals caring for you
- NHS payment authorities
- the Inland Revenue
- the Benefits Agency, if you are claiming exemption/remission from NHS charges
- private dental schemes of which you are a member
- law enforcement agencies and carers (in accordance with current legislation)

Disclosure takes place on a ‘need-to-know’ basis, so that only the individuals or organisations who need to know in order to provide care to you and for the proper administration of Government (whose personnel are covered by strict confidentiality rules) will be given the information. Only that information that the recipient needs to know will be disclosed.

In very limited circumstances or when required by law or a court order, personal data may have to be disclosed to a third party not connected with your health care. In all other situations, disclosure that is not covered by this Code of Practice will only occur when we have your specific consent.

Where possible you will be informed of these requests for disclosure.

Access

You have the right of access to the data that we hold about you and to receive a copy. Access may be obtained by making a request in writing and the payment of a fee for access of up to £10 (for records held on computer) or £50 (for those held manually or for computer-held records with non-computer radiographs). We will provide a copy of the record within 40 days of receipt of the request and fee (where payable) and an explanation of your record should you require it.

If You Do Not Agree!

If you do not wish the data that we hold about you to be disclosed or used in the way that is described in this Code of Practice, please discuss the matter with your dentist. You have the right to object, but this may affect our ability to provide your care.