

## Summary Care Records – Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

### 1. What is a Summary Care Record (SCR)?

It is a summary of a patient's key health information that will be available to anyone treating them in the NHS across England only.

### 2. Why is the NHS introducing this system?

Today, all the places where you receive care keep records about you. They can usually only share information from your records by letter, email, fax or phone. With the new system people who are treating you will be able to access those parts of your records that they are allowed to see more quickly, as they will be located in one place.

### 3. What are the benefits of a SCR?

Over time, NHS organisations will keep all your health care records on computers that link up your notes, allowing them to get access to information in a safe and secure way. This change will take place over several years and will bring a number of improvements:

- Healthcare staff will be able to get a more complete picture of your healthcare.
- Healthcare staff will have quicker access to your records so they can provide more effective care.
- You will have access to your Summary Care Record, whenever you want it, through Health Space (a secure internet site).

### 4. What information will the SCR contain?

The SCR will have details of a patient's medications, any allergies and any bad reactions to medicines they have and will build over time to include their main health issues for example, diabetes.

The SCR will carry information about the medications that you are currently taking. Whether this information can then be used by doctors other than your GP to prescribe repeat prescriptions of these medications has not yet been confirmed by the Department of Health.

### 5. Will I have access to my own SCR?

Yes.

As now, you will have the right to see your health care records.

Once you have a Summary Care Record, you will be able to see it online at any time by visiting [www.healthspace.nhs.uk](http://www.healthspace.nhs.uk)

You will be able to make sure it is accurate and, in time, add things yourself (for example, if you prefer us to contact you in a certain way or you use a wheelchair and need special access).

You will need to register to use Health Space.

## **6. What are Detailed Care Records?**

The NHS Care Records Service is a secure service that links patient information from different parts of the NHS locally so that authorised NHS staff and patients have the information they need to make care decisions.

There are two elements to the NHS Care Records Service: Detailed Care Records (held locally) and the SCR (held nationally). The Detailed Care Records enable each person's records to be securely shared between different parts of their local NHS, such as the GP surgery and hospital.

## **7. Can I access my Detailed Care Records?**

Patients can only access their Detailed Care Record via the Access to Health Records Scheme.

In Wandsworth you can do this by contacting us on the details below or reading more on our website:

T: 020 8812 7975

F: 020 8812 7780

E: [caldicott.guardian@wpct.nhs.uk](mailto:caldicott.guardian@wpct.nhs.uk)

W: <http://www.wandsworth.nhs.uk/Stayinghealthy/records/Pages/default.aspx>

## **8. Who will see my SCR?**

Unless you choose not to have a Summary Care Record, healthcare professionals treating you across England will be able to see your Summary Care Record. You will be asked if staff can look at your Summary Care Record every time they need to. You can choose not to be asked every time.

Not everyone involved in your care will be able to see all of your records. The amount of information they can see will depend on their job. Staff who do not need to see information about your treatment will not be able to view it.

Records can be handed over if they are required in legal cases, *but* the usual permissions will need to be applied for and granted.

## **9. How is my confidentiality protected?**

Everyone has a legal right to confidentiality.

Therefore, by law, everyone working for or on behalf of the NHS must respect your confidentiality and keep all information about you secure. In every place where you're treated by the NHS, there are people responsible for protecting your confidentiality. These people are often known as Caldicott Guardians.

The NHS publishes a **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 to take part in the service. If you would like a copy, there is information on how to get one at question 25. The NHS Care Records Service uses the strongest national and international security measures available for handling your information.

These measures make sure that your information is stored safely, stays private and can only be seen by appropriate people.

NHS Wandsworth has a local "Information Charter" that sets out the standards that you can expect from us. A copy of this can be obtained from:

The Information Governance Manager  
NHS Wandsworth  
Wimbledon Bridge House  
Hartfield Road  
London SW19 3RU

T: 020 8812 7975

F: 020 8812 7780

E: [caldicott.guardian@wpct.nhs.uk](mailto:caldicott.guardian@wpct.nhs.uk)

Alternatively, you can download the charter by following the link at:

<http://www.wandsworth.nhs.uk/Stayinghealthy/records/Pages/default.aspx>

## 10. How is access to my records controlled?

When the new system is fully up and running, the following will apply to anyone who gets access to your records:

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

Until these controls are fully in place across England, NHS Wandsworth will be responsible for controlling access to your information, as it is now.

## 11. Is the NHS Care Records Service safe from hackers?

It would be very difficult to hack into it because the system uses the strongest national and international security measures available. It uses stronger safeguards than Internet banking.

**12. Could my records be accidentally deleted or lost?**

No there is strong protection to prevent any information about you being lost or deleted. The information is copied to a separate secure site so there is always a back up.

**13. Can patients who do not have access to the internet obtain hard copies of their SCR?**

The SCR scheme is an electronic records scheme and so, if you are opted-in to the scheme, and registered with Health Space, your personal SCR would readily be available online for you to access. If you have access to the internet via your mobile phone, then you will also be able to access your personal SCR online in this way. However, if you do not have access to the internet, then copies of your medical records can only be obtained via the Access to Health Records Scheme. Contact:

T: 020 8812 7975

F: 020 8812 7780

E: [caldicott.guardian@wpct.nhs.uk](mailto:caldicott.guardian@wpct.nhs.uk)

W: <http://www.wandsworth.nhs.uk/Stayinghealthy/records/Pages/default.aspx>

**14. Will the SCR and the European Health Insurance Card schemes (EHIC) be linked?**

At present, the SCR scheme is limited to England only and so only available in England.

**15. When travelling abroad particularly in countries that have reciprocal health arrangements with the UK, will doctors, hospitals etc., have access to these records?**

At present, the SCR scheme is limited to England only and so only available in England.

**16. Will I be able to print off my personal medical details from the HealthSpace website?**

Yes.

**17. Can parents or legal guardians see their child's records?**

Currently, parents or legal guardians have the right to have access to their child's records if their child is under 16.

Their child has the right to ask us not to give their parent or guardian access to their records. Their child also has the right to give information to us and to expect that access to that information will not be given to their parent or guardian.

However, at present even if a child has asked us not to give access, we may give parents and legal guardians information if the reasons for giving them access are more important for public good than keeping the child's information confidential.

This will still be the case with the NHS Care Records Service.

#### **18. Can I give other people outside the NHS access to my NHS Care Records?**

After careful consideration, you might want to give a family member, friend or carer access to your records to help them care for you. If you want someone else to access your records, you will need to give your written consent. This helps you to stay in control of your record and to make your own decisions about who can access it.

You can also ask the organisations which have given you care to provide information to other people. For example, this could be to your solicitor for a court case, or a medical insurer to help you apply for insurance. We need your permission to do this. You may want to limit their access to just part of your NHS Care Records.

#### **19. Can I limit the information that healthcare professionals have access to?**

You can limit the information that health care professionals can have access to, but this would mean that you won't be able to take advantage of the full benefits of the new service.

#### **20. Can a parent or guardian oppose the wishes of a 'Gillick'\*competent child in relation to opting in or opting out of SCR?**

A competent child is entitled to agree to an SCR, and an informed decision of this sort should be respected. Where the child lacks competence and a parent wishes to oppose the wishes of the child, then they should not generally be prevented from doing so, in order to safeguard the child's confidentiality. This includes dissent to the creation of an SCR.

There may be specific circumstances where a clinician feels that the best interests of the child concerned may justify the creation of an SCR and he/she is not persuaded by the arguments made to support dissent.

The individual making the request must be informed of this decision and it should be made clear that dissent to having an SCR is a choice that is provided at the discretion of the NHS and does not constitute a legal right.

\* **Gillick competence** is a term used in medical law to decide whether a child (16 years or younger) is able to consent to his or her own medical treatment, without the need for parental permission or knowledge.

#### **21. Can a parent, guardian or carer oppose the wishes of a vulnerable adult in relation to opting in or out of SCR?**

A competent adult is entitled to make their own decision, even if this might appear foolish or unwise to others, providing they have given sufficient information to make an informed decision. Such a refusal should be respected. Where the patient is an incompetent adult then the provisions of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (or Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 in Scotland) will apply.

The individual making the request must be informed of this decision and it should be made clear that dissent to having an SCR is a choice that is provided at the discretion of the NHS and does not constitute a legal right.

## **22. How will a clinician judge whether a patient lacks capacity to consent to access to the SCR, and what is in their best interests?**

Clinicians must have regard for the criteria set out in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 in England and Wales, and the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 in Scotland.

## **23. What about in an emergency situation when I am unable to give permission for someone to view my record?**

If a patient is not able to give permission to view their record then the clinician should act in the patient's best interest. Clinicians are accountable for their actions to their professional bodies as part of their code of conduct as in other clinical work they undertake. The clinician will use the emergency button to access the record, which raises an alert to the privacy officer as well as being recorded in the audit trail. The ability to access the record without permission should be given only to clinical staff who are accountable to their professional bodies. Good practice would be to seek permission from the patient once they have regained the capacity to do so.

## **24. What about when someone is consulting on behalf of another adult such as a person is too ill to come to the phone or a parent consulting by telephone on behalf of a child?**

The position is the same as with manual records if a third party came on the telephone to discuss the case. The doctor should apply exactly the same criteria. Caution always has to be used where a third party is involved to ensure that either there is proper permission from the patient to whom the record refers, or that the person speaking has some other form of authority, or that it is a genuine emergency, in which case the doctor should act in the patient's best interests.

## **25. If I need more information, where can I get this from?**

- You can 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 NHS Care Records' website [www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk) or by phoning 08453 700 750 or 0845 603 8510.
- For leaflets in other languages and formats, go to the NHS Care Records Service website [www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk) , or call 08453 700 750.

- Call the NHS Care Records Service helpline on 0845 603 8510.
- If you have a question about what happens in Wandsworth then contact NHS Wandsworth Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):

PALS  
Queen Mary's Hospital  
Roehampton Lane  
London SW15 5PN

T: 020 8487 6322  
E: [pals@wpct.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@wpct.nhs.uk)

## **26. How do I get a SCR?**

Your records will automatically become part of the new NHS Care Records Service over the next few years, unless you object. This is about to happen in your area. If you are happy about this, you don't need to do anything – you will automatically be opted-in.

## **27. What if I don't want a SCR?**

If you don't want a SCR at all, you will need to get a **SCR opt-out form** by contacting the helpline or going online:

W: [www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk)

T: 08453 700 750

## **28. How long will I have from receiving the leaflet to making my choice about whether I want a Summary Care Record and what information I want to share?**

The letter you received from your GP should mention a date, sometime after which your Summary Care Record will be created.

There will be a minimum period (currently 12 weeks) from when the information is sent to you before your Summary Care Record is created.

## **29. I've been contacted by my GP previously about SCRs and opted-out – why have NHS Wandsworth written to me again?**

NHS Wandsworth is required by the Department of Health to revalidate your decision from time to time – whether this is to opt-out or opt-in to the SCR scheme. We are also required by the Department of Health to ensure that the correct paperwork is completed, so that we have your decision recorded accurately. Therefore, if you do not want a SCR it is very important that you obtain a SCR opt-out form (please see above for details on how to do this).

## **30. There have been a lot of media reports that the NHS SCR scheme will not now be rolled out, and is due to be scrapped – is this true?**

No this is not true. NHS London has agreed to work with primary care trusts on a London-wide public information campaign. This campaign aims to explain to over 7.8 million people registered with a GP in London what a summary care record is, how their health information will be stored and managed in the future as well as their options as a patient. As part of this commitment to working closely with the GP community NHS London has agreed not to create any new electronic SCRs for patients until appropriate professional and public awareness has been raised.