

Covid-19 and your information - Updated March 2022

Supplementary privacy note on Covid-19

This notice describes how we may use your information to protect you and others during the Covid-19 outbreak. It supplements and is to be read alongside our standard Privacy Notice.

The health and social care system is facing significant pressures due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Health and care information is essential to deliver care to individuals, to support health and social care services and to protect public health. Information will also be vital in researching, monitoring, tracking and managing the outbreak. In the current emergency it has become even more important to share health and care information across relevant organisations.

Existing law which allows confidential patient information to be used and shared appropriately and lawfully in a public health emergency is being used during this outbreak. The Secretary of State has served notice under Regulation 3(4) of the Health Service (Control of Patient Information) Regulations 2002 (COPI) to require NHS Digital; NHS England and Improvement; Arms Length Bodies (such as Public Health England); local authorities; health organisations and GPs to share confidential patient information to respond to the Covid-19 outbreak. Any information used or shared during the Covid-19 outbreak will be limited to the period of the outbreak unless there is another legal basis to use the data. The COPI notice is currently in place until 30 June 2022. Further information is available on gov.uk [here](#) and some FAQs on this law are available [here](#).

To support the response to the outbreak, NHS Digital has been legally directed to collect and analyse healthcare information about patients from their GP record for the duration of the coronavirus emergency period using the General Practice Extraction Service (GPES).

NHS Digital will analyse the data and securely and lawfully share data with other appropriate organisations described below for coronavirus response purposes only. These purposes include:

- carrying out vital research into treatments and vaccines for the virus, including clinical trials
- identifying coronavirus trends and risks to public health
- diagnosing and monitoring the effects of coronavirus
- controlling and helping to prevent the spread of the virus
- planning and providing health, social care and other public services in response to coronavirus (COVID-19)
- helping clinicians, scientists, public health bodies and the government to provide guidance and develop policies to respond to the outbreak
- monitoring and managing the outbreak

NHS Digital is the controller of the personal data collected and analysed above jointly with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, who has directed NHS Digital to collect, analyse and in certain circumstances disseminate this data under the COVID-19 Public Health Directions 2020 (COVID-19 Directions).

Data may be analysed and linked to other data held by NHS Digital, or held by other organisations to which access to the data is granted for COVID-19 purposes. Data will be collected nationally from all GP Practices by NHS Digital every fortnight.

All GP practices in England are legally required to share data with NHS Digital for this purpose under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The data to be collected will include information about patients who are currently registered with a GP practice or who have a date of death on or after 1 November 2019 whose record contains coded information relevant to coronavirus planning and research.

It will not include details for any patient who has registered a Type 1 objection with their GP practice. Where a Type 1 objection has been registered, your GP practice will not share your personal identifiable confidential information outside of the GP practice, except when it is being used for the purposes of your care and treatment

More information on this collection of data can be found here:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/coronavirus/gpes-data-for-pandemic-planning-and-research/transparency-notice-gpes-data-for-pandemic-planning-and-research-covid-19>

During this period of emergency, opt-outs will not generally apply to the data used to support the Covid-19 outbreak, due to the public interest in sharing information. This includes [National Data Opt-outs](#). However, in relation to the Summary Care Record, existing choices will be respected. Where data is used and shared under these laws your right to have personal data erased will also not apply. It may also take us longer to respond to Subject Access requests, Freedom of Information requests and new opt-out requests whilst we focus our efforts on responding to the outbreak.

In order to look after your health and care needs we may share your confidential patient information including health and care records with clinical and non clinical staff in other health and care providers, for example neighbouring GP practices, hospitals and NHS 111. We may also use the details we have to send public health messages to you, either by phone, text or email.

During this period of emergency we may offer you a consultation via telephone or video-conferencing. By accepting the invitation and entering the consultation you are consenting to this. Your personal/confidential patient information will be safeguarded in the same way it would with any other consultation.

We will also be required to share personal/confidential patient information with health and care organisations and other bodies engaged in disease surveillance for the purposes of protecting public health, providing healthcare services to the public and monitoring and managing the outbreak. Further information about how health and care data is being used and shared by other NHS and social care organisations in a variety of ways to support the Covid-19 response is [here](#).

NHS England and Improvement and NHSX have developed a single, secure store to gather data from across the health and care system to inform the Covid-19 response. This includes data already collected by NHS England, NHS Improvement, Public Health England and NHS Digital. New data will include 999 call data, data about hospital occupancy and A&E capacity

data as well as [data provided by patients themselves](#). All the data held in the platform is subject to strict controls that meet the requirements of data protection legislation.

In such circumstances where you tell us you're experiencing Covid-19 symptoms we may need to collect specific health data about you. Where we need to do so, we will not collect more information than we require and we will ensure that any information collected is treated with the appropriate safeguards.

Covid-19 Vaccinations

Covid-19 vaccinations are being delivered according to priority groups identified by the Joint Committee of Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). The vaccinations may not take place at your GP practice, but rather a local vaccination service (led by GPs, practice nurses and community pharmacists) who are responsible for delivering the vaccine to people in your community.

NHS England is responsible for processing your personal data for the purposes of the national vaccination programme. To find out more, you can access the privacy notice at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/contact-us/privacy-notice/national-flu-vaccination-programme/> or search for "NHS England Privacy Notice" in your browser.

We may amend this privacy notice at any time so please review it frequently. The date at the top of this page will be amended each time this notice is updated.