

Data Protection

The following Information has been pulled together from the Information Governance Staff Handbook (July 217) to help inform Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) about the use of patient information for use by the PPG.

Caldicott Principles and Data Protection Act Principles

All NHS employees must be aware of the seven Caldicott Principles which apply to both patient and staff data:

Principle 1: Justify the purpose - Why is the information needed?

Principle 2: Don't use patient identifiable information unless absolutely necessary – Can the task be carried out without identifiable information?

Principle 3: Use the minimum necessary patient identifiable information – Can the task be carried out with less information?

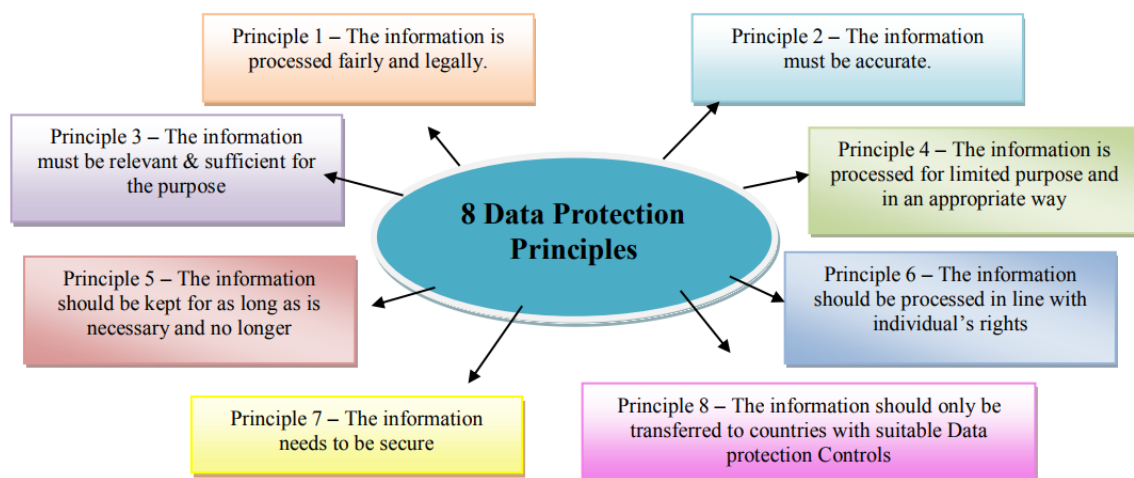
Principle 4: Access to patient identifiable information should be restricted to required/relevant

Principle 5: Everyone with access to patient identifiable information should be aware of their responsibilities – Lack of knowledge is not acceptable

Principle 6: Understand and comply with the law

Principle 7: The duty to share information can be as important as the duty to protect patient confidentiality

The following are the eight Data Protection Act principles that must be followed when handling personal and sensitive information. These principles should be considered when handling both corporate and clinical records.



key rules for all NHS staff to follow:

1. Patients and staff should be fully informed about how their information may be used
2. There are strict conditions under which personal, personal confidential and sensitive personal data may be disclosed
3. Individuals have the right to see what information is held about them, and to have any errors corrected. They also have the right to request copies
4. Identifiable information should be anonymised wherever and whenever possible
5. The disclosure or sharing of personal data is permissible where exemptions apply
6. Sharing of personal data between organisations can take place with appropriate authority and permissions
7. Sometimes a judgement has to be made about the balance between the duty of confidence and disclosure in the public interest. Any such disclosure must be justified
8. Personal data should be kept secure and confidential at all time

Rules 1, 6 and 7 are pivotal to the issue of sharing patient contact details between the practice and the PPG.

The key message from the CCG is for PPGs to have a conversation with your practice staff about the benefits of being able to communicate with the patient community of the surgery through their channels, such as short messaging services (SMS - texting) and emails and facilitating a way that they can communicate on behalf of the PPG rather than them handing over any personal patient contact details.